

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 1,070 (which corresponds to Litir 1,374). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Dunadd is a famous rocky outcrop between Lochgilphead and Kilmartin in Argyll. I'd like to tell you about a farmer from that area a long time ago.

He had the second sight. He was having dreams that were annoying him. One night, he was in bed. Beside the fire in the room a container of milk was warming.

A gang of fairies came in. They had a changeling. They were looking for water to clean the baby. There was no water in the room. So the fairies used the cream from the milk container.

The fairies didn't realise how time was running (out). A cockerel was heard crowing. The fairies had to return to their fairy hillock. They were in a hurry, and they left a wee bag behind.

When the farmer arose, he poured the milk out onto the grass. His dogs drank the cream. They fell dead.

The farmer opened the bag. He discovered something strange inside it. There was a small stone arrow of the type called a 'mysterious arrow' – in English an 'elf-arrow'. Also in the bag there was a small bowl in which the fairies would make porridge. And there

Tha Dùn Ad na chreag ainmeil eadar Ceann Loch Gilp agus Cill Mhàrtainn ann an Earra-Ghàidheal. Bu toigh leam innse dhuibh mu thuathanach às an sgìre sin o chionn fhada.

Bha an dà-shealladh aige. Bha e a' faighinn aislingean a bha a' cur dragh air. Oidhche a bha seo, bha e san leabaidh. Ri taobh an teine san t-seòmar bha soitheach bainne a' blàthachadh.

Thàinig gràisg de shìthichean a-steach. Bha tàcharan aca. Bha iad a' sireadh uisge airson an leanabh a ghlanadh. Cha robh uisge anns an t-seòmar. Mar sin, chleachd na sìthichean am bàrr bhon t-soitheach bhainne.

Cha do thuig na sìthichean mar a bha an ùine a' ruith. Chualas coileach a' gairm. Bha aig na sìthichean ri tilleadh don t-sithean aca. Bha cabhag orra agus dh'fhàg iad poca beag às an dèidh.

Nuair a dh'èirich an tuathanach, dhòirt e am bainne a-mach air an fheur. Dh'òl na coin aige am bàrr. Thuit iad marbh.

Dh'fhosgail an tuathanach am poca. Lorg e rudan annasach na bhroinn. Bha saighead bheag chloiche ann dhen t-seòrsa ris an canar *saighead sionn* – ann am Beurla *elf-arrow*. Cuideachd anns a' phoca, bha bobhla beag anns am biodh na sìthichean a' dèanamh lite. Agus bha buill-

<i>were stone balls there. The balls would be put in a pail of water, and the water would be given to cattle that were ill. They would get better.</i> <i>According to oral tradition, the farmer's descendants kept the fairies' things. Who knows that they don't still have them. And the fairies? Well, who would say they are not still in the fairy hillock?!</i> <i>There are many amazing things around Dunadd. There was a fortress there that was a prime base for the kings of the old kingdom of Dalriada. And there is a famous footprint in the rock. According to oral tradition, the kings were married to the land by placing a foot in it.</i> <i>But who created the footprint? Well, it is said that it was the hero, Oisean (Ossian). He was hunting, and a stag attacked him. Oisean leapt high and his foot came down on the rock. He left the footprint we can see today.</i>	chloiche ann. Bhiodh na buill air an cur ann an cumann uisge, agus bhiodh an t-uisge air a thoirt do chrodh a bha tinn. Thigeadh piseach orra. A rèir beul-aithris, chùm sliochd an tuathanaich na rudan aig na sìthichean. Cò aige tha fios nach eil iad aca fhathast. Agus na sìthichean? Uill, cò chanadh nach eil iad anns an t-sìthean fhathast?! Tha tòrr rudan iongantach timcheall Dhùn Ad. Bha daingneach ann a bha na phrìomh àros aig rìghrean seann rìoghachd Dhal Riata. Agus tha lorg-coise ainmeil anns a' chreig. A rèir beul-aithris, bha na rìghrean air am pòsadh don talamh le bhith a' cur cas ann. Ach cò chruthaich an lorg-coise? Uill, thathar ag ràdh gur e an gaisgeach, Oisean, a bha ann. Bha e a' sealg agus thug damh ionnsaigh air. Leum Oisean gu h-àrd agus thàinig a chas sìos air a' chreig. Dh'fhàg e an lorg-coise a chì sinn an-diugh.
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