

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 508 (which corresponds to Litir 812). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

In the mountains of Lochaber, there is Stob Coir' na Ceannain. It's between Fort William and Loch Treig, south of Roybridge. Dòmhnall Mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn was living in that area. He wrote a famous poem – 'the song of the owl'. And I'm going to tell you a wee story from that area, in which there is an owl.

Stob Coir' na Ceannain gets its name from a corrie – Coir' na Ceannain. In the corrie, there is a lochan. There was once a trout living there. Here is the story The one-eyed trout in Coir' na Ceannain.

There was an eagle. The day was very cold. 'I've never felt it so cold,' the eagle said. 'I'll go over to Strath Ossian because there is a stag living on that hill. He is very old. I'll ask him – "have you ever felt cold like this?"'

The eagle met the stag. 'Now, friend,' said the eagle, 'did you ever feel cold like this?'

'No,' said the stag. 'But go down to the home of the owl. I'm

Ann am beanntan Loch Abar, tha Stob Coir' na Ceannain. Tha i eadar An Gearasdan agus Loch Trèig, deas air Drochaid Ruaidh. Bha Dòmhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dàn a' fuireach anns an sgìre sin. Sgrìobh esan dàn ainmeil – Òran na Comhachaig. Agus tha mise a' dol a dh'innse naidheachd dhuibh às an sgìre sin, anns a bheil comhachag.

Tha Stob Coir' na Ceannain a' faighinn a h-ainm bho choire – Coir' na Ceannain. Anns a' choire, tha lochan. Bha uaireigin breac a' fuireach ann. Seo agaibh an stòiridh *Breac na h-Aona Sùl' ann an Coir' na Ceannain*.

Bha iolaire ann. Bha an latha uabhasach fuar. 'Cha d' fhairich mi riamh i cho fuar,' thuirt an iolaire. 'Thèid mi a-null a Shrath Oisein oir tha damh a' fuireach sa mhonadh sin. Tha e gu math sean. Cuiridh mi a' cheist air – "an d' fhairich thu a leithid seo de dh'fhuachd riamh?"'

Thachair an iolaire ris an damh. 'Nis, a charaid,' thuirt an iolaire, 'an d' fhairich thu riamh a leithid seo de dh'fhuachd?'

'Cha d' fhairich,' thuirt an damh. 'Ach thalla sìos gu dachaigh na

ninety years old, but she is much older than that.'

The eagle went down the mountain. It met the owl. She asked the owl the same question she asked the stag.

'Oh,' said the owl, 'I've never felt cold like this.'

'Nor have I,' agreed the eagle.

'But look here,' said the owl, 'there is an old trout in Lochan Coir' na Ceannain which is one-eyed. Ask him the same question.'

The eagle went to speak to the old trout. The eagle asked him, 'did you ever feel cold like this?'

'Yes,' replied the trout. 'I felt one day that was colder than this. I was so cold in the lochan that I was cavorting around. I was trying to warm myself up. I banged into a projection of rock and that's what left me one-eyed.'

comhachaig. Tha mise ceithir fichead bliadhna 's a deich, ach tha ise fada nas sine na sin.'

Chaidh an iolaire sìos a' bheinn. Thachair i ris a' chomhachaig. Chuir i an aon cheist air a' chomhachaig 's a chuir i air an damh.

'O,' ars' a chomhachag, 'cha d' fhairich mise riamh a leithid seo de dh'fhuachd.'

'Cha d' fhairich no mise,' dh'aontaich an iolaire.

'Ach trobhad seo,' ars' a' chomhachag, 'tha seann bhreac ann an Lochan Coir' na Ceannain a tha air aon sùil. Cuir an aon cheist airsan.'

Dh'fhalbh an iolaire a bhruidhinn ris an t-seann bhreac. Chuir an iolaire a' cheist air, 'an d' fhairich thu riamh a leithid seo de dh'fhuachd?'

'Dh'fhairich,' fhreagair am breac. 'Dh'fhairich mi aon latha a bha na b' fhuaire na seo. Bha mi cho fuar anns an lochan 's gun robh mi a' gabhail ròidean mun cuairt. Bha mi a' feuchainn ri teas a chur orm fhìn. Bhuail mi air sgòr creige agus 's e sin a dh'fhàg mi air aon sùil.'