

## **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 522 (which corresponds to Litir 826). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*In Uist and Benbecula, the Lady's Bedstraw, or rù was being dug up in olden times. They were making red dye with the roots. Rù grows on the machair.*

*People were harvesting too much of it. And the machair sand was being swept away by the wind. So the landlords banned the harvesting of the rù. But people were still keen on the colour. Women were going out in the darkness of the night to harvest it.*

*There was a farmer in Benbecula called 'Calum Sagart'. He was a polite man. But his wife was evil. She was a wicked woman/witch.*

*Calum and his wife had a daughter. She decided to harvest rù on the machair. She was going to go out after midnight on Sunday night.*

*Her mother was very much against her going to harvest the rù. But the daughter refused to listen to her. When the girl was going out the door, her mother said, 'You are going out carrying your mother's curse.' She said her daughter*

Ann an Uibhist is Beinn a' Bhaoghla, bhathar a' buain an rù, *Lady's Bedstraw*, anns an t-seann aimsir. Bha iad a' dèanamh dath dearg, no ruadh, leis na freumhaichean. Tha an rù a' fàs air a' mhachair.

Bha daoine a' buain cus dheth. Agus bha gainmheach a' mhachaire air a siabadh air falbh leis a' ghaoith. Mar sin, chuir na h-uachdarain stad air buain an rù. Ach bha daoine fhathast measail air an dath. Bha boireannaich a' falbh a-mach ann an dorchadas na h-oidhche airson a bhuain.

Bha tuathanach ann am Beinn a' Bhaoghla ris an abradh iad 'Calum Sagart'. 'S e duine modhail a bha ann. Ach bha a bhean olc. 'S e baobh a bha innte.

Bha nighean aig Calum 's a bhean. Chuir i roimhpe rù a bhuain air a' mhachair. Bha i a' dol a dh'fhalbh a-mach an dèidh meadhan-oidhche Oidhche Dhòmhnach.

Bha a màthair anabarrach fada an aghaidh dhi a dhol a bhuain an rù. Ach cha tug an nighean cluas dhi. Nuair a bha an nighean a' dol a-mach air an doras, thuirt a màthair, 'Tha thu a' falbh le mollachd do mhàthar air do cheann.' Thuirt i nach tilleadh a nighean beò.

would not return alive.

*And, as was predicted, so it happened. Her daughter did not return. Her neighbours went out to look for her. But they never found the daughter. They found items of her clothing on the machair where she was picking the rù. But they never found her body.*

*A short time after this happened, people saw a light that is called An Teine Mòr (will-o'-the-wisp). Some likened it to a fire in a creel (or a human chest cavity). And some were believing that the fire was in the chest cavity of Calum Sagart's daughter.*

*They were saying that it was the ghost of the daughter. She was going to travel ceaselessly until judgement day. And the local people had a terrible hatred for the girl's mother because she had lain a curse upon her that night.*

Agus, mar a thuir, 's ann a thachair. Cha do thill a nighean. Chaidh a coimhearsnaich a-mach ga h-iarraidh. Ach cha do lorg iad an nighean riamh. Fhuair iad lorg air buill-aodaich aice air a' mhachair far an robh i a' buain an rù. Ach cha d' fhuair iad lorg air a corp.

An ceann beagan ùine an dèidh dha seo tachairt, chunnaic daoine an solas ris an abrar *An Teine Mòr*. Bha cuid ga shamhlachadh ri teine ann an cliabh. Agus bha feadhainn a' creidsinn gun robh an teine ann an com nighean Chalum Shagairt.

Bha iad ag ràdh gur e taibhs na h-ìghne a bha ann. Bha i a' dol a shiubhal gun sgar gu latha a' bhreitheanais. Agus bha gràin an uilc aig muinntir an àite air màthair na h-ìghne leis gun do chuir i mollachd air ceann na h-ìghne air an oidhche sin.