

# 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 800 (which corresponds to Litir 1,104). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I was telling you about St Merchard and Glenmoriston. Now, I'd like to tell you about places around that area, that are connected with a war between the MacKenzies and the MacDonalds.*

*In the year 1602, the MacKenzies took control of Strome Castle from the MacDonalds. That is in Wester Ross. The heir of Mac Raghnaill [MacDonnell] from Lundie in Glengarry was angry about it. He was Ailean Dubh mac Raghnaill. He decided to gain revenge on the MacKenzies.*

*He travelled through the MacKenzie country, disguised as a pedlar. That was to obtain knowledge of his enemies' country. In September 1603, he took with him a force from Glengarry to the Black Isle. They destroyed a church congregation near Muir of Ord. They killed many MacKenzies.*

*On the way home, they stopped on a moor between Meall Fuarvonie and Loch Ness. A force of MacKenzies was in pursuit of them. They saw the MacDonalds*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Naomh Meircheard agus Gleann Moireasdan. Anise, bu mhath leam innse dhuibh mu àiteachan timcheall na sgìre sin, a tha co-cheangailte ri cogadh eadar Clann 'ic Coinnich agus na Dòmhnallaich.

Anns a' bhliadhna sia ceud deug 's a dhà (1602), ghabh Clann 'ic Coinnich greim air Caisteal an t-Sròim bho na Dòmhnallaich. Tha sin air taobh an iar Rois. Bha oighre Mhic Raghnaill à Lunndaidh ann an Gleanna Garadh fiadhaich mu dheidhinn. B' esan Ailean Dubh mac Raghnaill. Chuir e roimhe dìoghaltas a dhèanamh air Cloinn 'ic Coinnich.

Chaidh e mun chuairt ann an Dùthaich 'ic Coinnich ann an riochd ceannaiche-siubhail. Bha sin airson eòlas fhaighinn air dùthaich a nàimhdean. Anns an t-Sultain sia ceud deug 's a trì (1603), thug e feachd leis à Gleanna Garadh gu ruige an t-Eilean Dubh. Rinn iad sgrìos air coitheanal eaglaise faisg air a' Bhlàr Dhubh. Mharbh iad tòrr de Chloinn 'ic Coinnich.

Air an rathad dhachaigh, stad iad air mòinteach eadar Meall Fuar-mhonaidh agus Loch Nis. Bha feachd aig Clann 'ic Coinnich air an tòir. Chunnaic iad na Dòmhnallaich agus thàinig iad sìos orra.

*and descended upon them. That place is still called 'the damp meadow of the blood'.*

*Ailean Dubh escaped with his life. He reached Allt a' Ghiubhais. There was a deep gorge there. He jumped over the burn. One of the MacKenzies tried to follow him, but his leap was short. He fell backwards and grabbed a small tree. Ailean Dubh turned. With a sword-blow, he cut the tree's trunk. The other man fell to the bottom of the gorge.*

*The place where Ailean leapt is still known as 'the merchant's leap'. You'll remember that Ailean was going around Ross-shire pretending he was a travelling-merchant [pedlar]. That is the reason for the name.*

*Ailean went to the shore of Loch Ness. The chief of the Frasers of Foyers was waiting for him with a boat.*

*That wasn't the end of the matter, however, as we'll see next week.*

Mharbh iad tòrr de na Dòmhnallaich, agus 's e Lòn na Fala, no Lòn na Fola, a chanas daoine ris an àite sin fhathast.

Teich Ailean Dubh le a bheatha. Ràinig e Allt a' Ghiubhais. Bha clais dhomhainn ann. Leum e thairis air an allt. Dh'fheuch fear de Chloinn 'ic Coinnich leantainn air, ach bha an leum aige goirid. Thuit e an comhair a chùil agus ghabh e grèim air craobh bheag. Thionndaidh Ailean Dubh. Le beum-claidheimh, gheàrr e stoc na craoibhe. Thuit am fear eile gu bonn na claise.

Tha an t-àite far an do leum Ailean aithnichte fhathast mar Leum a' Cheannaiche. Bidh cuimhne agaibh gun robh Ailean a' dol timcheall ann an Siorrachd Rois, a' toirt a' chreidsinn gur e ceannaiche-siubhail a bha ann. 'S e sin as coireach ris an ainm.

Chaidh Ailean gu cladach Loch Nis. Bha ceann-cinnidh nam Frisealach à Foithir a' feitheamh ris le bàta.

Cha b' e sin deireadh a' ghnòthaich, ge-tà, mar a chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain.