

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 1,056 (which corresponds to Litir 1,360). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you about oral tradition that the priest, Father Allan, collected. Some of his stories were connected to the second sight or omens. Here is one from Cille Pheadair in South Uist.

John Morrison was playing the bagpipes in his house on a winter's evening. Outside it was blizzarding. Suddenly, the cockerel came down off its roost. It jumped up and down. It was flapping its wings at the piper.

His wife asked John to stop playing. She was of the opinion that the cockerel's behaviour was an omen. Shortly after that, there was a knocking at the door. John went there. The priest had bad news for him. John's brother – Malcolm – had died.

The snow was so deep, and the drifts so wide, that Malcolm went off the road. He was walking on Loch nam Faoileann which was frozen. He fell through the ice. He lost his bodily warmth quickly and he died.

John was not distraught at the news. After how the cockerel had been, John realised, when somebody came to the door, that he would have bad news.

I'll conclude these stories with another account from Father Allan. A young guy - Mac Iain 'ic Fhearchair –

Bha mi innse dhuibh mu bheul-aithris a chruinnich an sagart, Mgr Ailein. Bha cuid de na sgeulachdan aige co-cheangailte ris an dà-shealladh no manaidhean. Seo agaibh fear à Cille Pheadair ann an Uibhist a Deas.

Bha Iain MacIlleMhoire a' seinn na pioba anns an taigh aige air feasgar geamhraidh. Bha cur is cathadh ann a-muigh. Gu h-obann, thàinig an coileach a-nuas bhon spiris aige. Leum e suas is sìos. Bha e a' clapartaich ris a' phìobaire.

Dh'iarr a bhean air Iain sgur a sheinn. Bha i dhen bheachd gur e manadh a bha ann an giùlan a' choilich. Goirid an dèidh sin, bha gnogadh air an doras. Chaidh Iain ann. Bha droch naidheachd aig an t-sagart dha. Bha bràthair Iain – Calum – air bàs fhaighinn.

Bha an sneachd cho domhainn, agus na cathaidhean cho farsaing, 's gun deach Calum far an rathaid. Bha e a' coiseachd air Loch nam Faoileann a bha reòite. Thuit e tron deigh. Chaill e teas a bhodhaig gu luath agus chaochail e.

Cha robh Iain troimhe-chèile mun naidheachd. Leis mar a bha an coileach, bha beachd aig Iain, nuair a thàinig cuideigin don doras, gum biodh droch naidheachd aige.

Cuiridh mi crìoch air na sgeulachdan seo le cunntas eile aig Mgr Ailein. Bha fear òg – Mac Iain 'ic

<p><i>was living by Loch Aineort. A young lass, Oighrig, was living in the same village. Father Allan must have obtained the story from Oighrig herself. It happened when she was about thirteen years of age.</i></p> <p><i>One day, Mac Iain 'ic Fhearchair left Oighrig's house. He went to fish in a burn. That night, Oighrig and her mother were at home. They were carding wool. Her mother saw a candle-light go past her. It went to the end of the house.</i></p> <p><i>She reckoned that the light signified something. Next day, the brother of the lad who had gone fishing came to Oighrig's house. He said that his brother had been found dead beside the burn where he was fishing.</i></p>	<p>Fhearchair – a' fuireach ri taobh Loch Aineort. Bha tè òg, Oighrig, a' fuireach anns an aon bhaile. Feumaidh gun d' fhuair Mgr Ailein an sgeul bho Oighrig fhèin. Thachair e nuair a bha i mu thrì bliadhn' deug a dh'aois.</p> <p>Latha a bha seo, dh'fhàg Mac Iain 'ic Fhearchair taigh Oighrig. Chaidh e a dh'iasgach ann an allt. Air an oidhche sin, bha Oighrig agus a' màthair a-staigh. Bha iad a' càrdadh clòimhe. Chunnaic a màthair solas coinnle a' dol seachad oirre. Chaidh e gu ceann an taighe.</p> <p>Bha ise dhen bheachd gun robh an solas na chomharra de rudeigin. An ath latha, thàinig bràthair a' ghille a bh' air a dhol a dh'iasgach gu taigh Oighrig. Thuirt e gun robh a bhràthair air a lorg marbh ri taobh an uillt far an robh e ag iasgach.</p>
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