

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 284 (which corresponds to Litir 588). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

The Fairy Flag is famous. It's on the Isle of Skye. It belongs to the Clan MacLeod of Dunvegan. It's in Dunvegan Castle.

In English it's called the Fairy Flag. The flag is made of silk. It's very old. And valuable.

According to oral tradition, a MacLeod was on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He was involved in the Crusades. One day, he was crossing a river. A fairy attacked him. MacLeod defeated the fairy.

The fairy gave MacLeod a reward. It was a wooden box. Smaller boxes were in the box. In the final box, there was a piece of yellow silk. The Fairy Flag.

There was a heritage connected to the flag. When a man would pick up the flag, a large host would appear. A host of armed heroes.

There was also a warning connected to the flag. If a person picked it up within a year and a day, no crops would grow on his land for a year and a day. Through that time, no sheep would have lambs. No cattle would have calves. No family would have a baby.

MacLeod returned to Skye. He

Tha a' Bhratach Shìth ainmeil. Tha i anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Tha i le Clann 'ic Leòid Dhùn Bheagain. Tha i ann an Caisteal Dhùn Bheagain.

'S e a' Bheurla oirre – *The Fairy Flag*. Tha a' bhratach air a dèanamh de shìoda. Tha i uabhasach sean. Agus prìseil.

A rèir beul-aithris, bha Leòdach air eilthreachd don Tìr Naoimh. Bha e an sàs ann an Cogaidhean na Croise. Latha a bha seo, bha e a' dol tarsainn abhainn. Thug sìthiche ionnsaigh air. Rinn MacLeòid a' chùis air an t-sìthiche.

Thug an sìthiche duais do MhacLeòid. 'S e a bh' ann bogsa fiodha. Bha bogsaichean na bu lugha anns a' bhogsa. Anns a' bhogsa mu dheireadh, bha pìos de shìoda buidhe. A' Bhratach Shìth.

Bha dualchas an cois na brataich. Nuair a thogadh duine a' bhratach, bhiodh sluagh mòr a' nochdadh. Sluagh de ghaisgich armaichte.

Bha rabhadh an cois na brataich cuideachd. Nan togadh duine i taobh a-staigh latha is bliadhna, cha bhiodh bàr a' fàs air an fhearann aige airson latha is bliadhna. Tron ùine sin, cha bhiodh uain aig caoraich. Cha bhiodh laoigh aig crodh. Cha bhiodh leanabh aig teaghlach.

gave the flag to his clan chief. A great host of fairies appeared. But no crops grew. And no lamb or calf or baby was born for a year and day.

It's not know where the flag came from originally. Some people say that the silk was from the Middle East. There is an opinion that it belonged to the King of Norway – Harald Hardradr. Harald was working for the Emperor in Constantinople.

Harald was at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066. He lost to the English.

In his army there was Godred Crovan. He is famous in the history of the Gaels. Some people think that perhaps Godred got the flag from Harald. And that a MacLeod got it from Godred. But who knows if that is true. We'll have another look at the Fairy Flag next week.

Thill MacLeòid don Eilean Sgitheanach. Thug e a' bhratach don cheann-chinnidh aige. Nochd sluagh mòr de shìthichean. Ach cha do dh'fhàs bàrr. Agus cha do rugadh uan no laogh no leanabh airson latha is bliadhna.

Chan eil fhios cò às a thàinig a' bhratach bho thùs. Tha cuid ag ràdh gun robh an sìoda às an Ear-mheadhanach. Tha beachd ann gun robh i aig Rìgh Nirribhidh – Harald Hardradr. Bha Harald ag obair don Ìmpire ann an Constantinople.

Bha Harald aig Blàr Drochaid Stamford anns a' bhliadhna mìle, seasgad 's a sia (1066). Chaill e do na Sasannaich.

Anns an arm aige bha Goraidh Cròbhan. Tha esan ainmeil ann an eachdraidh nan Gàidheal. Tha cuid dhen bheachd gur dòcha gun d' fhuair Goraidh a' bhratach bho Harald. Agus gun d' fhuair Leòdach i bho Ghoraidh. Ach cò aige tha fios a bheil sin fìor. Bheir sinn sùil a bharrachd air a' Bhrataich Shìth an ath-sheachdain.