

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 790 (which corresponds to Litir 1,094). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I'll bring my account of William Wallace to a close today. In September 1297, Wallace and his companion, Andrew de Moray, went to Stirling Bridge. They were on the north side of the bridge. They had thousands of soldiers.

The English had a much bigger army, however. They were under the command of John de Warenne, the Earl of Surrey and Hugh de Cressingham, the treasure of the English governors in Scotland. They were waiting south of the bridge.

De Warenne sent two priests over to where Wallace was. They were offering forgiveness to the Scots if they put down their weapons. Wallace refused the offer.

Matters went well for the English to begin with. The Scots stood where they were. English cavalry crossed the bridge. They were followed by infantry. Still, the Scots did not attack them.

But they were not idle. Wallace asked a group of spearmen to go down to the river. When half of the English army had crossed, the spearmen closed the bridge. Wallace's soldiers

Bheir mi an cunntas agam air Uilleam Uallas gu crìch an-diugh. Anns an t-Sultain, dà cheud deug, naochad 's a seachd (1297), chaidh Uallas agus a chompanach Anndra Moireach a Dhrochaid Shruighlea. Bha iad air an taobh tuath dhen drochaid. Bha na mìltean shaighdearan aca.

Bha armailt tòrr na bu mhotha aig na Sasannaich, ge-tà. Bha iad fo stiùir Iain Uarainn, Iarla Shurraidh, agus Ùisdean Cresingham, ionmhasair an luchd-riaghlaidh Shasannaich ann an Alba. Bha iad a' feitheamh gu deas air an drochaid.

Chuir Uarainn dithis shagartan a-null far an robh Uallas. Bha iad a' tairgsinn maitheanas do na h-Albannaich nan leigeadh iad sìos an armachd. Dhiùlt Uallas an tagradh.

Chaidh gnothaichean gu math do na Sasannaich an toiseach. Sheas na h-Albannaich far an robh iad. Chaidh marcshluagh Shasainn tarsainn na drochaid. Bha iad air an leantainn le saighdearan-coise. Fhathast, cha tug na h-Albannaich ionnsaigh orra.

Ach cha robh iad dìomhain. Dh'iarr Uallas air buidheann de luchd-sleagha dhol sìos don abhainn. Nuair a bha leth de dh'armailt nan Sasannach air a dhol tarsainn, dhùin an luchd-sleagha an drochaid. Thug

attacked those who had already crossed the bridge.

The English cavalry retreated, backwards. They were now among their own infantry. There was uproar. The Scots won the day. It was said, of the large number of English who crossed the bridge, that only three survived. Cressingham was among the dead.

The Earl of Surrey reckoned they weren't safe where they were. His army fled to Berwick on the English side of the Border. That wasn't all. The English soldiers fled from the castles that they had held in the south of Scotland.

William Wallace thus gave Scotland its [her] freedom. He was recognised as the country's governor. That wasn't the end of the story, however. King Edward of England, who was on the mainland of Europe, was very angry about what happened. But I'll leave the rest of the story to another day.

saighdearan Uallais ionnsaigh air an fheadhainn a bh' air a dhol tarsainn na h-aibhne mu-thràth.

Chaidh am marc-shluagh Sasannach air ais, an comhair an cùil. Bha iad a-nise am measg nan saighdearan-coise aca fhèin. Bha buaireadh ann. Chaidh an latha leis na h-Albannaich. Bhathar ag ràdh, dhen àireamh mhòr de Shasannaich a chaidh tarsainn na drochaid, nach d' fhuair às beò ach trìuir. Bha Cressingham am measg nam marbh.

Bha Iarla Shurraidh dhen bheachd nach robh iad sàbhailte far an robh iad. Theich an armailt aige gu ruige Bearaig air taobh Shasainn dhen chrìch. Cha b' e sin a-mhàin. Theich na saighdearan Sasannach bho na caistealan, a bha air a bhith nan làmhnan, ann an ceann a deas na h-Alba.

Thug Uilleam Uallas mar sin a saorsa a dh'Alba. Chaidh aithneachadh mar riaghladair na dùthcha. Cha b' e sin deireadh an sgeòil, ge-tà. Bha Rìgh Eideard Shasainn, a bha air tìr-mòr na Roinn Eòrpa, gu math feargach mu na thachair. Ach fàgaidh mi an còrr dhen sgeul gu latha eile.