

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 695 (which corresponds to Litir 999). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was reporting on the last king to be a Gaelic-speaker – James IV. In England, Henry VIII obtained the throne in 1509. He started to expand the English navy. He built a great warship, the Mary Rose.

James IV, King of Scotland, also had great ambition, although Scotland was small and poor in comparison with England. He was involved in a crusade against the Ottoman Empire. He built the Great Michael. She was named after the Archangel Michael. She was built in Newhaven near Edinburgh. She was launched in 1512. She was twice the size of the Mary Rose.

The Great Michael was made of oak. She had four masts and her hull was extremely thick. She had more than fifty guns. She had a crew of three hundred sailors and a thousand soldiers.

She was afloat for a year and a half when she was asked to go across the English Channel. That was in order to attack English territories in France. Scotland was

Bha mi a' dèanamh aithris air an rìgh mu dheireadh aig an robh Gàidhlig – Seumas IV. Ann an Sasainn, fhuair Eanraig VIII an rìgh-chathair ann an còig ceud deug is naoi (1509). Thòisich e air cabhlach Shasainn a leudachadh. Thog e long-chogaidh mhòr, am *Mary Rose*.

Bha glòir-mhiann aig Rìgh na h-Alba, Seumas IV, cuideachd, ged a bha Alba beag is bochd an coimeas ri Sasainn. Bha e ag iarraidh cabhlach mòr nàiseanta a bhiodh an sàs ann an cogadh-croise an aghaidh Ìmpireachd nan Ottoman. Thog e an *Great Michael*. Bha i air a h-ainmeachadh an dèidh an Àrd-aingeil Mìcheal. Chaidh a togail ann an Newhaven faisg air Dùn Èideann. Chaidh a cur air bhog ann an còig ceud deug is dhà-dheug (1512). Bha i a dhà uiread na bu mhotha na am *Mary Rose*.

Bha an *Great Michael* air a togail de fhiodh daraich. Bha ceithir crainn oirre agus bha a slige air leth tiugh. Bha còrr is caogad gunna oirre. Bha sgiob' aice de thrì cheud maraiche agus suas ri mìle saighdear.

Bha i air bhog airson bliadhna gu leth nuair a chaidh iarraidh oirre dhol thar Caolas Shasainn. Bha sin airson ionnsaigh a thoirt air àiteachan a bha le Sasainn anns an Fhraing. Bha Alba ann an seann

in an auld alliance with France.

Just a month after that, James took an army with him, with thirty thousand men in it, over the English border[s]. The two armies met each other at Flodden in Northumberland. The English won the day. James was killed.

When Henry VIII saw the plans for the Great Michael he ordered that an even bigger warship be built in England. She was the Henry Grace à Dieu, or 'Great Harry'

And what happened to the Great Michael? Well, she was sold to the French in 1514. She was renamed La Grande Nef d'Ecosse. Most historians reckon that the French let her rot away in Brest in Brittany.

chaidreabhas leis an Fhraing.

Direach mìos an dèidh sin, thug Seumas leis armailt, le trithead mìle duine innte, thar crìochan Shasainn. Thachair an dà armailt ri chèile aig Flodden ann an Northumberland. Chaidh an latha leis na Sasannaich. Chaidh Seumas a mharbhadh.

Nuair a chunnaic Eanraig VIII na planaichean airson a' Ghreat Michael, dh'òrdaich e gum biodh long eadhon na bu mhotha air a togail ann an Sasainn. B' ise an Henry Grace à Dieu, no an 'Great Harry'.

Agus dè thachair don Ghreat Michael? Uill, chaidh a reic do na Frangaich ann an còig ceud deug is ceithir-deug (1514). Chaidh ainm ùr a chur oirre – La Grande Nef d'Ecosse. Tha a' chuid as motha de luchd-eachdraidh dhen bheachd gun do leig na Frangaich leatha a dhol a dholaidh ann am Brest sa Bhreatainn Bhig.