

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 817 (which corresponds to Litir 1,121). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Recently I took a walk to a hill on the Black Isle. There is a flapole on the top, with the flag of Scotland on it. The place is called Ormond Hill. There was at one time a big castle on it – Ormond Castle.

In his book – Place-names of Ross and Cromarty – William (J) Watson tells us about the place. But he does not tell us what the Gaelic is for Ormond Castle. The castle is also known in English as 'The Castle of Avoch'. It's near a village called Avoch. Perhaps Caisteal Abhaich is the correct Gaelic for it.

In the 13th century, the castle was in the hands of a powerful family – the Morays. The most famous of them was Andrew Moray. He was known in English as Andrew de Moray. His family had a large amount of land in Moray.

In 1296, the King of England, Edward I, was preparing to invade Scotland with a large army. Edward had taken advantage of the country's situation. She was without a king or queen. However, the people of Scotland stood against him. War was on the horizon.

O chionn ghoirid ghabh mi cuairt gu cnoc anns an Eilean Dubh. Tha brat-chrann air a' mhullach, le bratach na h-Alba air. 'S e an t-ainm air an àite *Ormond Hill*. Bha uaireigin caisteal mòr air – *Ormond Castle*.

Anns an leabhar aige – *Place-names of Ross and Cromarty* – tha Uilleam MacBhàtair ag innse dhuinn mun àite. Ach chan eil e ag innse dhuinn dè a' Ghàidhlig a tha air *Ormond Castle*. Tha an caisteal air aithneachadh ann am Beurla cuideachd mar '*The Castle of Avoch*'. Tha e faisg air baile beag ris an canar Abhach. 'S dòcha gur e Caisteal Abhaich a' Ghàidhlig cheart air.

Anns an treas linn deug, bha an caisteal ann an làmhan teaghlach cumhachdach – na Moirich. B' e am fear a b' ainmeile dhiubh Anndra Moireach. Bha e aithnichte ann am Beurla mar Andrew de Moray. Bha fearann mòr aig an teaghlach aige ann am Moireibh.

Ann an dà cheud deug, naochad 's a sia (1296), bha Rìgh Shasainn, Eideard I, a' dèanamh deiseil airson armailt mhòr a thoirt a-steach a dh'Alba. Bha Eideard air brath a ghabhail air suidheachadh na dùthcha. Bha i às aonais rìgh no banrigh. Ge-tà, sheas muinntir na h-Alba na aghaidh. Bha cogadh air fàire.

Andrew de Moray went to the south of Scotland to stand against Edward. But, at the Battle of Dunbar, the day went with the English. Andrew was captured. He was imprisoned in Chester Castle.

He wasn't there long, however. During the winter he escaped from his prison. He made his way home. Scotland had been suffering, particularly as the English administration inflicted heavy taxes on the people. Andrew was angry about it.

He went to his castle near Avoch. He raised his standard. He declared how he was going to stand against the English. At the same time, another man was doing the same thing in the south of Scotland. He was William Wallace. Together, Wallace and Andrew de Moray would change the history of Scotland.

Chaidh Anndra Moireach gu ruige ceann a deas na h-Alba airson seasamh an aghaidh Eideard. Ach, aig Blàr Dhùn Barra, chaidh an latha leis na Sasannaich. Chaidh Anndra a ghlacadh. Bha e air a ghlasadh ann an Caisteal Chester.

Cha robh e ann fada, ge-tà. Anns a' gheamhradh rinn e dol-às bhon phrìosan aige. Rinn e a shlighe dhachaigh. Bha Alba air a bhith a' fulang, gu h-àraidh leis gun do chuir an luchd-riaghlaidh Sasannach cìsean mòra air an t-sluagh. Bha Anndra fiadhaich mu dheidhinn.

Chaidh e do a chaisteal faisg air Abhach. Thog e a shuaicheantas. Chuir e an cèill mar a bha e a' dol a sheasamh an aghaidh nan Sasannach. Aig an aon àm, bha fear eile a' dèanamh an aon rud ann an ceann a deas na h-Alba. B' esan Uilleam Uallas. Còmhla, bhiodh Uallas agus Anndra Moireach ag atharrachadh eachdraidh na h-Alba.