

An Litir Bheag le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 485 (which corresponds to Litir 789). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about Clach a' Choire – The Ringing Stone – on Tìree. Here's a story about the stone and Lachlann the Bard.

A long time ago things were poor on Tìree. The people were in poverty and short of food. Lachlann the Bard went out to the stone. He had heard that the stone had special powers. He was going to seek help from it because the people were in a dire predicament.

With his fist closed he hit the stone softly several times. But no sound came from it. Then he picked up a pebble from the shore. He hit the stone hard with it three times. A large sound came from it. It was like a bell.

Lachlann stood back. After a short time, a head appeared in the sea near him. He thought to begin with that it was a seal. But it had the head of a man, with long hair. Lachlann was afraid but he stood his ground.

The creature came out of the sea. When it was near the bard, it said, 'Why did you call for [on] me, Lachlann?'

'My cow is poorly. It's

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Chlach a' Choire – The Ringing Stone – ann an Tìriodh. Seo agaibh stòiridh mun chloich agus Lachlann am Bàrd.

O chionn fhada bha gnothaichean truagh ann an Tìriodh. Bha na daoine bochd agus gann de bhiadh. Chaidh Lachlann am Bàrd a-mach a dh'ionnsaigh na cloiche. Bha e air cluinntinn gun robh cumhachdan sònraichte aig a' chloich. Bha e a' dol a shireadh cobhair bhuaipe oir bha an sluagh ann an èiginn.

Le a dhòrn dùinte tharraing e buillean ciùin air a' chloich. Ach cha tàinig fuaim sam bith aiste. An uair sin, thog e dòirneag bhon chladach. Bhuaile gu cruaidh air a' chloich leatha trì tursan. Thàinig fuaim mòr aiste. Bha e coltach ri clag.

Sheas Lachlann air ais. An ceann ùine ghoirid, nochd ceann anns a' chuan faisg air. Shaoil e an toiseach gur e ròn a bha ann. Ach bha ceann fir aige, le falt fada. Bha an t-eagal air Lachlann ach sheas e far an robh e.

Thàinig an creutair a-mach às a' mhuir. Nuair a bha e faisg air a' bhàrd, thuirt e, 'Carson a ghairm thu orm, a Lachlann?'

'Tha am mart agam bochd. Tha i

stopped giving milk,' replied the man, fear in his voice. 'I have no food for my child.'

The creature stood in silence. Finally it said, 'Many people are poor just now. But you came here for assistance. Go home and give your child food. Don't tell anybody the reason you came here.' And the creature turned back to the sea.

When he reached the house, Lachlann found his cow in good health. She was full of milk. And his neighbours also had plenty of milk and food.

Lachlann said nothing to anybody about his journey to the Ringing Stone. Well, that was until he was an old man when he had his grandchildren around him next to the fire.

Now, when I myself was at the stone recently, I saw a seal in the sea close to me. Well, I imagine it was a seal...

air sguir a thoirt bainne,' fhreagair an duine, agus eagal na ghuth. 'Chan eil biadh agam airson mo leanabh.'

Sheas an creutair na thost. Mu dheireadh, thuir e, 'Tha mòran daoine bochd an-dràsta. Ach thàinig thusa an seo airson cobhair. Thalla dhachaigh agus thoir biadh dha do leanabh. Na inns do dhuine an reusan a thàinig thu an seo.' Agus thionndaidh an creutair air ais don chuan.

Nuair a ràinig e an taigh, fhuair Lachlann am mart aige slàn, fallain. Bha i làn de bhainne. Agus bha pailteas bainne is bìdh aig a choimhearsnaich cuideachd.

Cha tuirt Lachlann guth ri duine mun turas aige do Chlach a' Choire. Uill, cha tubhairt gus an robh e na sheann duine, agus na h-oghaichean timcheall air ri taobh an teine.

Nise, nuair a bha mi fhìn aig a' chloich o chionn ghoirid, chunnaic mi ròn anns a' mhuir faisg orm. Uill, tha mi an dùil gur e ròn a bha ann...