

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 488 (which corresponds to Litir 792). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

Here is the old story The Humpbacked Old Men and the Fairies.

Two old men were living in the same glen. They were both humpbacked. They were taking turns every Sunday to visit each other. On the route between them was a forest.

One particular Sunday, one of the old men was on his walk. When he was near a fairy hillock in the forest, he heard voices. The fairies in the hillock were singing a song. It went like this: Monday, Tuesday, Monday, Tuesday, Monday, Tuesday. They sang it again and again.

The old man went closer to the fairy hillock. He stuck his head inside. 'What do you want?' said one of the fairies.

'You don't know all the words for the song,' said the old man. 'I know them, however. If you remove the hump from my back, I'll tell you the next part of the song.'

'Go on, then!' said the fairies. And the old man began to sing: Monday, Tuesday, Monday, Tuesday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday.

The fairies were pleased and

Seo agaibh an t-seann sgeulachd Na Bodaich Chrotach agus na Sìthichean.

Bha dithis bhodach a' fuireach anns an aon ghleann. Bha iad le chèile crotach. Bha iad a' gabhail turas mu seach gach Didòmhnaich a dhol a chèilidh air a chèile. Air an rathad eatarra, bha coille.

Didòmhnaich a bha seo, bha fear de na bodaich air chuairt. Nuair a bha e faisg air sìthean anns a' choille, chuala e guthan. Bha na sìthichean anns an t-sìthean a' gabhail òran. Chaidh e mar seo: *Diluain, Dimàirt, Diluain, Dimàirt, Diluain, Dimàirt*. Sheinn iad e a-rithist agus a-rithist.

Chaidh am bodach na b' fhaisge air an t-sìthean. Chuir e a cheann a-steach. 'Dè tha thu ag iarraidh?' thuirt fear de na sìthichean.

'Chan eil sibh eòlach air na faclan gu lèir airson an òrain,' ars am bodach. 'Tha iad agam, ge-tà. Ma bheir sibh a' chroit far mo dhroma, innsidh mi dhuibh an ath phìos dhen òran.'

'Siuthad, ma-thà!' thuirt na sìthichean. Agus thòisich am bodach air seinn: *Diluain, Dimàirt, Diluain, Dimàirt, Diluain, Dimàirt, Diciadain*.

Bha na sìthichean toilichte agus

they thanked the old man. While he was walking away from the hillock, the hump left him. The old man was now as straight as an arrow. He walked to his friend's house. The other old man couldn't believe the matter. He wanted to get rid of his own hump.

On the following Sunday the second old man went for his walk through the forest. When he reached the fairy hillock, the fairies were singing: Monday, Tuesday, Monday, Tuesday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Again and again. The old man put his head in.

What do you want?' said one of them.

'You don't know all the words for the song,' said the old man. 'I know them, however. If you remove the hump from my back, I'll tell you them.'

'Go on, then!' said the fairies. And the old man began to sing: Monday, Tuesday, Monday, Tuesday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.

But the fairies didn't like that at all. 'You wrecked our song,' they shouted. 'Get out of here!' And when the old man left, he found out that the other man's hump had grown on his back as well. He was now double-humped!

thug iad taing mhòr don bhodach. Fhad 's a bha e a' coiseachd air falbh bhon t-sìthean, dh'fhalbh a' chroit. Bha am bodach a-nise cho dìreach ri saighead. Choisich e gu taigh a charaid. Cha b' urrainn don bhodach eile an gnothach a chreidsinn. Bha esan airson faighinn cuidhteas na croite aige fhèin.

An ath Dhidòmhnach chaidh an dàrna bodach air chuairt tron choille. Nuair a ràinig e an sìthean, bha na sìthichean a' gabhail òran: *Diluain, Dimàirt, Diluain, Dimàirt, Diluain, Dimàirt, Diciadain*. A-rithist 's a-rithist. Chuir am bodach a cheann a-steach.

'De tha thu ag iarraidh?' thuirt fear dhiubh.

Chan eil sibh eòlach air na faclan gu lèir,' ars am bodach. 'Tha iad agam, ge-tà. Ma bheir sibh a' chroit far mo dhroma, innsidh mi dhuibh iad.'

'Siuthad, ma-thà!' thuirt na sìthichean. Agus sheinn am bodach: *Diluain, Dimàirt, Diluain, Dimàirt, Diluain, Dimàirt, Diciadain, Diardaoin 's Dihaoine*.

Ach cha do chòrd sin ris na sìthichean idir. 'Mhill thu an t-òran againn,' dh'èigh iad. 'A-mach à seo leat!' Agus nuair a theich am bodach fhuair e a-mach gun robh croit a' bhodaich eile air fàs air a dhruim-san cuideachd. Bha e a-nise dà-chrotach!