

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 541 (which corresponds to Litir 845). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Before we leave Strathardle, I want to tell you about a battle between clans that is famous in the history of the Highlands. It brings in Strathardle and Inverness.

It happened in 1333. A group of Munros from Easter Ross were returning home from Edinburgh. They were travelling through Strathardle and Glen Fernate.

They camped for the night. But they didn't seek permission from the landlord. Local people came out. They cut the tails from the Munros' horses. The place is called 'the field of the tails' because of that.

The Munros put together a force. They returned to Strathardle and engaged in plunder. They took away all the cattle.

On the way home, they went through Moy, Mackintosh country. The Mackintosh wanted half of the booty. The Munros refused that and continued on their way. The Mackintosh was angry. The Munros went through

Mus fhàg sinn Srath Àrdail tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu chath eadar fineachan a tha ainmeil ann an eachdraidh na Gàidhealtachd. Tha e a' toirt a-steach Srath Àrdail agus Inbhir Nis.

Thachair e ann an trì cheud deug, trithead 's a trì (1333). Bha buidheann de Rothaich à taobh sear Rois a' tilleadh dhachaigh à Dùn Èideann. Bha iad a' siubhal tro Shrath Àrdail agus Gleann Feàrnaid.

Champaich iad airson na h-oidhche. Ach cha do dh'iarr iad cead bhon uachdaran. Thàinig muinntir an àite a-mach. Gheàrr iad na h-earbail far eich nan Rothach. 'S e Dail nan Earball ainm an àite air sgàth sin.

Chuir na Rothaich feachd ri chèile. Thill iad gu Srath Àrdail agus rinn iad sgrios. Thug iad air falbh an crodh gu lèir.

Air an rathad dhachaigh, chaidh iad tron Mhòigh, dùthaich Mhic an Tòisich. Dh'iarr Mac an Tòisich leth dhen fheudail. Dhiùlt na Rothaich sin agus lean iad air an slighe. Bha Mac an Tòisich feargach. Chuir e feachd ri chèile. Chaidh na Rothaich tro Inbhir

Inverness. They were on the road to Beauly. The Mackintoshes caught them at Clachnaharry.

Munro sent half of his men home with the booty. The others turned to fight the Mackintoshes. There was terrible death. That battle is still remembered by the people of Inverness.

Dail nan Earball, where this story began, is not marked on the maps. But we know where it is. Charles Fergusson from Strathardle researched it.

He spoke to old folk in the area in an attempt to find out where Dail nan Earball was. For eleven years, he failed. He suspected that the knowledge was lost.

However, Charles' old schoolmaster was speaking to an elderly man, Robert Fleming, in Glenshee. Fleming was living in Glen Fernate when he was young. He knew Dail nan Earball. And, because of that, we know today where the tails were cut off the Munros' horses.

Nis. Bha iad air an rathad don Mhanachainn. Fhuair Clann 'ic an Tòisich grèim orra aig Clach na h-Aithrigh.

Chuir an Rothach an leth-chuid de na daoine aige dhachaigh leis an fheudail. Thionndaidh càch airson cath a chur ri Clann 'ic an Tòisich. Bha bàs uabhasach ann. Tha an cath sin fhathast ann an cuimhne muinntir Inbhir Nis.

Chan eil Dail nan Earball, far an do thòisich an sgeul seo, comharraichte air na mapaichean. Ach tha fios againn far a bheil e. Rinn Teàrlach MacFhearghais à Srath Àrdail rannsachadh air.

Bhruidhinn e ri seann daoine anns an sgìre, feuch faighinn a-mach cà' robh Dail nan Earball. Airson aon bhliadhn' deug, dh'fhàilnich air. Bha e an amharas gun robh fios air sin air chall.

Ge-tà, bha an seann mhaighstir-sgoile aig Teàrlach a' bruidhinn ri bodach, Raibeart Fleming, ann an Gleann Sith. Bha Fleming a' fuireach ann an Gleann Feàrnaid nuair a bha e òg. Bha e eòlach air Dail nan Earball. Agus, leis an sin, tha fios againn an-diugh far an deach na h-earbaill a ghearradh far eich nan Rothach.