

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 739 (which corresponds to Litir 1,043). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

Were you ever at Loch Garten in Strathspey? It's one of the best places in Scotland to see the osprey. It's beautiful, surrounded on all sides by pine forest.

It was said at one time that a supernatural creature was living in the woods around the loch. The local people called in 'The Bodach'. They would hear the Bodach during the night. He would call and cry.

One Donald MacPherson from Tulloch was among those who gave us an account of the Bodach. He would meet with friends in Tulloch every week to play cards and to take a dram or two.

One particular night, they were playing cards. But they had run out of whisky. Donald was younger than the others. He was asked to go to a bothy for more whisky. Donald went there, and started on the way back.

The night was calm. Donald didn't have a lantern, but it was enough for him to see his way. He reached a hollow where juniper bushes were growing. He heard a sound like a horse trying to rise to its

An robh sibh riamh aig Loch a' Ghartain ann an Srath Spè? 'S e fear de na h-àiteachan as fheàrr ann an Alba airson an iolair-uisge fhaicinn. Tha e brèagha, le coille-ghiuthais ceithir-timcheall air.

Bhathar ag ràdh aig aon àm gun robh creutair os-nàdarrach a' fuireach anns na coilltean timcheall an locha. 'S e 'Am Bodach' a chanadh muinntir an àite ris. Bhiodh iad a' cluinntinn a' Bhodaich air an oidhche. Bhiodh e a' glaothaich is a' caoidh.

Bha fear Dòmhnall Mac a' Phearsain às an Tulach am measg na feadhainn a thug cunntas dhuinn air a' Bhodach. Bhiodh e a' coinneachadh ri caraidean air an Tulach a h-uile seachdain airson cairtean a chluich, agus drama no dhà a ghabhail.

Oidhche a bha seo, bha iad a' cluich chairtean. Ach cha robh uisge-beatha air fhàgail aca. Bha Dòmhnall na b' òige na càch. Chaidh iarraidh air falbh gu bothan airson tuilleadh uisge-bheatha. Chaidh Dòmhnall ann, agus thòisich e air an rathad air ais.

Bha an oidhche ciùin. Cha robh lòchran aig Dòmhnall, ach bha e furasta gu leòr dha a shlighe fhaicinn. Ràinig e glac far an robh preasan aitinn a' fàs. Chuala e fuaim coltach ri each a bha a' feuchainn ri èirigh gu a chasan. An uair sin, chuala e nàdar de

feet. Then he heard a sort of screech . It was as if the horse was afraid.

Donald looked around. There was no sign of a horse. His friends had heard nothing. He didn't tell them anything.

At three o' clock in the morning, the meeting came to a close. Donald's home was on a different road from the others. He was walking alone. Suddenly a white, luminous thing appeared in front of him.

Donald didn't want to continue and he didn't want to return to the place he had come from. So he left the road. He walked home across the heather (moor). And he heard the same frightening scream he heard when he was getting the whisky. Now he was scared. But what did he do? I'll tell you in the next Litir.

sgread. Bha e mar gun robh an t-eagal air an each.

Thug Dòmhnall sùil mun chuairt. Cha robh sgeul air each. Thill e don taigh. Cha robh a charaidean air càil a chluinntinn. Cha do dh'inns e dad dhaibh.

Aig trì uairean sa mhadainn, thàinig an cèilidh gu ceann. Bha dachaigh Dhòmhnail air rathad eadar-dhealaichte bho chàch. Bha e a' coiseachd leis fhèin. Gu h-obann, nochd rudeigin geal, solasach air a bheulaibh.

Cha robh Dòmhnall airson leantainn air agus cha robh e airson tilleadh don àite às an tàinig e. Mar sin, dh'fhàg e an rathad. Choisich e dhachaigh thar an fhraoich. Agus chuala e an aon sgreuch eagallach a chuala e nuair a bha e a' faighinn an uisge-bheatha. Anise, bha eagal air. Ach dè rinn e? Innsidh mi dhuibh anns an ath Litir.