

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 772 (which corresponds to Litir 1,076). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I'll bring the story The Raven's Stone to a conclusion. You'll remember that it was a magic stone. If it were in somebody's mouth, that person would be invisible. To be visible again, the person would put the stone in his pocket.

Lady Mackintosh appeared in Balnacraig at the head of a [military] force. She was wanting to take Helen home. Helen was courting with Fair John from Balnacraig.

But Helen refused to go with her aunt. And Fair John's father refused to surrender her. Lady Mackintosh ordered her men to attack the house where Helen was. There was a battle.

John gave Helen the Raven's Stone. In the fighting, he was badly wounded. Helen came to him. 'I swallowed the stone by mistake,' she admitted.

'Oh dear,' said Fair John. 'You'll never be seen again, Helen. My final request is to be buried in the wood where we met each other.' And he died.

Helen picked up John's bow and started to kill her aunt's men. The

Bheir mi an sgeulachd *Clach an Fhithich* gu crìch. Bidh cuimhne agaibh gur e clach dhraoidheil a bh' innte. Nam biodh i ann am beul cuideigin, bhiodh an neach sin do-fhaicsinneach. Airson a bhith faicsinneach a-rithist, bhiodh an neach a' cur na cloiche na phòcaid.

Nochd a' Bhean-usal Nic an Tòisich ann am Baile na Creige aig ceann feachd. Bha i ag iarraidh Eilidh a thoirt dhachaigh. Bha Eilidh a' suirghe le Iain Bàn à Baile na Creige.

Ach dhiùlt Eilidh a dhol còmhla ri a h-antaidh. Agus dhiùlt athair Iain Bhàin a thoirt seachad. Thug a' Bhean-usal Nic an Tòisich seachad òrdugh do na daoine aice ionnsaigh a thoirt air an taigh anns an robh Eilidh. Bha cath ann.

Thug Iain Clach an Fhithich gu Eilidh. Anns an t-sabaid, chaidh a leòn gu dona. Thàinig Eilidh thuige. 'Shluig mi a' chlach le mearachd,' dh'aidich i.

'Obh obh,' ars Iain Bàn. 'Chan fhaicear tuilleadh thu, Eilidh. 'S e m' iarrtas mu dheireadh a bhith air mo thiodhlacadh anns a' choille far an do choinnich sinn ri chèile.' Agus chaochail e.

Thog Eilidh bogha Iain agus thòisich i air fir a h-antaidh a mharbhadh. Cha d'

only ones that escaped with their lives were the Lady and two men.

John was buried by his father and his brother-in-law, Calum, in the wood. Helen was also present, but nobody else saw her.

John's father farewelled his son. 'May your soul be at eternal rest,' he said.

Then the two of them heard Helen's voice. 'John, my love, I'm going to lie with you forever.' There was a noise like a body falling into a grave. Calum saw a bloody dirk on the ground at his feet.

'I knew,' said the old man, 'that there would be suffering if the Raven's Stone were used with evil intent.'

The pair filled in the grave but they didn't mark it in any way. It's reported, from time to time on a summer's afternoon in that wood – to this very day – that a woman's voice will be heard, lamenting and wailing.

fhuaire às lem beatha ach a' Bhean-uasal fhèin agus dithis fhear.

Chaidh Iain a thiodhlacadh le athair agus le a bhràthair-chèile, Calum, anns a' choille. Bha Eilidh an làthair cuideachd, ach chan fhaca duine eile i.

Dh'fhàg athair Iain beannachd aig a' ghille aige. 'Fois sìorraidh aig d' anam,' thuirt e.

An uair sin, chuala an dithis guth Eilidh. 'Iain, a ghràidh, tha mi a' dol a laighe còmhla riut ann an sìorraidheachd.' Bha fuaim ann coltach ri corp a' tuiteam gu uaigh. Chunnaic Calum biodag le fuil oirre air an talamh aig a chasan.

'Bha fhios agam,' ars am bodach, 'gun tigeadh fulangas nam biodh Clach an Fhithich air a cur gu feum le droch rùn.'

Lion an dithis an uaigh, ach cha do chuir iad comharra sam bith oirre. A rèir aithris, bho àm gu àm air feasgar samhraidh anns a' choille sin – chun an latha an-diugh – cluinnear guth boireannaich, agus i a' caoidh 's a' caoineadh.