

# **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 764 (which corresponds to Litir 1,068). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*Happy New Year [to you]. I'm going to start with a question. Who is the Scottish king who is named in the Magna Carta – the important English document? The answer is – King Alexander II or Alexander son of William, son of Henry, son of David. He ascended to the throne in 1214. He took a Scottish army with him across the English border to help the English nobles against King John. He was hoping to gain land in England.*

*It didn't happen, however. Things changed politically in England. Alexander returned home without a prize. He turned his attention then to the Scottish lands that were controlled by the Norse. He was campaigning against the Norse when he died on [the island of] Kerrera, near Oban in 1249.*

*When Alexander was in England, the nobles of England and King John came together to write the Magna Carta – a document that established the rights of the barons. And Alexander is named in it.*

*I was thinking of the Magna Carta because my attention was on another document – The Declaration of Arbroath. Among the people of Britain, the Magna Carta is known. Even in*

Bliadhna Mhath Ùr dhuibh. Tha mi a' dol a thòiseachadh le ceist. Cò an Rìgh Albannach a tha air ainmeachadh anns a' *Mhagna Carta* – an sgrìobhainn chudromach Shasannach? 'S e am fuasgladh – Rìgh Alasdair II no Alasdair mac Uilleim 'ic Eanraig 'ic Dhaibhidh. Ghabh e an rìgh-chathair ann an dà cheud deug is ceithir-deug (1214). Thug e armailt Albannach leis thar crìoch Shasainn airson taic a thoirt do na h-uaislean Sasannach an aghaidh Rìgh Iain. Bha e an dòchas fearann fhaighinn ann an Sasainn.

Cha do thachair e, ge-tà. Dh'atharraich cùisean gu poilitigeach ann an Sasainn. Thill Alasdair dhachaigh gun duais. Thug e sùil an uair sin air na tìrean Albannach a bha fo smachd nan Lochlannach. Bha e ag iomairt an aghaidh nan Lochlannach nuair a chaochail e ann an Cerrara, faisg air an Òban, ann an dà cheud deug, ceathrad 's a naoi (1249).

Nuair a bha Alasdair ann an Sasainn, thàinig uaislean Shasainn agus Rìgh Iain còmhla airson am *Magna Carta* a sgrìobhadh – sgrìobhainn a bha a' daingneachadh chòraichean nam baran. Agus tha Alasdair air ainmeachadh ann.

Bha mi a' beachdachadh air a' *Mhagna Carta* oir bha m' aire air sgrìobhainn eile – Foirgheall Obar Bhrothaig – *The Declaration of Arbroath*. Am measg muinntir Bhreatainn, tha am *Magna Carta* aithnichte. Eadhon ann

*Scotland, the Declaration of Arbroath is not as well known.*

*But I expect that to change this year. The seven hundred years since the Declaration of Arbroath was sent to the Pope in Avignon will be commemorated. I hope that it will be as well known as the Magna Carta before the year is out.*

*And why wouldn't it be? We have no more important declaration. It stands as a presentation of freedom and independence. And it proves that the Scots considered that a king only reigned with the permission of the people.*

*In Arbroath, much will be happening as a commemoration of it. I'd be surprised if there weren't an American or two present. Some people consider the Declaration of Arbroath to be among the documents on which the American Declaration of Independence was based.*

an Alba, chan eil Foirgheall Obar Bhrothaig cho aithnichte ris.

Ach tha dùil agam gun atharraich sin am-bliadhna. Bithear a' comharrachadh seachd ceud bliadhna on a chaidh Foirgheall Obar Bhrothaig a chur don Phàp ann an Avignon. Tha mi an dòchas gum bi e a cheart cho aithnichte ris a' *Mhagna Carta* mus bi a' bhliadhna a-mach.

Agus carson nach bitheadh? Chan eil foirgheall nas cudromaiche againn. Tha e a' seasamh mar thaisbeanadh de shaorsa is neo-eisimeileachd. Agus tha e a' dearbhadh gun robh na h-Albannaich dhen bheachd gun robh rìgh a' riaghladh a-mhàin le cead an t-sluaigh.

Ann an Obar Bhrothaig, bidh tòrr a' dol mar chuimhneachan air. Cuiridh e iongnadh orm mura bi Ameireaganach no dhà an làthair. Tha cuid dhen bheachd gun robh Foirgheall Obar Bhrothaig am measg nan sgrìobhainnean air an robh Foirgheall Neo-eisimeileachd nan Stàitean Aonaichte stèidhichte.