

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 171 (which corresponds to Litir 475). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

In the Orkneyinga Saga, there is a story about a battle between two earls. The Orcadian earl Sigurd Eysteinnsson (Sigurd the Powerful) was an enemy of the Scottish earl Maelbrigte Tooth. There was a big tooth sticking out of Maelbrigte's mouth. It was like the tusk of a wild boar.

The two men met in Moray. Each man was going to take forty men with him. But Sigurd took eighty men with him. He put two men on each horse.

When the two groups were near each other, Maelbrigte saw that Sigurd had eighty men. At the end, Maelbrigte and his companions were dead.

But Maelbrigte got his revenge on Sigurd. How? Well, the Norsemen beheaded the Scots. They tied the heads to their saddles. Sigurd tied Maelbrigte's head to his own saddle.

Sigurd's horse was going slowly. Sigurd dug his spur into it. But he hit his calf on the tooth that was sticking out of Maelbrigte's

Ann an Orkneyinga Saga, tha stòiridh ann mu dheidhinn batail eadar dà iarla. Bha an t-iarla Arcach, Sigurd Eysteinnsson (Sigurd Cumhachdach), na nàmhaid don iarla Albannach Maelbrigte Fiacail. Bha fiacail mhòr a' stobadh a-mach à beul Mhaelbrigte. Bha i coltach ris an fhiacail mhòir aig torc.

Bha an dithis a' coinneachadh ann am Moireibh. Bha gach duine a' dol a thoirt ceathrad fear leis. Ach thug Sigurd ochdad fear leis-san. Chuir e dithis air gach each.

Nuair a bha an dà bhuidhinn faisg air a' chèile, chunnaic Maelbrigte gun robh ochdad fear aig Sigurd. Aig an deireadh, bha Maelbrigte agus a chompanaich marbh.

Ach rinn Maelbrigte dìoghaltas air Sigurd. Ciamar? Uill, gheàrr na Lochlannaich cinn nan Albannach dhiubh. Cheangail iad na cinn do na diollaidean aca. Cheangail Sigurd ceann Mhaelbrigte don diollaid aige fhèin.

Bha an t-each aig Sigurd a' dol gu mall. Chuir Sigurd a spor an sàs ann. Ach bhuail e a chalpa anns an fhiacail a bha a' stobadh a-mach à

mouth. He sustained a wound. The wound was poisoned. Sigurd died on the road home.

A story like this explains how the Kirkwall Ba' Game started. That's a game that hundreds of people play. It happens on the day before Christmas and on New Year's Day every year. Each team tries to get a ball to the other side of the town.

A young lad from Orkney went to the mainland of Scotland. He wanted to fight a man called "Tusker". The young lad defeated Tusker. He cut his head off. He died his head to his saddle.

On the road home, the big tooth made a wound in the lad's leg. Poison went through the lad's body. The lad reached Kirkwall. Many people were waiting for him. He threw the head to the crowd. Shortly after that, he died. The crowd was angry. They kicked the head through the streets. And that's how, if you believe it, the Kirkwall Ba' Game got started!

beul Mhaelbrigte. Fhuair e lot. Bha an lot air a phuinnseanachadh. Chaochail Sigurd air an rathad dhachaigh.

Tha sgeulachd mar seo a' mìneachadh mar a thòisich an *Kirkwall Ba' Game*. 'S e sin gèam a tha na ceudan a' cluich. Tha e a' tachairt air an latha ron Nollaig agus air Latha na Bliadhn' Ùire gach bliadhna. Bidh gach sgioba a' feuchainn ri ball a thoirt gu taobh thall a' bhaile.

Chaidh fear òg à Arcaibh gu tìr-mòr na h-Alba. Bha e airson sabaid le fear air an robh "Tusker". Bha fiacail mhòr aig Tusker. Rinn an gille òg a' chùis air Tusker. Gheàrr e a cheann dheth. Cheangail e a cheann don dìollaid aige.

Air an rathad dhachaigh, rinn an fhiacail mhòr lot ann an cas a' ghille. Chaidh puinnsean tro bhodhaig a' ghille. Ràinig an gille Kirkwall. Bha mòran a' feitheamh ris. Thilg e an ceann don t-sluagh. Goirid às dèidh sin, chaochail e. Bha an sluagh feargach. Bhreab iad an ceann tro na sràidean. Agus 's ann mar sin, ma tha thu ga chreidsinn, a thòisich an *Kirkwall Ba' Game*!