

## **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 322 (which corresponds to Litir 626). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*I was telling you about MacGregor's Leap. Gregor MacGregor jumped over it in the sixteenth century. There was another man who tried to do the same thing. He was an acrobat. But he didn't succeed. He lost his life.*

*I went up the glen from MacGregor's Leap. The glen gets bare and open. I reached Loch Lyon and the end of the road. Then I was walking. I was going to Taigh nam Bodach.*

*That's what the place is named on the map. But some name it Taigh na Cailliche. It's next to Allt Cailliche and in Gleann Cailliche. And there is a "bodach" and "cailleach" living there!*

*Taigh nam Bodach is a small, low building. It's made of stone, wood and turf. It's about two metres long, one a half metres in width and around half a metre in height. The house is open to [facing] the east.*

*There are eight stones in the house. Three of the stones are named The Old Man, The Old Woman and The Daughter.*

*I said the stones are in the*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Leum MhicGriogair ann an Gleann Lìomhann. Leum Griogair MacGriogair thairis air anns an t-siathamh linn deug. Bha fear eile ann a dh'fheuch ris an aon rud a dhèanamh. 'S e teud-chleasaiche, no acrobat, a bha ann. Ach cha deach leis. Chaill e a bheatha.

Chaidh mi suas an gleann bho Leum MhicGriogair. Tha an gleann a' fàs maol agus fosgailte. Ràinig mi Loch Lìomhann agus ceann an rathaid. An uair sin bha mi a' coiseachd. Bha mi a' dol gu Taigh nam Bodach.

'S e sin an t-ainm a tha air an àite air a' mhapa. Ach bidh cuid ga ainmeachadh mar Taigh na Cailliche. Tha e ri taobh Allt Cailliche ann an Gleann Cailliche. Agus tha "bodach" is "cailleach" a' fuireach ann!

'S e a tha ann an Taigh nam Bodach togalach beag ìosal. Tha e air a dhèanamh de chlach, fiodh agus sgrathan. Tha e mu dhà mheatair a dh'fhaid, meatair gu leth ann an leud agus timcheall air leth-mheatair ann an àirde. Tha an taigh fosgailte don àird an ear.

Tha ochd clachan anns an taigh. Tha trì de na clachan ainmichte mar Am Bodach, A' Chailleach is An Nighean.

Thuir mi gu bheil na clachan

*house. But that's not true for the whole year. They are inside it in the winter. They are taken out at Beltane time every year. That's at the beginning of summer. They are put in a circle in front of the house.*

*At Halloween time they are put inside again for the winter. The old people were believing that the Bodach and Cailleach would protect their livestock. If the livestock were safe, the people would be safe.*

*You'll be thinking – paganism must survive in Glenlyon. I don't know about that. But perhaps the custom goes back to pagan times. If that's true, perhaps Taigh nam Bodach is among the oldest pagan sites in Britain.*

anns an taigh. Ach chan eil sin fìor fad na bliadhna. Tha iad na bhroinn anns a' gheamhradh. Tha iad air an toirt a-mach aig àm na Bealltainn gach bliadhna. Tha sin aig toiseach an t-samhraidh. Tha iad air an cur ann an cearcall air beulaibh an taighe.

Aig àm na Samhna tha iad air an cur a-steach a-rithist airson a' gheamhraidh. Bha na seann daoine a' creidsinn gun cumadh am Bodach 's a' Chailleach dìon air an sprèidh aca. Nam biodh an sprèidh sàbhailte, bhiodh na daoine sàbhailte.

Bidh sibh a' smaoinichadh – feumaidh gu bheil pàganachd fhathast beò ann an Gleann Lìomhann. Chan eil fhios a'm mu dheidhinn sin. Ach 's dòcha gu bheil an cleachdadh a' dol air ais gu linn na pàganachd. Ma tha sin fìor, 's dòcha gu bheil Taigh nam Bodach am measg nan làraichean pàganach as sine ann am Breatainn.