

**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 314 (which corresponds to Litir 618). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I was telling you about George Gunn, the clan chief of the Gunns. He had a nickname – the Bràisteach Mòr [“the great brooched one”]. He was alive in the 15th Century. He had a castle at Kinbrace in Sutherland.*

*A stranger came and he obtained a night's accommodation. A dozen young, handsome men came [in].*

*“Are these your sons?” the stranger asked.*

*“Yes,” the Bràisteach Mòr replied*

*“You many be proud of them,” said the stranger. “I don't know one person in Caithness who wouldn't be envious of them – except one.”*

*“And who is he?” the Bràisteach Mòr asked.*

*“Myself,” the stranger replied. And he revealed who he was. He was Keith of Ackergill, an old enemy from Caithness. “I would put my twelve sons against your own, Gunn, on any day,” he said.*

*Gunn accepted the challenge. Thirteen men were going to fight thirteen men. They were going to be on horseback. They were going to*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Sheòras Gunnach, ceann-cinnidh nan Gunnach. Bha frith-ainm aige – am Bràisteach Mòr. Bha e beò anns a' chòigeamh linn deug. Bha caisteal aige ann an Ceann a' Bhràist no Kinbrace ann an Siorrachd Chataibh.

Thàinig coigreach agus fhuair e cuid na h-oidhche. Thàinig dusan fear òg, àrd, eireachdail.

“An iad seo do mhic?” dh'fhaighnich an coigreach.

“S iad,” fhreagair am Bràisteach Mòr.

“Faodaidh tu a bhith moiteil asta,” ars an coigreach. “Chan eil mi eòlach air aon duine ann an Gallaibh nach biodh farmadach dhiubh – ach amhàin aonan.”

“Agus cò e?” dh'fhaighnich am Bràisteach Mòr.

“Mi fhìn,” fhreagair an srainnsear. Agus leig e a-mach cò e. B' esan Cèith Ackergill, seann nàmhaid à Gallaibh. “Chuirinn mo dhusan mac an aghaidh do chuid fhèin, a Ghunnaich, air latha sam bith,” thuirt e.

Ghabh an Gunnach ris an dùbhlán. Bha trì duine deug a' dol a shabaid an aghaidh trì duine deug. Bha iad gu bhith air muin eich. Bha

*meet in Caithness, in a remote place.*

*The Gunns went to Caithness. They met the Keiths at a burn that ran into the Water of Glutt. According to the Reverend Donald Sage, who wrote the account, the burn was called Allt nan Gamhna (“the burn of the stirks”). I haven’t found that name on modern maps.*

*The Gunns noticed that the Keiths had been involved in treachery. There were two men on each horse. But the Gunns weren’t going to flee. They dismounted and started to fight. The Gunns were brave and valorous. But there were too many men on the other side. The Keiths won the day. The Bràisteach Mòr and seven of his sons were killed. The Keiths stole the famous brooch from the Bràisteach Mòr’s body. And they stole a sword from him also.*

*The other five sons of the Bràisteach Mòr fled. But they stopped at a burn. One of the brothers, Henry, was angry about the Keiths’ deceit. He vowed revenge. We’ll see what happened next week.*

iad a’ dol a choinneachadh ann an Gallaibh, ann an àite iomallach.

Chaidh na Gunnaich a Ghallaibh. Choinnich iad ris na Cèithich aig allt a bha a’ ruith a-steach do dh’Uisge Gluta. A rèir an Urramaich Dòmhnall Saigeach, a sgrìobh an cunntas, ’s e Allt nan Gamhna an t-ainm a bha air an allt. Cha do lorg mi an t-ainm sin air mapaichean an latha an-diugh.

Thug na Gunnaich an aire gun robh Clann Chèith air a bhith ri foill. Bha dithis air gach each. Ach cha robh na Gunnaich a’ dol a theicheadh. Thàinig iad far an each agus thòisich iad air sabaid. Bha na Gunnaich treun is gaisgeil. Ach bha cus dhaoine air an taobh eile. Chaidh an latha le Clann Chèith. Chaidh am Bràisteach Mòr agus seachdnar mhac aige a mharbhadh. Ghoid na Cèithich a’ bhràiste ainmeil bho chorp a’ Bhràistich Mhòir. Agus ghoid iad claidheamh bhuaithe cuideachd.

Thèich an còignear mhac eile aig a’ Bhràisteach Mhòr. Ach stad iad aig allt. Bha fear de na bràithrean, Eanraig, feargach mu fhoill nan Cèitheach. Gheall e dìoghaltas fhaighinn. Chì sinn dè thachair an-ath-sheachdain.