

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 825 (which corresponds to Litir 1,129). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

Have you heard of Boleskine House? Boleskine House. It's near Foyers on Loch Ness-side. If you have, perhaps it was in connection with Aleister Crowley. Crowley was a strange man. He was involved in 'witchcraft'. We'll come to him yet.

I want to tell you about Boleskine itself. There must have been a bothy there at one time. It was connected to fleasgan – withes or rods – perhaps of willow or a tree of that type. Was the bothy built of withes? Or were people collecting withes in the wood there?

The parish of Boleskine was established in the 13th century. A church was built there around that time. There was a cemetery connected to it. A story is told of a minister in the 17th century. He had to put the bodies back in their graves. That was after a wizard had brought the dead to life! Boleskine has a long history of witchcraft!

According to oral tradition, the church was burned down while a congregation was inside it.

An cuala sibh riamh mu Thaigh Bhoth Fhleisginn? Boleskine House. Tha e faisg air Foidhir, taobh Loch Nis. Ma chuala, 's dòcha gun robh e ann an co-cheangal ri Aleister Crowley. 'S e fear annasach a bha ann an Crowley. Bha e an sàs ann am 'buidseachd'. Thig sinn thuige fhathast.

Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu Bhoth Fhleisginn fhèin. Feumaidh gun robh both no bothan ann uaireigin. Bha e co-cheangailte ri fleasgan – gadan no slatan – 's dòcha de sheileach no craobh dhen t-seòrsa sin. An robh am bothan air a thogail de fhleasgan? No an robh daoine a' cruinneachadh fhleasgan anns a' choille an sin?

Chaidh paraiste Bhoth Fhleisginn a chur air chois anns an treas linn deug. Chaidh eaglais a thogail ann mun àm sin. Bha cladh co-cheangailte rithe. Thathar ag innse stòiridh mu mhinistear anns an t-seachdamh linn deug. B' fheudar dha na cuirp a chur air ais do na h-uaignean aca. Bha sin às dèidh do bhuidseach na mairbh a dhèanamh beò! Tha eachdraidh fhada de bhuidseachd aig Both Fhleisginn!

A rèir beul-aithris, chaidh an eaglais na smàl nuair a bha coitheanal na broinn. Chaidh mòran daoine a mharbhadh. Cha deach an eaglais a

Many people were killed. The church was not built again. Boleskine House was built in its place. That could be correct, because the house is opposite the cemetery.

The most powerful clan in Boleskine was the Frasers. They were connected to the Frasers of Lovat who were based near Beauly. Some of the Frasers were strong Jacobites. They rose in the Prince's cause. Their estate house in Erchite, beside Loch Ness, was destroyed following the Battle of Culloden.

Their clan chief, Lord Lovat ('The Old Fox'), was put to death in London in 1747. Bit by bit, the Frasers of Lovat retrieved their place among the British gentry. One of the sons of the Old Fox was Archibald Campbell Fraser. He built Boleskine House, as we shall hear next week.

thogail a-rithist. Chaidh Taigh Bhoth Fhleisginn a thogail na h-àite. Dh'fhaodadh sin a bhith ceart, oir tha an taigh mu choinneimh a' chladha.

B' e an cinneadh a bu chumhachdaiche ann am Both Fhleisginn na Frisealaich. Bha iad co-cheangailte ri Clann 'ic Shimidh a bha stèidhichte faisg air a' Mhanachainn. Bha cuid de na Frisealaich nan Seumasaich làidir. Dh'èirich iad ann an adhbhar a' Phrionnsa. Chaidh an taigh mòr aca ann an Eircheid, taobh Loch Nis, a sgrios an dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair.

Chaidh an ceann-cinnidh, am Morair Mac Shimidh ('An Seann Mhadadh'), a chur gu bàs ann an Lunnainn ann an seachd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a seachd (1747). Mean air mhean, fhuair Clann 'ic Shimidh an àite air ais am measg uaislean Bhreatainn. B' e Gilleasbaig Caimbeul Friseal fear de na gillean aig an t-Seann Mhadadh. Thog esan Taigh Bhoth Fhleisginn, mar a chluinneas sinn an-ath-sheachdain.