

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 568 (which corresponds to Litir 872). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about the Battle of Largs and the Treaty of Perth. I'm going to read you passages from an old book today. They're about the Battle of Largs. They're from 'The History of Scotland' by Angus Mackenzie. The book was published in 1867. I[ve] changed the text and spelling a little.

Here is the first passage: Håkon's fleet got past the Mull of Kintyre and into the Firth of Clyde. Håkon was an old hero who had been for 46 years the king of Norway [Scandinavia]. Alasdair III wasn't even half his age. But the young hero tricked the old hero.

Do you understand that? How did Alasdair, the young king of Scotland, trick the old Scandinavian king? Well, he delayed the fighting. He was waiting for the autumn storms.

Here is the second passage: Alasdair was collecting soldiers from each part of the kingdom, putting them in small groups around the coastline, facing the fleet; and, in addition to that,

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Chath na Leargaidh Ghallta agus Co-chòrdadh Pheairt. Tha mi a' dol a leughadh dhuibh earrannan beaga à seann leabhar an-diugh. Tha iad mu dheidhinn Cath na Leargaidh Ghallta. Tha iad à 'Eachdraidh na h-Alba' le Aonghas MacCoinnich. Chaidh an leabhar fhoillseachadh ann an ochd ceud deug, seasgad 's a seachd (1867). Dh'atharraich mi an teacs agus an litreachadh beagan.

Seo a' chiad earrann: Fhuair cabhlach Haco ...seachad air Maol Chinntire, 's a-steach do chaolas Chluaidh. Bu sheann laoch Haco, a bha dà fhichead bliadhna 's a sia na rìgh air Lochlann. Cha robh Alasdair III leth sin a dh'aois. Ach thug an laoch òg an car ...às an t-seann laoch.

A bheil sibh a' tuigsinn sin? Ciamar a thug Alasdair, Rìgh òg na h-Alba, car às an t-seann Rìgh Lochlannach? Uill, chuir e dàil air an t-sabaid. Bha e a' feitheamh ri stoirmean an fhoghair.

Seo an dàrna earrann: Bha Alasdair ...a' tional shaighdearan às gach ceàrna dhen rìoghachd, 's gan cuir ann am buidhnean beaga mun cuairt dhen oirthir mu choinneimh nan luingeas; 's a thuilleadh air sin, bha gun

Alasdair was undoubtedly keeping an eye on the elements themselves coming to his aid ... a storm blew up [that was] so terrible and sudden that the Norse thought it was [the] Scottish sorceresses that were raising the wind.

The storm continued for a day and night. Ships were driven onto the rocks. When the wind abated, Håkon and his soldiers went on land. They wanted to save their things from the wrecked ships.

Here is the final passage: They saw the Scottish army, that had now collected from every district, surrounding them ... and King Alasdair himself leading them. They swept the incomers ahead of them down to the shore...

Scotland didn't have a famous victory at the Battle of Largs. But Scotland won the peace that followed [it]. And that fortified Scotland in good time [for it] to stand up to the English in the Wars of Independence. But that's another story.

teagamh sùil aig Alasdair ris na h-eileamaidean fhèin a thighinn ga chòmhnadh ... shèid stoirm cho uabhasach 's cho obann 's gun do shaoil na Lochlannaich gum b' iad na bandraoidhean Albannach a bha a' togail na gaoithe.

Lean an stoirm fad latha is oidhche. Chaidh longan a sguabadh air na creagan. Nuair a shocraich a' ghaoth, chaidh Håkon agus a shaighdearan gu tìr. Bha iad airson an stuth aca a shàbhaladh bho na longan briste.

Seo an earrann mu dheireadh: *Chunnaic iad an t-arm Albannach, a bha nis air tional às gach ceàrna, ag iadhadh mun timcheall ... 's rìgh Alasdair fhèin air an ceann. Sguab iad na h-eilthirich sìos romhpa gu beul na mara ...*

Cha robh buaidh mhòr aig Alba ann an Cath na Leargaidh Ghallta. Ach bhuannaich Alba an t-sìthe a lean air. Agus dhaingnich sin Alba ann an deagh àm airson seasamh an aghaidh nan Sasannach ann an Cogaidhean na Neo-eisimeileachd. Ach 's e sgeul eile a tha sin.