

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 852 (which corresponds to Litir 1,156). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

In the year 1715, the Jacobites started a rebellion. In Strathardle in Perthshire, the banner was raised at Kirkmichael. Hundreds of people were present.

There was a strong wind. There was a golden ball on the top of the flagpole. And it fell to the ground with the wind. Some people were of the opinion that that was a bad omen.

But the Laird of Ashintully did not agree. 'Disregard that,' he said. 'Nothing but good things ever came from above.' It's certain that he was thinking of God and Heaven.

Some people remembered that saying. It appeared again in 1826. In that year, the weather was extremely cold. Snow was lying all winter long. The poor people were suffering. And there was no good growth in summer. People were remembering that year as 'the year of the short corn'.

There was a certain man in Strathardle. He was an honest man. He had a young family. They were always hungry.

There was a wealthy farmer living next door. He had a pit full of potatoes. But he wasn't willing to sell

Ann a' bhliadhna seachd ceud deug 's a còig-deug (1715), thòisich na Seumasaich ar-a-mach. Ann an Srath Àrdail ann an Siorrachd Pheairt, thogadh a' bhratach ann an Cill Mhìcheil. Bha na ceudan an làthair.

Bha gaoth làidir ann. Bha ball òir air mullach a' bhrat-chrainn. Agus thuit e gu làr leis a' ghaoith. Bha cuid dhen bheachd gur e droch chomharra a bha ann.

Ach cha robh Tighearna Eas an Tulaich ag aontachadh. 'Coma leibh sin,' thuirt e. 'Cha tàinig ach rud math riamh bho gu h-àrd.' Is cinnteach gun robh e a' smaoinichadh air Dia agus Nèamh.

Chuimhnich feadhainn an abairt sin. Thàinig i am bàrr a-rithist ann an ochd ceud deug, fichead 's a sia (1826). Anns a' bhliadhna sin, bha an aimsir cianail fuar. Bha sneachd na laighe fad a' gheamhraidh. Bha na daoine bochda a' fulang. Agus cha robh fàs math ann as t-samhradh. Bha cuimhne aig daoine air a' bhliadhna sin mar 'Bliadhna a' Bhàrr Ghoirid'.

Bha fear a bha seo ann an Srath Àrdail. 'S e duine onarach a bha ann. Bha teaghlach òg aige. Bha an t-acras orra fad na h-ùine.

Bha tuathanach beartach a' fuireach an ath dhoras. Bha slochd aige a bha làn bhuntàta. Ach cha robh e deònach na

the potatoes. He was waiting until they would command a higher price.

Some people saw how this family was suffering. They wanted to put matters right. At night, they went to the farmer's pit. They filled sacks with potatoes. They went to the house of the poor family.

They didn't want the family to know where the food came from. The house was low, with a thatched roof. The men went on the roof. They looked down the chimney. There was no fire. The family were on their knees, praying for food. The men poured hundreds of potatoes down the chimney.

'Well,' said the man of the house, 'it's true what the Laird of Ashintully said on the day of the banner-raising – that a bad thing never came from above!'

buntàta a reic. Bha e a' feitheamh gus am biodh pris na b' fheàrr orra.

Chunnaic cuid mar a bha an teaghlach seo a' fulang. Bha iad airson gnothaichean a chur ceart. Air an oidhche, chaidh iad gu slochd an tuathanaich. Lion iad pocannan le buntàta. Chaidh iad gu taigh an teaghlaich bho chd.

Cha robh iad airson 's gum biodh fios aig an teaghlach cò às a thàinig am biadh. Bha an taigh ìosal, le mullach tughaidh. Chaidh na daoine air a' mhullach. Thug iad sùil sìos an t-similear. Cha robh teine ann. Bha an teaghlach air an glùinean, ag ùrnaigh airson biadh. Dhòirt na daoine na ceudan bhuntàta sìos an t-similear.

'Uill,' thuirt fear an taighe, 'is fìor na thuirt Tighearna Eas an Tulaich latha togail na brataich – nach tàinig droch rud riamh bho gu h-àrd!'