

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 761 (which corresponds to Litir 1,065). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

This year, I was in Glen Banchor in Badenoch. It's near Newtonmore. Nobody lives there today.

There is a strong connection between Glen Banchor and St Bride. There was at one time a chapel there dedicated to St Bride.

On Bride's feast day, the first of February, nobody would use the Glen Banchor mill. Why? Well, at one time, a widow lived in the glen. She had no money. She would pay her rent in corn.

She and her two children were in danger that they would be put out of their house. They were in need of food, however. The woman sent all her corn to the mill for grinding.

The miller was a rogue. He told another man to whom the woman owed money. He took away her corn. It wasn't long until she and her children were evicted from their house.

It was winter. It was Bride's feast day. The three [of them] made for the woman's grandmother's house. The grandmother had the reputation of being a witch.

A blizzard came, and the woman and her two children lost their lives in the storm.

Am-bliadhna, bha mi ann an Gleann Bheannchair ann am Bàideanach. Tha e faisg air Bail' Ùr an t-Slèibh. Chan eil duine a' fuireach ann an-diugh.

Tha ceangal làidir ann eadar Gleann Bheannchair agus Naomh Brìde. Bha uaireigin caibeal ann a bha coisrigte do Bhrìde.

Air latha Fèill Brìde, a' chiad latha dhen Ghearran, cha bhiodh duine a' cleachdadh muileann Ghleann Bheannchair. Carson? Uill, uaireigin, bha bantrach a' fuireach sa ghleann. Cha robh airgead aice. Bhiodh i a' pàigheadh a màil ann an arbhar.

Bha i fhèin agus a dithis chloinne ann an cunnart gum biodh iad air an cur a-mach às an taigh aca. Bha iad feumach air biadh, ge-tà. Chuir am boireannach an t-arbhar air fad aice chun a' mhuilinn airson a bhleith.

Bha am muillear na thrustar. Chuir e fios gu duine eile aig an robh airgead air a' bhoireannach. Thug esan leis an t-arbhar aice. Cha b' fhada gus an robh i fhèin is a cuid chloinne air an cur às an taigh aca.

'S e an geamhradh a bha ann. 'S e Latha Fèill Brìde a bha ann. Rinn an triùir air taigh seanmhair a' bhoireannaich. Bha cliù aig a seanmhair gur e bana-bhuidseach a bha innte.

Thàinig cur is cathadh, agus chaill am boireannach agus a dithis chloinne am beatha anns an stoirm.

The woman's grandmother cursed the miller and the man to whom her granddaughter owed money. Shortly after that, the creditor took his own corn to the mill. He put it in the kiln, to dry it. It was night-time. Next morning, the kiln was burnt to the ground. The bodies of the two men – himself and the miller – were lying together.

The miller's brother rebuilt the kiln. But he lost a hand in the mill's machinery, and he died. Then the mill was destroyed by fire.

The local people understood that the witch had cursed the mill. Some of them went to speak to her. And I'll tell you next week what happened.

Rinn seanmhair a' bhoireannaich mallachd air a' mhuillear agus air an duine aig an robh airgead air a ban-ogha. Goirid an dèidh sin, thug fear nam fiachan a chuid arbhair don mhuileann. Chuir e anns an àth e, airson tiormachadh. 'S e an oidhche a bha ann. An ath mhadainn, bha an àth air a losgadh gu làr. Bha cuirp na dithis fhear – e fhèin agus am muillear – nan laighe còmhla.

Thog bràthair a' mhuilleir an ath às ùr. Ach chaill e làmh ann an uidheamachd a' mhuilinn, agus chaochail e. An uair sin, bha am muileann air a sgrios le teine.

Bha muinntir na sgìre a' tuigsinn gun robh a' bhana-bhuidseach air am muileann a chur fo mhallachd. Chaidh feadhainn aca a bhruidhinn rithe. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh an ath sheachdain dè thachair.