

## **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 539 (which corresponds to Litir 843). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*We're again in Strathardle in Perthshire this week. Glen Fernate is connected to Strathardle. At the bottom of the glen, there is a large rock. It's different from the other rocks in the strath. Some people say that it was moved there by ice thousands of years ago. We call such things a 'clach iomrallach' or glacial erratic.*

*But the old people had another story. It goes back to the time when the Cummings were lords of Badenoch. The clan chief of the Cummings wanted to build a big castle. Instead of going to stonemasons, he went to speak to a famous witch in Badenoch. She agreed to build him a big castle. She would carry the stones in her apron.*

*She started by looking for two large stones that were equivalent in size. They would be going at both sides of the castle's gate. But, although the witch searched throughout Scotland, she didn't discover two stones that were suitable.*

*One night, she was out when*

Tha sinn ann an Srath Àrdail ann an Siorrachd Pheairt a-rithist an t-seachdain seo. Tha Gleann Fèrnaid ceangailte ri Srath Àrdail. Aig bonn a' ghlinne, tha clach mhòr ann. Tha i eadar-dhealaichte bho na clachan eile anns an t-srath. Tha cuid ag ràdh gun robh i air a gluasad ann le deigh o chionn nam mìltean bhliadhnaichean. Canaidh sinn 'clach iomrallach' no *glacial erratic* ri a leithid.

Ach bha stòiridh eile aig na seann daoine. Tha e a' dol air ais don linn nuair a b' iad na Cuimeanaich uachdarain Bhàideanach. Bha ceann-cinnidh nan Cuimeanach airson caisteal mòr a thogail. An àite a bhith a' dol gu clachairean, chaidh e a bhruidhinn ri bana-bhuidseach ainmeil ann am Bàideanach. Dh'aontaich ise caisteal mòr a thogail dha. Bhiodh i a' giùlan nan clach na h-aparan.

Thòisich i le bhith a' coimhead airson dà chloich mhòir a bha co-ionann ann am meudachd. Bhiodh iad a' dol air gach taobh de gheata a' chaisteil. Ach, ged a rùraich a' bhana-bhuidseach air feadh Alba, cha do lorg i dà chloich a bha freagarrach.

Oidhche a bha seo, bha i a-

*she met another witch. This one belonged to the Isle of Man – a place where witchcraft was famous! And she told the one from Badenoch that there were two stones that would be suitable on the Isle of Man.*

*The Scottish one found the stones. She picked up one of them in her apron. She was in the heavens, heading home on a clear night when a hunter saw her. She was above Strathardle. The hunter said, ‘God preserve me!’ With those words, the witch’s power was broken. The apron string broke. And the stone fell to ground. It still lies there.*

*The witch didn’t get another apron string that was strong enough, and the castle was not built. And, they say, on every anniversary from the day the stone fell to ground, the ghost of the witch returns, trying to pick it up and move it. We should all avoid the place on that night!*

muigh nuair a thachair i ri bana-bhuidseach eile. Bhuineadh an tè seo do dh’Eilean Mhanainn – àite far an robh buidseachd ainmeil! Agus dh’inns i don tè à Bàideanach gun robh dà chloich a bhiodh freagarrach ann an Eilean Mhanainn.

Lorg an tè Albannach na clachan. Thog i tè dhiubh na h-aparan. Bha i anns na speuran a’ dèanamh air an taigh air oidhche shoilleir nuair a chunnaic sealgair i. Bha i os cionn Srath Àrdail. Thuir an sealgair, ‘Dhia, glèidh mise!’ Leis na faclan sin, bhriseadh cumhachd na bana-bhuidsich. Bhris sreanga a h-aparain. Agus thuit a’ chlach gu talamh. Tha i fhathast na laighe an sin.

Cha d’ fhuair a’ bhana-bhuidseach sreanga aparain eile a bha làidir gu leòr, agus cha deach an caisteal a thogail. Agus, tha iad ag ràdh, air gach ceann-bliadhna bhon latha a thuit a’ chlach gu talamh, bidh taibhse na bana-bhuidsich air ais, a’ feuchainn ri a togail ’s a gluasad. Bu chòir dhuinn uile an t-àite a sheachnadh air an oidhche sin!