

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 738 (which corresponds to Litir 1,042). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about the Big Cave (Raitts Cave) near Kingussie. The MacNivens stole cattle on the land of MacPherson of Cluny. MacPheerson sent his daughter to the MacNivens as a messenger. The MacNivens sent her home without a petticoat and with the stolen bull along with her. The bull had no tongue. That was a challenge to MacPherson. He decided to wreak revenge on the MacNivens.

One of the MacPhersons – loquacious Alasdair – put an armed band together. They attacked the MacNivens. Only eighteen of the MacNivens remained alive the next day. They were hiding in the woods.

They didn't flee the area, however. They created an underground house and they built a farmhouse above it. They stayed there secretly. There was a trapdoor in the kitchen floor. The women sent the men food through the trapdoor.

Loquacious Alasdair suspected that some of the MacNiven men were still alive. But he didn't know where they were. He decided to find out.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun Uaimh Mhòir faisg air Ceann a' Ghiùthsaidh. Thog Clann 'ic Ille Naoimh creach air fearann Mhic a' Phearsain Chluainidh. Chuir Mac a' Phearsain a nighean gu ruige Clann 'ic Ille Naoimh mar theachdaire. Chuir Clann 'ic Ille Naoimh dhachaigh i gun chòta bàn oirre, agus leis an tarbh a ghoid iad na cois. Bha an tarbh gun teanga. Bha sin na dhùbhlán do Mhac a' Phearsain. Chuir esan roimhe dìoghaltas a dhèanamh air Clann 'ic Ille Naoimh.

Chuir fear de Chlann 'ic a' Phearsain – Alasdair Cainnteach – feachd ri chèile. Thug iad ionnsaigh air Clann 'ic Ille Naoimh. Cha robh ach ochd duine deug de Clann 'ic Ille Naoimh fhathast beò an ath mhadainn. Bha iadsan am falach anns na coilltean.

Cha do theich iad às an sgìre, ge-tà. Chruthaich iad taigh fo-thalamh, agus thog iad taigh aig tuathanach os a chionn. Dh'fhuirich iad an sin gu diomhair. Bha doras-bùird ann an ùrlar a' chidsin. Bha na boireannaich a' cur biadh do na fir tron doras.

Bha amharas aig Alasdair Cainnteach gun robh cuid de dh'fhir Clann 'ic Ille Naoimh fhathast beò. Ach cha robh fios aige cà' robh iad. Chuir e roimhe faighinn a-mach.

He disappeared. He let his beard grow. He disguised himself as a beggar. He went to the farmer's house in Raitts. He asked for a night's lodging. When the women tried to get him out of the house, he started to scream. He was pretending that he was suffering from a kidney stone. The women took pity on him. They allowed him to lie in front of the fire in the kitchen.

Alasdair pretended he was asleep. The women opened the trapdoor and sent food down to the men. Alasdair saw them. He left next morning. He put together an armed band. They returned to the farmer's house. They found the men under the floor. And they killed them.

The farmer's house must have been dismantled. All that is left is the Big Cave itself.

Dh'fhalbh e à fianais. Leig e le fheusag fàs. Chuir e e fhèin ann an riochd diol-dèirce. Chaidh e gu taigh an tuathanaich ann an Ràt. Dh'iarr e cuid na h-oidhche. Nuair a dh'fheuch na boireannaich ri a chur a-mach às an taigh, thòisich e air sgreuchail. Bha e a' cumail a-mach gun robh e a' fulang leis a' chloich-fhuaile no *kidney stone*. Ghabh na boireannaich truas ris. Leig iad leis laighe air beulaibh an teine anns a' chidsin.

Thug Alasdair a' chreidsinn gun robh e na chadal. Dh'fhosgail na boireannaich an doras-bùird agus chuir iad biadh sìos do na fir. Chunnaic Alasdair iad. Dh'fhalbh e an ath mhadainn. Chuir e feachd ri chèile. Thill iad gu taigh an tuathanaich. Lorg iad na fir fon ùrlar. Agus mharbh iad iad.

Feumaidh gun deach taigh an tuathanaich a leagail. Chan eil sgeul air an-diugh. Chan eil air fhàgail ach an Uamh Mhòr fhèin.