

**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 315 (which corresponds to Litir 619). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.macleane@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.macleane@bbc.co.uk).

*I was telling you about the Bràisteach Mòr, George Gunn. He was the clan chief of the Gunns. I told how he and seven of his sons were killed. That was in combat with the Keiths of Ackergill. The Keiths stole the famous brooch and a sword from the Bràisteach Mòr's body.*

*The Bràisteach Mòr's other five sons fled. One of them, Henry, was angry. He vowed revenge. He was wanting to get the brooch and sword back. The brothers were not united, however. The eldest one, James, refused to go with him. But Henry left with two others.*

*They found the Keiths at Dirlot Castle in central Caithness (there is just a ruin there today). Henry left his two brothers at the door. He himself went to a window. The window was open. The clan chief was sitting inside the room. Henry let an arrow fly towards him. The arrow killed him. "Gunn's compliments to Keith," Henry shouted.*

*The Keiths jumped to their feet. They ran to the door. But the*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun Bhràisteach Mhòr, Seòras Gunnach. B' esan ceann-cinnidh nan Gunnach. Dh'inns mi mar a chaidh e fhèin agus seachdnar mhac aige a mharbhadh. Bha sin ann an còmhrag le Clann Chèith Ackergill. Ghoid na Cèithich a' bhràiste ainmeil agus claidheamh bho chorp a' Bhràistich Mhòir.

Thèich an còignear mhac eile aig a' Bhràisteach Mhòr. Bha fear dhiubh, Eanraig, feargach. Gheall e dìoghaltas fhaighinn. Bha e ag iarraidh a' bhràist agus an claidheamh fhaighinn air ais. Cha robh na bràith-rean aontaichte, getà. Dhiùlt am fear a bu shine, Seumas, a dhol leis. Ach dh'fhalbh Eanraig agus dithis eile.

Lorg iad na Cèithich aig Caisteal Dhirlot ann am meadhan Ghallaibh (tha dìreach tobhta ann an-diugh). Dh'fhàg Eanraig a dhithis bhràithrean aig an doras. Chaidh e fhèin gu uinneag. Bha an uinneag fosgailte. Bha an ceann-cinnidh na shuidhe am broinn an t-seòmair. Leig Eanraig saighead dha ionnsaigh. Mharbh an t-saighead e. "Iomacharag a' Ghunnaich gu Cèith," dh'èigh Eanraig – "Gunn's compliments to Keith."

Leum na Cèithich don casan. Ruith iad chun an dorais. Ach bha na

*Gunns were waiting for them. Man after man, they put them to death. Henry got into the castle. He got hold of his father's brooch and sword. He fled with them.*

*The five brothers met again. James said he was wanting the brooch and the sword, because he was the eldest. But Henry was unhappy. James had not been willing to fight for them. Henry and James fell out with each other. Henry went to live in Caithness.*

*From that time, Henry refused to call himself or any of his descendants by the name "Gunn". It's from him that the Hendersons in Caithness arose, according to oral tradition. They were called "Cheannraigich" in Gaelic.*

*James stayed in Kinbrace. But what happened to the famous brooch? I've no idea.*

Gunnaich a' feitheamh riutha. Fear an dèidh fir, chuir iad gu bàs iad. Fhuair Eanraig a-steach don chaisteal. Fhuair e grèim air a' bhràist agus claidheamh aig athair. Theich e leotha.

Choinnich an còignear bhràithrean a-rithist. Thuir Seumas gun robh e ag iarraidh na bràiste agus a' chlaidheimh, oir b' esan am fear a bu shine. Ach bha Eanraig mì-thoilichte. Cha robh Seumas air a bhith deònach sabaid air an son. Chaidh Eanraig is Seumas a-mach air a chèile. Dh'fhalbh Eanraig a dh'fhuireach ann an Gallaibh.

Bho sin a-mach, dhiùlt Eanraig "Gunnach" a ghabhail air fhèin no air a shliochd. 'S ann bhuaithesan a thàinig na Hendersons ann an Gallaibh, a rèir beul aithris. 'S e "Cheannraigich" a bha orra ann an Gàidhlig.

Dh'fhuirich Seumas ann an Ceann a' Bhràist. Ach dè thachair don bhràiste ainmeil? Chan eil fhios a'm.