

# 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 750 (which corresponds to Litir 1,054). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I was telling you about the Battle of Glen Fruin. It happened west of Loch Lomond in the year 1603.*

*The day was going with the MacGregors, and the Colquhouns were running ahead of them down Glen Fruin. The MacGregors met the head of Dumbarton University and his students – thirty-seven people. The head said to the chief of the MacGregors, Alasdair Dubh, that he was putting the young folk in his care.*

*There was a barn nearby. Alasdair Dubh ordered that the students be put there under the care of one of his men, Eòghann Dubh. Now, Eòghann wasn't the brightest puppy in the litter. He didn't understand his obligation. He thought that the boys were his prisoners. He stood with his sword outside the barn door and he locked the door.*

*After the battle, the MacGregors were returning home. They reached the barn. Alasdair saw Eòghann Dubh. 'Eòghann,' he said, 'what did you do with the lads I left in your care?'*

*Eòghann admitted he had killed every one of them. 'God forbid,' said Alasdair. He went to the barn. The lads were all lying dead. They had been trying to get out because the air was becoming contaminated inside the barn.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Chath Ghlinn Freòin. Thachair e gu siar air Loch Laomainn anns a' bhliadhna sia ceud deug 's a trì (1603).

Bha an latha a' dol leis na Griogaraich, agus bha Clann a' Chombaich a' ruith romhpa sìos Gleann Freòin. Thachair na Griogaraich air ceannard Oilthigh Dhùn Bhreatann agus oileanaich aige – trithead 's a seachd daoine. Thuir an ceannard ri ceann-cinnidh nan Griogarach, Alasdair Dubh, gun robh e a' cur na h-òigridh fo a chùram-san.

Bha sabhal faisg air làimh. Dh'òrdaich Alasdair Dubh na h-oileanaich a chur an sin fo chùram fear de na daoine aige, Eòghann Dubh. Nise, cha b' e Eòghann an cuilean a bu ghlice san àl. Cha do thuig e dè bha fa-near dha. Bha esan dhen bheachd gun robh na gillean nam prìosanaich aige. Sheas e le a chlaidheamh taobh a-muigh doras an t-sabhail agus ghlas e an doras.

An dèidh a' chatha, bha na Griogaraich a' tilleadh dhachaigh. Ràinig iad an sabhal. Chunnaic Alasdair Eòghann Dubh. 'Eòghann,' thuir e, 'dè rinn thu leis na gillean a dh'fhàg mi fod chùram?'

Dh'aidich Eòghann gun robh e air a h-uile mac màthar dhiubh a mharbhadh. 'Gun sealladh Dia oirne,' thuir Alasdair. Chaidh e don t-sabhal. Bha na gillean uile nan laighe marbh. Bha iad air a bhith a' feuchainn ri faighinn a-mach a chionn 's gun robh an t-àile

*They didn't speak Gaelic and Eòghann didn't speak English. He thought that they were trying to escape. And he killed them.*

*The MacGregors were indignant about what had happened. They were certain that vengeance would be visited upon them from the Lowlands, and they were correct. They were outlawed.*

*In the first Litir about the Battle of Glen Fruin, I told you how the MacGregor merchants killed a white-tailed black wether. That's what put them on the gibbet, and caused the battle.*

*A saying arose among the MacGregors. 'It would have been better had the black wether with the white tail never been born.' It would have been better had the black wether with the white tail never been born. Indeed it would.*

air a thruilleadh am broinn an t-sabhail. Cha robh Gàidhlig aca 's cha robh Beurla aig Eòghann. Bha esan a' smaoinichadh gun robh iad a' feuchainn ri dol-às a dhèanamh. Agus mharbh e iad.

Bha na Griogaraich diombach mu na thachair. Bha iad deimhinne gun tigeadh dìoghaltas orra bhon Ghalltachd, agus bha iad ceart. Bha iad air an dèanamh nan eucoirich.

Anns a' chiad Litir mu Chath Ghlinn Freòin, dh'inns mi dhuibh mar a mharbh na marsantaich Ghriogarach molt le earball geal. 'S e sin a chuir air a' chroich iad, agus a dh'adhbharaich an cath.

Dh'èirich gnàth-fhacal aig na Griogaraich: 'B' fheàrr nach do rugadh a-riamh molt dubh an earbaill ghil'. B' fheàrr nach do rugadh a-riamh molt dubh an earbaill ghil. B' fheàrr, gu dearbh.