

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 316 (which corresponds to Litir 620). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

What's the Gaelic for MacNair/Macnair? Well, in Ross-shire it's Mac 'an Uidhir. It means Mac Iain Uidhir. That's the old form of Mac Iain Odhair or "the son of John of the sallow complexion".

It's not Mac 'an Uidhir that is said, however, for MacNair in the Loch Lomond area. They say Mac an Oighre, "the son of the heir". And they have a story that tells how the name came into being. The title of the story is The Descendants of the Speckled Horse who was Never Wise. I'll come to the story soon.

The story/history goes back to the time of the Battle of Pinkie near Edinburgh, between Scotland and England. That was in 1547. Among the clans that took part in the battle were the MacFarlanes of Arrochar.

The MacFarlanes made plenty of enemies in England. As Scotland and England came closer to each other, the Government in Edinburgh oppressed them. It was said of the MacFarlanes that they were involved in robbery and murder. They lost much of their land.

Now to the story The Descendants of the Speckled Horse who was

Dè a' Ghàidhlig a tha air MacNair? Uill, ann an Siorrachd Rois, Mac 'an Uidhir. Tha e a' ciallachadh Mac Iain Uidhir. 'S e sin an seann dreach air Mac Iain Odhair no "the son of John of the sallow complexion".

*Chan e Mac 'an Uidhir a thathar ag ràdh, ge-tà, ri MacNair ann an sgìre Loch Laomainn. Tha iadsan ag ràdh Mac an Oighre, "the son of the heir". Agus tha stòiridh aca a dh'innseas mar a thàinig an t-ainm gu bith. 'S e tiotal an stòiridh *Sliochd an Eich Bhric Nach Robh Riamh Glic*. Thig mi don stòiridh a dh'aithghearr.*

Tha an eachdraidh a' dol air ais don linn an dèidh Cath Phincidh faisg air Dùn Èideann, eadar Alba is Sasainn. Bha sin ann an còig ceud deug, ceathrad 's a seachd (1547). Am measg nam fineachan a ghabh pàirt anns a' bhatail bha Clann Phàrlain an Arair.

Rinn Clann Phàrlain nàimhdean gu leòr ann an Sasainn. Mar a thàinig Alba is Sasainn na b' fhaisge air a chèile, bha an Riaghaltas ann an Dùn Èideann trom orra. Bhathar a' cur as leth Clann Phàrlain gun robh iad ri mèirle is murt. Chaill iad mòran dhen fhearann aca.

*A-nise, don stòiridh *Sliochd an Eich Bhric Nach Robh Riamh Glic*. Bha*

Never Wise. *MacFarlane of Arr-ochar was married twice. His second wife was an Englishwoman. His first wife left a son. He was the heir. This lad decided to go to Edinburgh. He wanted to speak to the King. He was wanting to get back the land they [had] lost.*

But he didn't have a suitable horse. His horse was ragged. He knew that his half-brother had a beautiful speckled horse. He was the son of his father and his second wife, the Englishwoman. The heir asked his half-brother to give him a loan of the horse – just for his journey to Edinburgh.

The half-brother's mother heard the conversation. She put a stop to the arrangement. She herself made an arrangement about the speckled horse. We'll see what it was in the next Litir.

MacPhàrlain an Arair air a bhith pòsta dà thuras. Bha an dàrna bean aige na ban-Shasannach. Dh'fhàg a chiad bhean mac. B' esan an t-oighre. Chuir an gille seo roimhe a dhol a Dhùn Èideann. Bha e airson bruidhinn ris an Rìgh. Bha e ag iarraidh am fearann a chaill iad fhaighinn air ais.

Ach cha robh each freagarrach aige. Bha an t-each aige robach. Bha fios aige gun robh each bòidheach breac aig a leth-bhràthair. B' esan an gille aig athair agus an dàrna bean aige, an tè Shasannach. Dh'iarr an t-oighre air a leth-bhràthair an t-each a thoirt dha air iasad – dìreach airson a thurais a Dhùn Èideann.

Chuala màthair an leth-bhràthar an còmhradh. Chuir ise stad air a' bhargan. Rinn i fhèin bargan mun each bhreac. Chì sinn dè bha ann anns an ath Litir.