

# **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 540 (which corresponds to Litir 844). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*North of Kirkmichael, in Strathardle, there is a village called Dalnagairn or Dail nan Càrn. There are, or were, cairns there. One of them was Càrn na Baoibh. A baobh is a bad witch.*

*The people were blaming a witch for a great death among the area's cattle. But she was invisible. She was giving people a slap. And people were thinking it was the person next to them that did it. The matter would often come to blows. The people of Strathardle were completely fed up of the witch.*

*One Sunday, the priest was late going to the church. A tailor was playing with scissors. He looked through the finger holes. He saw the witch in the congregation.*

*After the service, the tailor went to the priest. The priest asked him not to say anything, but to return to the church the next Sunday, bringing his scissors.*

*But the tailor couldn't keep the matter secret. His wife got the news from him. It wasn't long until it was on everybody's lips. In revenge, the witch destroyed more cattle.*

Gu tuath air Cill Mhìcheil, ann an Srath Àrdail, tha baile beag ris an canar Dalnagairn no Dail nan Càrn. Tha, no bha, cùirn ann. B' e fear dhiubh Càrn na Baoibh. 'S e baobh droch bhana-bhuidseach.

Bha daoine a' coireachadh baobh airson bàs mòr aig crodh na sgìre. Ach bha i do-fhaicsinneach. Bha i a' toirt sgleog do dhaoine. Agus bha na daoine dhen bheachd gur e am fear no tè rin taobh a rinn e. Bhiodh an gnothach gu tric a' tighinn gu dùirn. Bha muinntir Shrath Àrdail seachd searbh sgìth dhen bhaoibh.

Didòmhnaich a bha seo, bha an sagart fadalach a dhol don eaglais. Bha tàillear a' cluich le siosar. Thug e sùil tro thuill nan corrag. Chunnaic e a' bhaobh anns a' choitheanal.

An dèidh na seirbheis, chaidh an tàillear don t-sagart. Dh'iarr an sagart air gun guth a ràdh, ach a bhith a' tilleadh don eaglais an ath Dhidòmhnaich, agus an siosar aige.

Ach cha b' urrainn don tàillear an gnothach a chumail dìomhair. Fhuair a bhean an naidheachd bhuaithe. Cha b' fhada gus an robh i am beul a' bhaile. Mar dhioghaltas, rinn a' bhaobh sgrios a bharrachd air a' chrodh.

*Surprisingly, the witch was in the congregation on Sunday. The tailor gave the scissors to the priest. He had scissors and a bottle of sacred water. He looked through the scissors and saw the witch.*

*In the sermon he pointed out the witch. She fled. The priest and congregation ran after her. She was invisible to the people. But the priest put [lifted] the scissors to his eyes and she saw her.*

*He poured the sacred water in a circle around the stone. The witch couldn't get out. The people started to pile stones on her. The priest shouted, 'Put [stones] on her, put on her – a stone for every cow!' That's what they did, and she died.*

*Does Càrn na Baoibh still exist? No. A landlord used the stones a long time ago. But, fortunately, the story was recorded by Charles Fergusson who belonged to the area.*

Gu h-annasach, bha a' bhaobh anns a' choitheanal Didòmhnaich. Thug an tàillear an siosar don t-sagart. Bha siosar aige agus botal de dh'uisge coisrigte. Thug e sùil tron t-siosar agus chunnaic e a' bhaobh.

Anns an t-searmon chomharraich e a' bhaobh. Theich i. Ruith an sagart agus an coitheanal às a dèidh. Shuidh a' bhaobh air clach. Bha i do-fhaicsinneach do na daoine. Ach thog an sagart an siosar do a shùilean agus chunnaic e i.

Dhòirt e an t-uisge coisrigte ann an cearcall timcheall na cloiche. Chan fhaigheadh a' bhaobh a-mach. Thòisich na daoine air clachan a chàrnadh oirre. Dh'èigh an sagart, 'Cuiribh oirre, cuiribh oirre – clach airson gach mairt!' 'S e sin a rinn iad, agus fhuair i bàs.

A bheil Càrn na Baoibh ann an-diugh? Chan eil. Chleachd uachdaran na clachan o chionn fhada. Ach, gu fortanach, chaidh an stòiridh a chlàradh le Teàrlach MacFhearghais a bhuineadh don sgìre.