

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 778 (which corresponds to Litir 1,082). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about the meeting in Inverness between Robert the Bruce and Norwegian representatives. That was in 1312. The King was there to ratify an agreement between the two countries – the Treaty of Perth.

Scotland had to send a hundred merks to Norway every year. But what happened to that agreement? Does Scotland still send money to Norway every year?

Well, no. The compensation was cancelled in 1469, when the Danish princess – Margaret – married King James III. Three years after that, the King of Denmark had not paid the dowry. Thus, Orkney and Shetland came under the control of Scotland in place of the dowry.

I found out about the meeting in Inverness as part of research on the city and the areas around it. Among those areas are Petty and Ardersier – east of Inverness.

For a long time the people there spoke Gaelic. They had a Gaelic culture. Many of them believed in the fairies. A short

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun choinneimh ann an Inbhir Nis eadar Raibeart am Brusach agus riochdairean Nirribhidh. Bha sin ann an trì cheud deug is dhà-dheug (1312). Bha an Rìgh ann airson aonta eadar an dà dhùthaich – Co-chòrdadh Pheairt – a dhaingneachadh.

Bha aig Alba ri ceud marg a chur gu Nirribhidh gach bliadhna. Ach dè thachair don aonta sin? Am bi Alba fhathast a' cur airgead gu Nirribhidh gach bliadhna?

Uill, cha bhi. Chaidh a chur às don dìoladh ann an ceithir cheud deug, seasgad 's a naoi (1469), nuair a phòs a' bhana-phrionnsa Dànach – Màiread – Rìgh Seumas III. Trì bliadhna an dèidh sin, cha robh Rìgh na Danmhairg air an tochradh a phàigheadh. Mar sin, thàinig Arcaibh is Sealtainn fo smachd na h-Alba an àite an tochruidh.

Fhuair mi a-mach mun choinneimh ann an Inbhir Nis mar phàirt de rannsachadh air a' bhaile agus na sgìrean mun chuairt air. Am measg nan sgìrean sin, tha Peitidh agus Àird nan Saor – gu sear air Inbhir Nis.

Airson ùine mhòr bha Gàidhlig aig na daoine an sin. Bha cultar Gàidhealach aca. Bha gu leòr dhiubh a' creidsinn anns na sìthichean. Pìos beag a-mach à baile Àird

distance from the village of Ardersier, there is a small knoll called Tom Eanraig 'Henry's knoll'. People said the fairies would go there, particularly at night under moonlight.

Around the year 1730, there was a man called Munro. He had a baby. The baby was weak and 'atrophied'. Our friend was of the opinion that it was a changeling. That was a child the fairies left in place of his own child. I expect that the child's name was Henry.

Anyway, Mr Munro believed that if he left the baby on the knoll overnight, that the correct baby would be there in its place in the morning. He left the baby on the knoll. He went home. But, when he returned in the morning, the poor baby was dead. And that's my story.

nan Saor, tha tom beag ris an canar Tom Eanraig. Tha e air na mapaichean fhathast. Bha daoine ag ràdh gum biodh sìthichean a' dol ann, gu h-àraidh air an oidhche fo sholas na gealaich.

Timcheall air a' bhliadhna seachd ceud deug is trithead (1730), bha fear ann air an robh Rothach mar ainm. Bha leanabh aige. Bha an leanabh lag is neo-chomasach. Bha ar caraaid dhen bheachd gur e tàcharan a bha ann. B' e sin leanabh a dh'fhàg na sìthichean an àite an naoidhein aige fhèin. Tha mi an dùil gur e Eanraig a bha air an leanabh mar ainm.

Co-dhiù, bha Mgr Rothach a' creidsinn, nam fàgadh e an leanabh air an tom thairis air an oidhche, gum biodh an leanabh ceart ann na àite sa mhadainn. Dh'fhàg e an leanabh air an tom. Chaidh e dhachaigh. Ach, nuair a thill e sa mhadainn, bha an leanabh bochd marbh. Agus sin agaibh mo sgeul.