

## **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 905 (which corresponds to Litir 1,209). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot).

*I want to tell you a story from the west of Lewis. It is called 'The Shawbost Freebooter'. A version of the story is in a collection that Norman Morrison, Tormod an t-Seòladair, made.*

*South of Shawbost, there is a mountain which is called, on the maps, Beinn Bhràgair. It's 'Beinn Mhòr' that Norman called it. Up there was a stone bothy. It's 'the robber's bothy' that people called it. A long time ago, a stranger constructed it. He went to live in it. Other people didn't know he was there.*

*One beautiful summer's day, two people were out in the hills. They were Alasdair Morrison, the eldest son of the clan chief of the Morrisons, and his cousin, Hugh MacAulay. They were hunting. They took a shortcut home across the Beinn Mhòr. Near the summit, they saw the bothy. There was a plaid of MacLeod tartan over the door.*

*Alasdair Morrison peered in. A man was sleeping there. Beside him were weapons. Morrison reckoned he was a spy. He was obtaining intelligence about the nearby*

Tha mi airson sgeul innse dhuibh à taobh siar Leòdhais. 'S e an t-ainm a th' air Ceatharnach Shiaboist 'The Shawbost Freebooter'. Tha dreach dhen sgeul ann an cruinneachadh a rinn Tormod Moireasdan, Tormod an t-Seòladair.

Deas air Siabost, tha beinn air a bheil, air na mapaichean, Beinn Bhràgair. 'S e 'Beinn Mhòr' a chanadh Tormod rithe. Shuas an sin bha bothan cloiche. 'S e 'Both a' Mhèirlich' a chanadh daoine ris. O chionn fhada, thog coigreach e. Chaidh e a dh'fhuireach ann. Cha robh fios aig daoine eile gun robh e ann.

Latha brèagha samhraidh a bha seo, bha dithis a-muigh anns a' mhonadh. B' iad sin Alasdair Moireasdan, am mac a bu shine aig ceann-cinnidh nam Moireasdanach, agus a cho-ogha Ùisdean MacAmhlaigh. Bha iad a' sealg. Ghabh iad rathad aithghearr dhachaigh tarsainn na Beinne Mòire. Faisg air a' mhullach, chunnaic iad am bothan. Bha plaide de bhreacan Cloinn 'ic Leòid thairis air an doras.

Thug Alasdair Moireasdan sùil a-staigh. Bha fear na chadal ann. Ri a thaobh, bha armachd. Bha am Moireasdanach dhen bheachd gur e fear-brathaidh a bh' ann. Bha e a' faighinn

*villages – Shawbost and Bragar. At that time the MacLeods and the Morrisons were enemies.*

*The pair left. They chose to keep an eye on the Beinn Mhòr. They didn't tell anybody else about the matter.*

*About a month later, two women were out scraping lichen from rocks. They were on the slope of the Beinn Mhòr. They saw a man above them. He was moving on his hands and knees in an attempt to remain hidden. The women went home. It wasn't long until everybody in Shawbost and Bragar knew that there was a freebooter living on the Beinn Mhòr.*

*Now, about a week before that, one of Ruairidh Dearg's cows had gone missing. The cattle were at the shieling, at the base of the Beinn Mhòr. When they heard about the freebooter, the local people reckoned he had stolen it. The story will continue next week.*

fiosrachadh mu na bailtean faisg air làimh – Siabost agus Bràgar. Aig an àm sin, bha Clann 'ic Leòid agus na Moireasdanaich nan nàimhdean.

Dh'fhalbh an dithis. Roghnaich iad an sùilean a chumail air a' Bheinn Mhòir. Cha tuirt iad càil mun chùis ri duine eile.

Mu mhìos an dèidh sin, bha dithis bhoireannach a-muigh a' sgrìobadh crotal bho chreagan. Bha iad air cliathaich na Beinne Mòire. Chunnaic iad fear os an cionn. Bha e a' gluasad air a làmhan 's a ghlùinean, feuch cumail am falach. Dh'fhalbh na boireannaich dhachaigh. Cha b' fhada gus an robh fios aig a h-uile duine ann an Siabost is Bràgar gun robh ceatharnach a' fuireach air a' Bheinn Mhòir.

Nise, mu sheachdain roimhe sin, bha bò aig fear, Ruairidh Dearg, air a dhol a dhìth. Bha an crodh a-muigh air an àirigh, aig bonn na Beinne Mòire. Nuair a chuala iad mun cheatharnach, shaoil muinntir an àite gur esan a ghoid i. Leanaidh an sgeul an-ath-sheachdain.