

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 768 (which corresponds to Litir 1,072). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about an incident in the Dores Inn, beside Loch Ness, after the Battle of Culloden. Jean's mother, Hannah, was murdered by a redcoat soldier who was on the way to Fort Augustus. Jean went on horseback to Fort Augustus, along with Fair John from Dores, and another man. On the back of a fourth horse, was Hannah's body.

The sentries stopped them. 'I am Alexander Fraser from Drumashie,' said Fair John. They did not know Alexander, who was a cousin of John's. But they would know, perhaps, that he was a landlord who was supportive of the government. John knew that the Duke of Cumberland was in the fort. He said to the sentries that he was wanting to speak to the Duke.

A lieutenant came to speak to him. John said that he was wanting to speak to the Duke. A major came. John told him the same thing.

Eventually, John got an opportunity to speak to Cumberland himself. He showed Hannah's body to him. He explained that her daughter was left without money and without a close relative, and that it was redcoat soldiers that were responsible. In

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu thachartas ann an Taigh-seinnse Dhurais, taobh Loch Nis, an dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair. Chaidh màthair Sìne, Hannah, a mhurt le saighdear dearg a bha air an rathad a Chille Chuimein. Chaidh Sìne air muin eich a Chille Chuimein, còmhla ri Iain Bàn à Duras agus fear eile. Air muin ceathramh eich, bha corp Hannah.

Chuir na freiceadain stad orra. 'Is mise Alasdair Friseal à Druim Athaisidh,' thuirt Iain Bàn. Cha robh iad eòlach air Alasdair, a bha na cho-ogha do dh'Iain. Ach bhiodh fios aca, 's dòcha, gur e uachdaran a bha ann a bha taiceil don riaghaltas. Bha fios aig Iain gun robh Diùc Chumberland anns a' ghearasdan. Thuirt e ris na freiceadain gun robh e ag iarraidh bruidhinn ris an Diùc.

Thàinig leifteanant a bhruidhinn ris. Thuirt Iain gun robh e ag iarraidh bruidhinn ris an Diùc. Thàinig màidsear. Dh'inns Iain an aon rud dhasan.

Mu dheireadh thall, fhuair Iain cothrom bruidhinn ri Cumberland fhèin. Sheall e corp Hannah dha. Mhìnich e gun robh a nighean air fhàgail gun sgillinn ruadh is gun dlùth-charaid, agus gur iad saighdearan dearga a bu chuireach. A

addition to the murder, the soldiers [had] destroyed the inn.

The Duke listened to the appeal. He asked John to go to an inn in Fort Augustus and wait there. A few hours after that, a colonel came in, with a leather satchel under his arm. There was money in it for Jean. The officers who were guilty of the crime had put money together. There was enough there to provide a good burial for Hannah, and to get Dores Inn on its feet again.

The group returned to Dores. Hannah was buried. Jean set up the inn anew. The soldiers were sent overseas in the service of the Crown. They never understood that the man who got the money from them was one of the rebels that they were seeking. Aye, that's what Fair John was – a Jacobite rebel! He returned to his life as a fugitive on the hills near Dores.

bharrachd air a' mhurt, sgrios na saighdearan an taigh-seinnse.

Dh'èist an Diùc ris an tagradh. Dh'iarr e air Iain a dhol a thaigh-seinnse ann an Cille Chuimein agus feitheamh an sin. Beagan uairean a thìde an dèidh làimhe, thàinig còirneal a-steach, le màileid leathair fo achlais. Bha airgead na broinn do Shìne. Bha na h-oifigearan a bha ciontach dhen eucoir air airgead a chur ri chèile. Bha gu leòr ann airson tiodhlacadh math a thoirt do Hannah, agus airson Taigh-seinnse Dhurais a chur air a chasan a-rithist.

Thill an còmhlán a Dhuras. Chaidh Hannah a thiodhlacadh. Chuir Sìne an taigh-seinnse air dòigh às ùr. Bha na saighdearan air an cur a-null thairis ann an seirbheis a' Chrùin. Cha do thuig iad riamh gum b' e an duine a fhuair an t-airgead bhuapa fear de na reubaltaich a bha iad a' lorg. Seadh, 's e sin a bh' ann an Iain Bàn – reubaltach Seumasach! Thill e gu bheatha mar ruagalaiche anns a' mhonadh faisg air Duras.