

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 582 (which corresponds to Litir 886). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk.

I'd like to tell you an old story. It goes back to the year 1504. It's about Big Kate of the Nose from Abergeldie in Braemar.

There was a man John Robertson, the Red Baron, living in Straloch in Strathardle. He was courting one of the daughters of the Gordon, the laird of Abergeldie. Every time he went to Abergeldie Castle, there was a dance.

One night when the Red Baron was there, the Gordon said to him that there were none in the universe better at dancing than the men of Mar, except for the angels and fairies. The Red Baron was not pleased to hear this boasting. The wedding day came. He didn't take his cousin with him as best man, as had been expected. He took another man in his place – Sharp Donald – the best dancer in Atholl.

After the wedding, the dance started. Donald kept quiet for a while. He was watching the women who were dancing. He selected the best one – a big, strong woman with a large nose. She was known as Big Kate of the Nose. Like Donald, she

Bu mhath leam seann stòiridh aithris dhuibh. Tha e a' dol air ais don bhliadhna còig ceud deug is ceithir (1504). Tha e mu dheidhinn Ceit Mhòr na Sròine à Obar Gheallaidh ann am Bràigh Mhàrr.

Bha fear Iain MacDonnchaidh, am Baran Ruadh, a' fuireach ann an Srath Loch ann an Srath Àrdail. Bha e a' suirghe le tè de nigheanan a' Ghòrdanaich, uachdaran Obar Gheallaidh. Gach turas a chaidh e a Chaisteal Obar Gheallaidh, bha danns ann.

Aon oidhche a bha am Baran Ruadh ann, thuir an Gòrdanach ris nach robh gin anns an domhan na b' fheàrr air danns na fir Mhàrr, ach a-mhàin na h-ainlean agus na sìthichean. Cha robh am Baran Ruadh toilichte am bòstadh sin a chluinntinn. Thàinig latha na bainnse. Cha tug e leis a cho-ogha mar fhleasgach, mar a bha dùil. Thug e fear eile na àite – Dòmhnall Biorach – an dannsair a b' fheàrr ann an Athall.

An dèidh na bainnse, thòisich an danns. Chùm Dòmhnall sàmhach greis. Bha e a' coimhead air na boireannaich a bha a' dannsadh. Roghnaich e an tè a b' fheàrr – tè mhòr, làidir le sròn mhòr. Bha i aithnichte do dhaoine mar Cheit Mhòr na Sròine. Coltach ri Dòmhnall, cha robh i

was not married.

Donald asked Kate to dance with him. What a great couple they were. Some people were saying that they had never seen such good dancing. The Gordon said to his wife, 'I wish the best man were the bridegroom'.

It's just as well the Red Baron didn't hear that! The men of Mar were angry, however. They decided to trick Sharp Donald. A big man from Mar and Donald were dancing a reel. The men were turning each other with their arms. The big man spun Donald quickly. Suddenly he let go of him. Donald was thrown into the fire.

Donald didn't show at all that he was angry. He jumped into the set again. He was going with the rhythm of the music as if nothing had happened. And what happened then? Well, I'll tell you that next week.

pòsta.

Dh' iarr Dòmhnall air Ceit a dhol a dhannsadh leis. Abair gur e cupall math a bha annta. Bha cuid ag ràdh nach fhaca iad a-riamh dannsadh cho math. Thuirt an Gòrdanach ri a bhean, 'B' fheàrr leam gum b' e am fleasgach fear na bainnse'.

Tha e math nach cuala am Baran Ruadh sin! Bha fir Mhàrr feargach, ge-tà. Chuir iad romhpa an car a thoirt à Dòmhnall Biorach. Bha fear mòr à Màrr agus Dòmhnall a' dannsadh ruidhle. Bha na fir a' tionndadh a chèile len gàirdeanan. Chuir am fear mòr Dòmhnall timcheall gu luath. Gu h-obann leig e dheth e. Chaidh Dòmhnall a thilgeil don teine.

Cha do sheall Dòmhnall idir gun robh fearg air. Leum e a-steach don t-seat a-rithist. Bha e a' dol le ruitheam a' chiùil mar nach robh dad air tachairt. Agus dè thachair an uair sin? Uill, innsidh mi sin dhuibh an-ath-sheachdain.