

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 789 (which corresponds to Litir 1,093). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about William Wallace. He wanted to exact revenge on the English governor in Lanark. He climbed the stair to the governor's bedroom. He broke in, and he killed the governor with his sword.

There was great disorder then. At the end of the affair many English soldiers were dead. When the news spread about what had transpired, Wallace got a large number of new followers. According to the account, the English were afraid of Wallace. But they were cunning. Instead of fighting him, they sent him an invitation. They wanted to meet him peacefully.

The conference was in a large wooden building – 'The Barns of Ayr'. The Scots came little by little. When each man entered, there was a noose awaiting him. One after another, they were hanged.

Wallace was late. When he reached the place, a woman stopped him. She told him what was happening in the building. Wallace and his friends closed the building. They set fire to it. Many people were killed. That's how 'The Black Parliament of Ayr' came to an end.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Uilleam Uallas. Bha e airson dìoghaltas a dhèanamh air an riaghladair Shasannach ann an Lanraig. Dhìrich e an staidhre gu seòmar-cadail an riaghladair. Bhris e a-steach, agus mharbh e an riaghladair le a chlaitheamh.

Bha ùpraid ann an uair sin. Aig deireadh a' ghnòthaich, bha an t-uabhas de na saighdearan Sasannach marbh. Nuair a sgaoil an naidheachd mu na thachair, fhuair Uallas àireamh mhòr de luchd-leantainn ùra. A rèir a' chunntais, bha na Sasannaich a' gabhail eagal ro Uallas. Ach bha iad seòlta. An àite a bhith ri cogadh na aghaidh, chuir iad cuireadh thuige. Bha iad airson coinneachadh ris gu sìtheil.

Bha a' cho-labhairt ann an togalach mòr fiodha – 'Saibhlean Inbhir Àir'. Thàinig na h-Albannaich beag air bheag. Nuair a chaidh gach fear a-steach, bha ròpa-crochaidh a' feitheamh ris. Fear an dèidh fear, chaidh an crochadh.

Bha Uallas fadalach. Nuair a ràinig e an t-àite, chuir boireannach stad air. Dh'inns i dha gu dè bha a' tachairt anns an togalach. Dhùin Uallas is a chàirdean an togalach. Chuir iad teine ris. Chaidh mòran a mharbhadh. 'S ann mar sin a chrìochnaich 'Pàrlamaid Dhubh Inbhir Àir'.

There was then a bit of a guerilla war. Bit by bit, Wallace gained control of every barracks north of the Forth, except for the Castle of Dundee. In August 1297, his force was surrounding the Castle of Dundee.

Then he heard that the Earl of Surrey had a big field army coming against him. He went to Stirling to meet him before the English got across the bridge there. There was no other easy way to the north.

The Earl of Surrey was old and in poor health. The command was really in the hands of Hugh [de] Cressingham, the treasurer of the English administration in Scotland. Before the battle, many of the Scottish nobles went over to the English side. They were of the opinion that Wallace would lose. His force was small in comparison with Cressingham's. But how did he get on at The Battle of Stirling Bridge? I'll tell you next week.

Bha nàdar de chogadh-guerilla ann an uair sin. Mean air mhean, fhuair Uallas smachd air a h-uile gearastan gu tuath air Abhainn Foirthe, ach a-mhàin Caisteal Dhùn Dè. Anns an Lùnastal dà cheud deug, naochad 's a seachd (1297), bha an armailt aige a' cuartachadh Caisteal Dhùn Dè.

An uair sin, chuala e gun robh armailt mhòr aig Iarla Shurraidh a' tighinn na aghaidh. Chaidh e a Shruighlea airson coinneachadh ris mus fhaigheadh na Sasannaich tarsainn na drochaid an sin. Cha robh rathad furasta eile gu tuath, seach sin.

Bha Iarla Shurraidh sean agus ann an droch shlàinte. Bha an comann ann an dha-rìreabh aig Ùisdean Cressingham, fear-ionmhais an luchd-riaghlaidh Shasannaich ann an Alba. Ron chath, chaidh gu leòr de dh'uaislean na h-Alba a-null gu taobh Shasainn. Bha iad dhen bheachd gun cailleadh Uallas. Bha an armailt aige beag, an coimeas ri armailt Chressingham. Ach ciamar a chaidh dha ann an Cath Drochaid Shruighlea? Innsidh mi dhuibh an-ath-sheachdain.