

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 266 (which corresponds to Litir 570). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Amulree is a village in Perthshire. Close by, there is Glen Quaich. In the glen there is Loch Freuchie. How did the loch get its name? Is it connected to the plant – heather? Well, no, according to oral tradition.

Fraoch is a man's name. He was a hero. There was once a woman in the area. Her name was Maoidh. She fell madly in love with Fraoch. He was the handsomest of the Fingalians. Maoidh had a daughter. Her name was Aoirlinn. She was extremely beautiful. Fraoch gave his love to Aoirlinn. They married. But Maoidh was angry. She was going to kill Fraoch.

Maoidh became ill. There was only one thing would make her better. As she herself said: "... the rowan of the cold island, with no man plucking it but Fraoch." The Eilean Fuar was an island in the loch. On the island there was a rowan tree. Nobody could go near the tree. There was a large beast living at its base.

But Fraoch was confident and heroic. He swam to the island. He found the rowan tree. The beast was asleep. Fraoch took with him

'S e Àth Maol Ruibhe baile beag ann an Siorrachd Pheairt. Faisg air, tha Gleann Cuaich. Anns a' ghleann tha Loch Fraochaidh. Ciamar a fhuair an loch ainm? A bheil e co-cheangailte ris an lus – fraoch? Uill, chan eil, a rèir beul-aithris.

'S e Fraoch ainm aig fear. 'S e gaisgeach a bha ann. Bha boireannach uaireigin anns an sgìre. 'S e Maoidh an t-ainm a bha oirre. Ghabh i trom ghaol air Fraoch. B' esan am fear a bu mhaisiche san Fhèinn. Bha nighean aig Maoidh. 'S e Aoirlinn an t-ainm a bha oirre. Bha i air leth maiseach. Thug Fraoch a ghràdh do dh'Aoirlinn. Phòs iad. Ach bha Maoidh feargach. Bha i a' dol a chur às do Fhraoch.

Dh'fhàs Maoidh tinn. Bha dìreach aon rud a dhèanadh i nas fheàrr. Mar a thuirt i fhèin e: "... caorann an Eilein Fhuair, 's gun duine ga bhuaic ach Fraoch." B' e an t-Eilean Fuar eilean anns an loch. Anns an eilean bha craobh-chaorainn. Cha b' urrainn do dhuine dhol faisg air a' chraoibh. Bha biast mhòr a' fuireach aig a bonn.

Ach bha Fraoch misneachail is gaisgeanta. Shnàimh e don eilean. Lorg e a' chraobh-chaorainn. Bha a' bhiast na

branches from the tree. He gave them to Maoidh.

Maoidh was hoping that the beast would kill Fraoch. When she saw the rowan branch, she wasn't pleased. She said to Fraoch that she wasn't satisfied. She was wanting the whole tree.

Fraoch returned to the island. The beast was slumbering at the base of the tree. Fraoch plucked the rowan tree from the ground. And he left with it. But the beast awoke. It attacked Fraoch. Fraoch had no knife. He and the beast wrestled. They fell dead together on the shore. The hero's name was given to the loch. People still call it Loch Fraochaidh.

cadal. Thug Fraoch leis geugan bhon chraoibh. Thug e do Mhaoidh iad.

Bha Maoidh an dòchas gun cuireadh a' bhiast às do Fhraoch. Nuair a chunnaic i an geug caorainn, cha robh i toilichte. Thuir i ri Fraoch nach robh i sàsaichte. Bha i ag iarraidh na craoibhe gu lèir.

Thill Fraoch don eilean. Bha a' bhiast na suain aig bonn na craoibhe. Spion Fraoch a' chraobh-chaorainn às an talamh. Agus dh'fhalbh e leatha. Ach dhùisg a' bhiast. Thug i ionnsaigh air Fraoch. Cha robh sgian aig Fraoch. Ghleac e fhèin is a' bhiast. Thuit iad le chèile marbh air a' chladach. Chaidh ainm a' ghaisgich a thoirt don loch. Canaidh daoine Loch Fraochaidh ris fhathast.