

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 914 (which corresponds to Litir 1,218). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was recently in the Black Wood of Rannoch or 'Coille Dhubh Raineach' as the local people would call it. It's on the southern shore of Loch Rannoch. I'm going to tell you two anecdotes from Loch Rannoch.

There was a man from London there for fishing. He was in a boat on the loch, and a ring fell from his finger. His family's crest was on the ring. It would be easy enough to recognise. But it had fallen into the loch.

This man returned to Rannoch the following year. He was travelling in a train. There was a man opposite him. There was a ring on his finger. 'Excuse me,' said the man from London, 'but where did you get that ring? That's my ring. My family's crest is on it.'

'Well,' said the other man, 'I was fishing in Loch Rannoch and I caught a trout. The fish was taken to the chef in the hotel. It was cooked for me. But the chef came to the table. He put a ring in front of me. He told me that he found the ring inside the fish. Isn't it an amazing story? It is said that it is true.'

Bha mi o chionn ghreis ann an Coille Dhubh Raineach, no 'Coille Dhubh Raineach' mar a chanadh muinntir an àite. Tha i air cladach a deas Loch Raineach. Tha mi a' dol a dh'innse dà naidheachd dhuibh à Loch Raineach.

Bha duin'-uasal à Lunnainn ann airson iasgach. Bha e ann am bàta air an loch, agus thuit fàinne bho a chorraig. Bha suaicheantas a theaghlaich air an fhàinne. Bhiodh e furasta gu leòr a h-aithneachadh. Ach bha i air tuiteam don loch.

Thill an duine seo a Raineach an ath bhliadhna. Bha e a' siubhal ann an carbad-iarainn. Bha fear mu a choinneamh. Bha fàinne air a chorraig. 'Gabhaibh mo leisgeul,' thuirt am fear à Lunnainn, 'ach càit an d' fhuair sibh an fhàinne sin? Sin an fhàinne agamsa. Tha suaicheantas mo theaghlaich oirre.'

'Uill,' thuirt am fear eile, 'bha mi iasgach ann an Loch Raineach agus ghlac mi breac. Chaidh an t-iasg a thoirt don chòcaire anns an taigh-òsta. Chaidh a bhruich dhomh. Ach thàinig an còcaire chun a' bhùird. Chuir e fàinne air mo bheulaibh. Dh'inns e dhomh gun do lorg e an fhàinne am broinn an èisg.' Nach iongantach an sgeul. Thathar ag ràdh gu bheil e fìor.

The other anecdote is much older. In 1745-6, redcoat soldiers were west of Loch Rannoch. They saw a Highland soldier on the summit of Meall Comraidh. He was being rude and taunting them.

They sent two redcoat soldiers up to deal with him. They went over the summit and out of sight. There was noise of battle. The redcoat soldiers did not return.

The Highland soldier returned to the mountain summit. He started again to mock (the soldiers). This time, a troop was sent up. They went out of sight. Again, there was the noise of fighting. And the Highland soldier appeared once more on the summit.

This time, the colonel ordered a large attack on the Highland soldier. All of the redcoats went together. When they were near the summit, one of their own soldiers appeared. He was wounded. 'Go back!' he said. 'It's a trick. There are two of them!'

Tha an naidheachd eile mòran nas sine. Ann am Bliadhna Theàrlaich, bha saighdearan-dearga siar air Loch Raineach. Chunnaic iad saighdear Gàidhealach air mullach Meall Comraidh. Bha e ri mì-mhodh is fanaid.

Chuir iad dithis shaighdearan-dearga suas airson dèiligeadh ris. Dh'fhalbh iad thar a' mhullaich agus à fianais. Bha fuaim catha ann. Cha do thill na saighdearan-dearga.

Thill an saighdear Gàidhealach gu mullach na beinne. Thòisich e a-rithist air fanaid. An turas seo, chaidh feachd a chur suas. Dh'fhalbh iad à fianais. A-rithist bha fuaim de shabaid ann. Agus nochd an saighdear Gàidhealach a-rithist air a' mhullach.

An turas seo, dh'òrdaich an coirneal ionnsaigh mhòr a thoirt air an t-saighdear Ghàidhealach. Dh'fhalbh a h-uile saighdear-dearg còmhla. Nuair a bha iad faisg air a' mhullach, nochd fear de na saighdearan aca fhèin. Bha e air a leòn. 'Thallaibh air ais!' dh'èigh e. 'S e feall a th' ann! Tha dithis ann!'