

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 279 (which corresponds to Litir 583). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a group of Lowlanders from Fife went to Stornoway. They were the Fife Adventurers. They were going to set up a colony in Lewis. They had support from the King, James VI. Neil MacLeod, and other MacLeods, stood against them. The MacLeods destroyed the Fifers' stronghold.

The government in Edinburgh was displeased. They gave permission to the clan chief of the Mackenzies of Kintail to go in pursuit of Neil. Niall went to live on the island of Berisay. That's off the west coast of Lewis.

While Neil was in Berisay, an English pirate appeared. He was Peter Love. Love had been involved in piracy. He had a great store on board of valuable things.

Neil gave Love sanctuary. But he deceived him. He put Love and his crew in custody. Neil was hoping to receive a pardon from the government for destroying the Fifers. But he didn't get a pardon. And Love was hanged to death. That was in Leith in 1610.

Eventually, Neil went to Harris.

Aig toiseach an t-seachdamh linn deug, chaidh buidheann de Ghoill à Fìobh a Steòrnabagh. B' iad sin na Fife Adventurers. Bha iad a' dol a dhèanamh tuineachas ann an Leòdhas. Bha taic aca bhon Rìgh, Seumas VI. Sheas Niall MacLeòid, agus Leòdaich eile, nan aghaidh. Rinn na Leòdaich sgrios air dùn nam Fìobhach.

Bha an riaghaltas ann an Dùn Èideann mì-thoilichte. Thug iad cead do cheann-cinnidh Clann 'ic Coinnich Chinn Tàile a dhol an tòir air Niall. Chaidh Niall a dh'fhuireach ann an Eilean Bhearasaidh. Tha sin far cladach an iar Leòdhais.

Fhad 's a bha Niall ann am Bearasaidh, nochd spùinneadair Sasannach. B' esan Peter Love. Bha Love air a bhith ri spùinneadh. Bha stòras mòr aige air bòrd de rudan luachmhor.

Thug Niall comraich do Love. Ach rinn e brath air. Chuir e Love is a chriutha ann an grèim. Thug e Love don riaghaltas. Bha Niall an dòchas maith-eanas fhaighinn bhon riaghaltas airson sgrios a dhèanamh air na Fìobhaich. Ach cha d' fhuair e maitheanas. Agus chaidh Love a chrochadh gu bàs. Bha sin ann an Lìte ann an sia ceud deug is deich (1610).

He sought support from the clan chief, Ruairidh MacLeod. Ruairidh was going to take Neil to London. Neil was wanting to meet the King. But they reached Glasgow. And it was requested of Ruairidh that he take Neil to Edinburgh. Neil was put in prison.

The day of the hanging came. Neil was of the opinion that an order of pardon was still coming. He wasn't in a hurry to get the rope around his neck. One of the hangmen was impatient. "Come on, Old Man," thuir e, "we haven't got all day." MacLeod shouted in Gaelic that he wasn't an old man. And did a pardon come? I'll tell you in the next Litir.

Mu dheireadh, chaidh Niall do Na Hearadh. Dh'iarr e taic bhon cheann-chinnidh, Ruairidh MacLeòid. Bha Ruairidh a' dol a thoirt Nèill a Lunnainn. Bha Niall ag iarraidh coinneachadh ris an Rìgh. Ach ràinig iad Glaschu. Agus chaidh iarraidh air Ruairidh Niall a thoirt a Dhùn Èideann. Bha Niall air a chur don phrìosan.

Thàinig latha a' chrochaidh. Bha Niall dhen bheachd gun robh òrdugh maitheanas a' tighinn fhathast. Cha robh e ann an cabhaig an ròp fhaighinn timcheall amhaich. Bha fear de na crochadairean mì-fhoighidneach. "Come on, Bodach," thuir e, "we haven't got all day." Dh'èigh MacLeòid ann an Gàidhlig nach e bodach a bha ann. Agus an tàinig maitheanas? Innsidh mi dhuibh anns an ath Litir.