

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 636 (which corresponds to Litir 940). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about Great Gormshuil of Moy. According to oral tradition, she sank a Spanish vessel off the coast of Mull. That was in 1588. The ship belonged to the armada that was going to attack England.

The ship went into Tobermory Bay. They felt the mast shaking.

'There is a big black rook on the mast,' said the crew.

'That's the Mull witch,' said the captain. He knew about supernatural things. Witches were attempting to sink the ship.

There was a terrible shaking. 'Oh,' said the captain, 'that's Gormshuil of Moy. And we're lost.' The vessel went down where she was. And she's there still.

Back to Lochaber. As I was telling you, Gormshuil told her clan chief, Lochiel, that he would hang her son some day. He said he would save him.

Well, one day, Gormshuil's son, the son of her neighbour who was a widow and another lad were on the hill. An argument started between the widow's son and the

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Ghormshuil Mhòr na Maighe. A rèir beul-aithris, chuir i soitheach Spàinnteach fodha far cladach Mhuile. Bha sin ann an còig ceud deug, ochdad 's a h-ochd (1588). Bhuineadh an long don mhòr-chabhlach a bha a' dol a thoirt ionnsaigh air Sasainn.

Chaidh an long a-steach a Bhàgh Thobar Mhoire. Dh'fhairich iad crathadh sa chrann.

'Tha ròcas mòr dubh air a' chrann,' thuirt an criutha.

'S e sin an Doideag Mhuileach,' ars an caiptean. Bha eòlas aige air gnothaichean os-nàdarrach. Bha bana-bhuidsich a' feuchainn ris an long a chur fodha.

Bha crathadh uabhasach ann. 'O,' ars an caiptean, 's e sin Gormshuil na Maighe. Agus tha sinn cailte.' Chaidh an soitheach fodha far an robh i. Agus tha i an sin fhathast.

Air ais gu Loch Abar. Mar a bha mi ag innse dhuibh, thuirt Gormshuil ri a ceann-cinnidh, Loch Iall, gun crochadh e a mac latha air choreigin. Thuirt esan gun sàbhaileadh esan e.

Uill, latha a bha seo, bha mac Gormshuil, mac nàbaidh aice a bha na banntarach agus gille eile sa mhonadh. Thòisich connsachadh eadar mac na banntarach agus an gille eile. Thug mac na

other lad. The widow's son struck the other one. He died.

The widow's son expected that he would be hanged. His mother was beside herself. Gormshuil remembered the promise Lochiel made to her. She asked her son to say that it was he that caused the lad's death. He was jailed at Achnacarry. Lochiel didn't know he was Gormshuil's son.

Gormshuil went to Achnacarry to ask Lochiel to save her son. She reached a burn. There was a salmon in a pool. Gormshuil went on her knees to catch it. Suddenly there was a torrent of water. The burn took her away. She was drowned in Loch Lochy. That burn is called 'the burn of the salmon'.

Lochiel didn't know that Gormshuil was on the way to speak to him. And her son was hanged [to death], just as she [had] said would happen.

banntraich buille don fhear eile. Fhuair e bàs.

Bha dùil aig mac na banntraich gum biodh e air a chrochadh. Bha a mhàthair troimhe-chèile. Chuimhnich Gormshuil an gealltanais a thug Loch Iall dhi. Dh'iarr i air a mac innse gum b' esan a dh'adhbharaich bàs a' ghille. Chaidh a chur don phrìosan ann an Achadh na Cairidh. Cha robh fios aig Loch Iall gum b' esan mac Gormshuil.

Chaidh Gormshuil gu ruige Achadh na Cairidh airson iarraidh air Loch Iall an gille aice a shàbhaladh. Ràinig i allt. Bha bradan ann an linne. Chaidh Gormshuil air a glùinean airson a ghlacadh. Gu h-obann bha beum-slèibhe ann. Thug an t-allt air falbh i. Chaidh a bàthadh ann an Loch Lòchaidh. 'S e Allt a' Bhradain a tha air an allt sin mar ainm.

Cha robh fios aig Loch Iall gun robh Gormshuil air an rathad a bhruidhinn ris. Agus chaidh an gille aice a chrochadh gu bàs, dìreach mar a dh'inns i a thachradh.