

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 453 (which corresponds to Litir 757). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

Have you ever heard of Clann an Oistir? They were a small clan. They were living on Iona. Clann an Oistir. The name comes from Latin. They were ostuarii in Latin – the ones who kept watch at a door. The word ostium means 'door' or 'opening'.

Clann an Oistir belong to oral tradition in Iona. It's said that they were doorkeepers for the monastery on that island. The progenitor of the clan came over from Ireland with St Columba. He kept watch on the monastery door. But he and Columba fell out with each other. Columba cursed him. He said that no more than five people of his sort should be alive at the same time.

Thus, when a sixth person was born in the family, one of the other five had to die. It isn't said how that happened. The clan came to an end in the eighteenth century. They were still on Iona.

There are many stories about St Columba and doors. He had an uncanny ability to open locked doors. He had a famous journey to Inverness. He was going to visit Brude, the King of the Picts in the

An cuala sibh riamh mu *Chlann an Oistir*? 'S e fine bheag a bha annta. Bha iad a' fuireach ann an Eilean Ì. Clann an Oistir. Tha an t-ainm a' tighinn bhon Laidinn. B' e *ostuarii* a bha annta ann an Laidinn – an fheadhainn a bha a' cumail faire aig doras. Tha am facal *ostium* a' ciallachadh 'doras' no 'fosgladh'.

Buinidh Clann an Oistir do bheul-aithris mu Eilean Ì. Thathar ag ràdh gum b' e dorsairean don mhanachainn anns an eilean sin a bha annta. Thàinig tùsaire na fine a-nall à Èirinn cuide ri Calum Cille. Chùm e faire air doras na manachainn. Ach chaidh e fhèin is Calum Cille a-mach air a chèile. Rinn Calum Cille mallachd air. Thuir e nach bu chòir barrachd na còignear de a sheòrsa a bhith beò aig an aon àm.

Mar sin, nuair a rugadh siathamh duine don teaghlach, bha aig fear no tè dhen chòignear eile ri bàs fhaighinn. Chan eilear ag ràdh ciamar a thachair sin. Thàinig an fhine gu ceann anns an ochdamh linn deug. Bha iad fhathast ann an Eilean Ì.

'S iomadh stòiridh a tha ann mu Chalum Cille agus dorsan. Bha comas thar chàich aige ann a bhith a' fosgladh dhorsan glaiste. Bha turas ainmeil aige a dh'Inbhir Nis. Bha e a' dol a thadhal air Brùid, Rìgh nan Cruithneach anns a'

north. Columba and his companions reached the King's palace. Brude was haughty, however. He was a powerful king. He didn't open the door of his palace to the saintly man.

When Columba saw this, he made a sign of the cross of the Lord. He knocked on the main door. He put his hand on it. The locking bolts flew open. The door opened wide. It was as if a large hand had pushed the door hard.

Columba and his companions went through the open door. When he heard what had happened, Brude came to meet the saint. The King was humble. From that day on, Brude accepted Columba as an honourable, educated and blessed man.

cheann a tuath. Ràinig Calum Cille agus a chompanaich lùchairt an Rìgh. Bha Brùid àrdanach, ge-tà. 'S e rìgh cumhachdach a bha ann. Cha do dh'fhosgail e doras a lùchairt don fhear naomh.

Nuair a chunnaic Calum Cille seo, rinn e comharra de chrois an Tighearna. Ghnog e an doras mòr. Chuir e a làmh air. Gu h-obann dh'fhuasgladh na glasan le neart. Dh'fhosgail an doras air a' chlab. Bha e mar gun robh làmh mhòr air an doras a phutadh gu cruaidh.

Chaidh Calum Cille agus a chompanaich tron doras fhosgailte. Nuair a chuala e mar a thachair, thàinig Brùid a choinneachadh ris an naomh. Bha an Rìgh iriosal. Bhon latha sin a-mach ghabh Brùid ri Calum Cille mar fhear urramach, ionnsaichte, beannaichte.