

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 1,036 (which corresponds to Litir 1,340). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you how the Scottish climber, A.M. Kellas, wrote to Norman Collie about the Big Grey Man. Kellas and his brother were fossicking for crystals in a hollow near the summit of Beinn MacDuibh. They saw a giant coming towards them. They fled in fear.

The Big Grey Man was known before that. In the nineteenth century, James Hogg and John Hill Burton wrote about him. A hundred years later, Peter Densham wrote about him. Peter was sitting eating chocolate on the summit of Beinn MacDuibh. He was alone.

He felt cold and a weight on his neck. He heard a crunching sound near the summit cairn. He wasn't believing the story about the Big Grey man. But a terrible feeling came over him. He took fright. He began to run. He didn't stop until he was down in Glenmore.

In her book 'The Secret of Spey', Wendy Wood wrote about a trip in the Làirig Ghrù near Beinn MacDuibh. Although she was alone, she heard a voice speaking to her – and in Gaelic!

The climber Tom Crowley described what he saw. He was

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mar a sgrìobh an sreapadair Albannach, A.M. Kellas, gu Tormod Collie mun Fhear Liath Mhòr. Bha Kellas agus a bhràthair a' rùrachadh airson chriostalan ann an glac faisg air mullach Beinne MhicDuibh. Chunnaic iad famhair a' tighinn gan ionnsaigh. Theich iad, agus an t-eagal orra.

Bha am Fear Liath Mòr aithnichte roimhe sin. Anns an naoidheamh linn deug, sgrìobh Seumas Hogg agus John Hill Burton mu dheidhinn. Ceud bliadhna an dèidh sin, sgrìobh Peter Densham mu dheidhinn. Bha Peter na shuidhe, ag ithe tèòclaid air mullach Beinne MhicDuibh. Bha e leis fhèin.

Dh'fhairich e fuachd agus cuideam air amhaich. Chuala e fuaim mar chnagadh faisg air càrn a' mhullaich. Cha robh e a' creidsinn anns an stòiridh mun Fhear Liath Mhòr. Ach thàinig droch fhaireachdainn air. Ghabh e eagal. Thòisich e air ruith. Cha do stad e gus an robh e shìos anns a' Ghleann Mhòr.

Anns an leabhar aice *The Secret of Spey*, sgrìobh Wendy Wood mu thuras aice anns a' Làirig Ghrù faisg air Beinn MacDuibh. Ged a bha i leatha fhèin, chuala i guth a' bruidhinn rithe – agus ann an Gàidhlig!

Rinn an sreapadair Tom Crowley tuairisgeul de na chunnaic e. Bha e a'

descending from Braeriach. He heard footsteps behind him. He looked and he saw a grey giant. He fled to the glen. Afterwards, he said that the giant had pointed ears, and long feet with talons.

The locals were of the opinion that the Big Grey Man was the ghost of William of Rynuie. William was a bard and hunter. It was he that wrote the famous song 'Aig Allt an Lochain Uaine'.

He took part in the Battle of La Coruña in Spain in 1809. He was wounded and he died in Portsmouth on the way home. Because he didn't get back to his home area, his ghost still wanders the mountains as the bard himself would do when he was alive.

teàrnadh bhon Bhràigh Riabhach. Chuala e cas-cheumannan air a chùlaibh. Thug e sùil agus chunnaic e famhair liath. Theich e don ghleann. An dèidh làimhe, thuirte gun robh cluasan biorach aig an fhamhair, agus casan fada le spògan biorach.

Bha muinntir an àite dhen bheachd gur e an taibhs aig Uilleam Ruigh 'n Uidhe a bha anns an Fhear Liath Mhòr. 'S e bàrd agus sealgair a bha ann an Uilleam. B' esan a sgrìobh an t-òran ainmeil 'Aig Allt an Lochain Uaine'.

Ghabh e pàirt ann am Blàr La Coruña anns an Spàinn ann an ochd ceud deug 's a naoi (1809). Chaidh a leòn agus chaochail e ann am Portsmouth air an rathad dhachaigh. Leis nach d' fhuair e air ais don sgìre aige fhèin, tha an taibhs aige fhathast a' coiseachd nam beann mar a bhiodh am bàrd fhèin nuair a bha e beò.