

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 981 (which corresponds to Litir 1,285). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

This week I'm going to conclude my account of Angus, Bride and the Cailleach Bheura. It's based on the book 'Wonder Tales from Scottish Myth and Legend' by Donald Alexander Mackenzie.

The Cailleach created various winds in spring, in an attempt to prevent the coming of the summer. But matters were going against her. The weather settled. The wild duck was happy. 'Ha ha!' she said, 'I and my six ducklings are still alive.'

'I'm not finished yet!' said the Cailleach. At night the Cailleach took hold of three winter days. She borrowed them. Snow, hailstones and a great wind came. The rivers were in flood. The duck and her ducklings were killed.

But the winter was coming to an end. The Cailleach went north. Before she left, she threw her magic hammer under a holly tree. Grass does not grow under a holly tree even today.

The Cailleach was on horseback. The horse leapt over Loch Etive. It came down on a mountain slope. It left the mark of its

An t-seachdain seo tha mi a' dol a thoirt mo chunntais mu Aonghas, Brìde agus a' Chailleach Bheura gu ceann. Tha e stèidhichte air an leabhar *Wonder Tales from Scottish Myth and Legend* le Dòmhnall Alasdair MacCoinnich.

Chruthaich a' Chailleach diofar ghaothan as t-earrach, feuch stad a chur air teachd an t-samhraidh. Ach bha cùisean a' dol na h-aghaidh. Shocraich an aimsir. Rinn an lach gàirdeachas. 'Ha hà!' thuirt i, 'tha mi fhìn agus mo shia iseanan fhathast beò.'

'Chan eil mi ullamh fhathast!' ars a' Chailleach. Air an oidhche, ghabh a' Chailleach grèim air trì latha geamhraidh. Rinn i iasad dhiubh. Thàinig sneachd, clachan-meallain agus gaoth mhòr. Bha tuil anns na h-aibhnichean. Chaidh an lach agus a h-iseanan a mharbhadh.

Ach bha an geamhradh a' tighinn gu ceann. Dh'fhalbh a' Chailleach gu tuath. Mus do dh'fhalbh i, thilg i a h-òrd draoidheil fo chraobh chuilinn. Cha bhi feur a' fàs fo chraobhan-cuilinn eadhon an-diugh.

Bha a' Chailleach air muin-eich. Leum an t-each thairis air Loch Èite. Thàinig e sìos air leathad beinne. Dh'fhàg e comharra a chruidhean air a'

horseshoes on the rock. People still call that place 'the horseshoes'.

The Cailleach continued to the north. She rested on the summit of Beinn na Caillich, near Broadford on the Isle of Skye. She was waiting until the day would be as long as the night (the equinox).

Angus and Bride came to land on that day. In the mountains, some of the lochs were still frozen. Bride put her hands into a loch where the water was very cold. When she did so, the Cailleach Bheura fell into a slumber. She would not waken again until the summer and autumn were over.

Donald Alexander Mackenzie tells us in conclusion that the people of Scotland did not possess a proper calendar at that time. They were judging the weather according to the account of the machinations of the Cailleach and Angus and Bride. The struggle between them is the struggle between spring and winter, growth and death, and warmth and cold.

chreig. Canaidh daoine 'Na Cruidhean' ris an àite sin fhathast.

Lean a' Chailleach orra gu tuath. Ghabh i fois air mullach Beinn na Caillich, faisg air an Ath Leathann anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Bha i a' feitheamh gus am biodh an latha cho fada ris an oidhche.

Thàinig Aonghas agus Brìde gu tìr air an latha sin. Anns na beanntan, bha cuid de na lochan fhathast reòite. Chuir Brìde a làmhan a-steach a loch far an robh an t-uisge fuar fuar. Nuair a rinn i sin, chaidh a' Chailleach Bheura na suain. Cha bhiodh i a' dùsgadh a-rithist gus am biodh an samhradh agus am foghar seachad.

Tha Dòmhnall Alasdair MacCoinnich ag innse dhuinn mar cho-dhùnadh nach robh mìosachan ceart aig muinntir na h-Alba aig an àm sin. Bha iad a' tomhas na h-aimsir a rèir a' chunntais mun dol a-mach eadar a' Chailleach agus Aonghas is Brìde. 'S e an strì a bha ann eatarra an strì eadar earrach is geamhradh, fàs is bàs, agus blàths is fuachd.