

## **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 526 (which corresponds to Litir 830). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I'm going to finish the story – 'The Blacksmith and the Devil' – which explains how the will-o'-the-wisp came into being.*

*'They are saying,' said the blacksmith to the Devil, 'that you can disguise yourself as anything you want.'*

*'That's true,' said the Devil.*

*'Well,' said the blacksmith, 'make yourself into a coin.'*

*The Devil made himself into a coin. The blacksmith picked up the coin. He put it into his purse. His third request to the old grey-haired man was that a coin would not get out of his purse unless his own hand picked it up. The Devil was now trapped by him. He was squealing and screaming. But he didn't get out of the purse.*

*The blacksmith pulverised the purse on the anvil. Then he threw it into the fire.*

*With the death of the Devil, matters started to go against the blacksmith. His livestock were dying. He had hidden gold and silver in kists and pits. But, when*

Tha mi a' dol a chur crìoch air an stòiridh – 'An Gobha agus an Droch Fhear' – a tha a' mìneachadh mar a thàinig an Teine Mòr, no Teine Sionnachain, gu bith.

'Tha iad ag ràdh,' thuirt an gobha ris an Droch Fhear, 'gun tèid agadsa air thu fhèin a chur ann an riochd sam bith a thogras tu.'

'Tha sin fìor,' ars an Droch Fhear.

'Uill,' thuirt an gobha, 'cuir thu fhèin ann an riochd bonn airgid.'

Chuir an Droch Fhear e fhèin ann an riochd bonn airgid. Thog an gobha am bonn. Chuir e na sporan e. B' e an treas iarrtas aige air an t-seann duine liath nach fhaigheadh bonn a-mach às an sporan aige ach a-mhàin nan togadh a làmh fhèin e. Bha an Droch Fhear a-nise an sàs aige. Bha e a' sgreadail 's a' sgreuchail. Ach cha d' fhuair e a-mach às an sporan.

Phronn an gobha an sporan air an innean. Thilg e an uair sin don teine e.

Le bàs an Droch Fhair, thòisich cùisean air a dhol an aghaidh a' ghobha. Bha an sprèidh aige a' faighinn bàs. Bha e air òr is airgead a chur ann an cisteachan is sluic. Ach, nuair a

*he opened the kists and pits, there was nothing in them except horse dung!*

*Matters went against his family as well. His wife died. The blacksmith was going from door to door, seeking alms. He had no friends. Eventually, he was found dead in a ruined building. The people were not willing to put his body in a cemetery. They threw his body in a pit near the river.*

*When he departed the world, he went directly to the bad place. The Devil was waiting for him at the door. 'I won't accept you in,' he said. 'I'll make a fire in your chest. You will move without cease. You'll have no rest. You will be an object of hatred to yourself. You will be an object of fear to every living creature.' And that's how the will-o'-the-wisp came into being.*

dh'fhosgail e na cisteachan 's na sluic, cha robh annta ach buachar eich!

Chaidh cùisean an aghaidh a theaghlaich cuideachd. Dh'eug a bhean. Bha an gobha a' falbh o dhoras gu doras, ag iarraidh na dèirce. Bha e gun charaid. Mu dheireadh, fhuaradh marbh e ann an seann tobhta. Cha robh na daoine deònach a chorp a chur ann an cladh. Thilg iad a chorp ann an sloc faisg air an abhainn.

Nuair a dh'fhàg e an saoghal, chaidh e gu dìreach a dh'ionnsaigh an droch àite. Bha an Droch Fhear a' feitheamh ris aig an doras. 'Cha ghabh mise a-steach thu,' thuir e. 'Cuiridh mi teine nad bhroilleach. Bidh thu a' gluasad gu sìorraidh. Cha bhi fois agad. Bidh thu nad chulaidh-ghràin dhut fhèin. Bidh thu nad chulaidh-eagail do gach creutair beò. Agus 's ann mar sin a thàinig an Teine Mòr gu bith.