

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 336 (which corresponds to Litir 640). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk.

Duncan MacRae from Isle Ewe was out with the Prince in the 1745-6 Jacobite rebellion. He was loyal to Charles Edward Stuart. After the Battle of Culloden, he received gold from Jacobites in France. He was going to give the gold to the Prince. The Prince was hiding from the redcoat soldiers. But it was dangerous for him to have the gold. Duncan hid the pot with the gold in the Feadan Mòr near Locha Druing.

But he didn't put the pot deep below the ground. He put it out of sight because he had the seun [charm]. He made the pot invisible. But a seun like that doesn't work all the time. Every seven years, on one day, the object that was invisible becomes visible again. Only for a short time.

Around the year 1826, the pot was seen again. The wife of Roddy MacKenzie, "the big shepherd" from Locha Druing, was gathering cattle in the Feadan Mòr. She was using a distaff. She saw the pot that was full of gold on the ground. She stuck the distaff into the ground next to the pot. She ran down to Locha Druing. She was wanting to get help. When she returned to the Feadan

Bha Donnchadh MacRath à Eilean Iùbh a-muigh cuide ris a' Phrionnsa ann am Bliadhna Theàrlaich. Bha e dìleas do Theàrlach Òg. Às dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair, fhuair e òr bho Sheumasaich anns an Fhraing. Bha e a' dol a thoirt an òir don Phrionnsa. Bha am Prionnsa am falach bho na saighdearan dearga. Ach bha e cunnartach an t-òr a bhith aige. Chuir Donnchadh a' phoit leis an òr am falach anns an Fheadan Mhòr faisg air Locha Druing.

Ach cha do chuir e a' phoit fada fon talamh. Chuir e a-mach à sealladh i oir bha an seun aige. Rinn e a' phoit do-fhaicsinneach. Ach chan eil seun mar sin ag obair fad na h-ùine. A h-uile seachd bliadhna, air aon latha, bidh an rud, a bha do-fhaicsinneach, faicsinneach a-rithist. Dìreach airson uine bheag.

Timcheall na bliadhna ochd ceud deug, fichead 's a sia (1826), chunnacas a' phoit a-rithist. Bha bean Ruairidh MhicCoinnich, "An Cìobair Mòr" à Locha Druing, a' tional a' chruidh anns an Fheadan Mhòr. Bha i a' cleachdadh cuigeal. Chunnaic i a' phoit a bha làn òir air an talamh. Stob i a' chuigeal a-steach don talamh ri taobh na poite. Ruith i sìos gu Locha Druing. Bha i ag iarraidh taic fhaighinn. Nuair a thill i

Mòr with other people, there was no sign of the pot or the distaff. According to oral tradition, the gold remains in the Feadan Mòr to this day.

Perhaps this story was based on an old heritage. In his book Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty, William Watson writes that the Fingalians were keeping their kettle in the Feadan Mòr. A witch stole the kettle. She ran away with it. The witch's name was Cuilisp.

But Caoilte went after her (Caoilte was the swiftest of the Fingalians). He got hold of the witch. That was in a place called Fèith Chuilisp ("bog of Cuilisp"). It's Cuilisp that created the bog. She dropped the Fingalians' kettle and the water came out of it. The place has been a bog since then.

don Fheadan Mhòr le daoine eile, cha robh sgeul air a' phoit no air a' chuigil. A rèir beul-aithris, tha an t-òr anns an Fheadan Mhòr fhathast.

'S dòcha gun robh an stòiridh seo stèidhichte air seann dualchas. Anns an leabhar aige *Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty*, tha Uilleam MacBhàtair a' sgrìobhadh gun robh an Fhèinn a' cumail a' choire aca anns an Fheadan Mhòr. Ghoid bana-bhuidseach an coire. Ruith i air falbh leis. 'S e Cuilisp an t-ainm a bha air a' bhana-bhuidsich.

Ach chaidh Caoilte às a dèidh (b' e Caoilte am fear a bu luaithe dhen Fhèinn). Fhuair e grèim air a' bhana-bhuidsich. Bha sin ann an àite ris an canar Fèith Chuilisp. 'S e Cuilisp a chruthaich an fhèith. Leig i coire na Fèinne agus thàinig an t-uisge a-mach às. Tha an t-àite air a bhith na bhoglach on uair sin.