

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 632 (which corresponds to Litir 936). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was in Lochaber last week. I was in Lundavra, south of Fort William. That's where I still am this week.

On the north shore of Loch Leven is Callert. There is an estate house there called Taigh Challaird or Callert House. West of that, near Onich, is Cuilcheanna. There is an estate house there also, called Taigh Chùil Cheanna or Cuilcheanna House.

Those two houses are very old. They were at one time owned by the Camerons of Callert. I want to tell you about oral tradition connected to that clan. In addition to Callert and Cuilcheanna, they also owned the estate house in Lundavra.

It was the custom for Cameron chiefs to send their sons to school in France. The laird of Lundavra had two legitimate sons. But he also had an illegitimate son – one Angus. He didn't receive an education in France.

While the two legitimate sons were away, Angus grew hopeful that he would get the estate after his father. One day, the laird got news that his two sons were returning from France. He sent Angus to pick them

Bha mi ann an Loch Abar an t-seachdain sa chaidh. Bha mi ann an Lunn Dà Bhrà, deas air a' Ghearasdan. Sin far a bheil mi fhathast an t-seachdain seo.

Air cladach a tuath Loch Lìobhainn, tha Callaird. Tha taigh mòr ann air a bheil Taigh Challaird no *Callert House*. Gu siar air sin, faisg air an Omhanaich, tha Cùil Cheanna. Tha taigh mòr an sin cuideachd, air a bheil Taigh Chùil Cheanna no *Cuilcheanna House*.

Tha an dà thaigh sin gu math sean. Bha iad uaireigin le Camshronaich Challaird. Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu bheul-aithris co-cheangailte ris a' chinneadh sin. A bharrachd air Callaird agus Cùil Cheanna, bha an taigh mòr aca ann an Lunn Dà Bhrà cuideachd.

Bha e na chleachdadh aig cinn-chinnidh nan Camshronach am mic a chur gu sgoil anns an Fhraing. Bha dithis mhac dligheach aig uachdaran Lunn Dà Bhrà. Ach bha mac dìolain aige cuideachd – fear Aonghas. Cha d' fhuair esan foghlam anns an Fhraing.

Fhad 's a bha an dithis mhac dligheach air falbh, dh'fhàs Aonghas dòchasach gum faigheadh esan an oighreachd an dèidh athar. Latha a bha seo, fhuair an t-uachdaran naidheachd gun robh a dhithis mhac a' tilleadh bhon

up. .But Angus was jealous. He murdered the pair. .He buried the bodies in a hollow called 'the hollow of the dead'.

Eventually, people found out that it was Angus who murdered the boys. But the laird didn't expel him from the estate. Angus didn't suffer at all. The local people were certain that they would all be punished sometime on account of that.

After years, the laird died. Because he didn't have a legitimate son, it was one of his brother's or daughter's sons [a nephew] who was the heir. The new laird had five sons and two daughters. One of the daughters was very famous. She was called Mary. Because the Camerons originally came from Callert, people called her Mary of Callert. I'll tell you more about Mary in the next Litir.

Fhraing. Chuir e Aonghas gan iarraidh. Ach bha farmad air Aonghas. Mhuirt e an dithis. Thiodhlaic e an cuirp ann an glac ris an canar Glac nam Marbh.

Tro thìde, fhuair daoine a-mach gur e Aonghas a mhuirt na balaich. Ach cha do chuir an t-uachdaran às an oighreachd e. Cha do dh'fhuiling Aonghas idir. Bha muinntir an àite cinnteach gun tigeadh peanas orra uile uair no uaireigin air sgàth sin.

An dèidh bhliadhnaichean, chaochail an t-uachdaran. Leis nach robh mac dligheach aige, b' e fear de mhic a bhràthar no a phiuthar a bha na oighre. Bha còignear mhac agus dithis nighean aig an uachdaran ùr. Bha tè de na nigheanan gu math ainmeil. 'S e Màiri a bha oirre. Leis gun tàinig na Camshronaich à Callaird bho thùs, 's e Màiri Challaird a bha aig na daoine oirre. Innsidh mi dhuibh tuilleadh mu Mhàiri anns an ath Litir.