

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 787 (which corresponds to Litir 1,091). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I want to tell you about a man who was famous in the history of Scotland. Here is a description of him. It was written in Gaelic in 1867. [He was] rough-boned ... [he had] light-brown hair, bright, keen eyes [and] a gash on the left side of his chin...

Here's more. He was 'awakened like a lion ... who resolved ... that he would drive out every Englishman between the north and south of Scotland.'

The man lived more than seven hundred years ago. He was William Wallace. He was involved in the Scottish wars of independence.

The account is in the book 'The History of Scotland'. The author was Angus Mackenzie from Gairloch. Did you understand the description of him? He was 'garbh-chnàmhach'. Literally, he was rough-boned, meaning heavy-boned, I'm sure. He had 'falt soilleir donn'. He had light-brown hair. And 'sùilean soilleir geur-sheallach'. And bright, keen eyes. And there was a 'sgor air taobh clì na smiogaid'. And there was a gash on the left side of the chin.

We are not sure if we have the full truth about William Wallace. Much of

Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu fhear a tha ainmeil ann an eachdraidh na h-Alba. Seo tuairisgeul dheth. Chaidh a sgrìobhadh ann an Gàidhlig ann an ochd ceud deug, seasgad 's a seachd (1867). '[Bha e] garbh-chnàmhach ... [bha] falt soilleir donn [aige], sùilean soilleir geur-sheallach [agus] sgor air taobh clì na smiogaid ...'

Seo tuilleadh. Bha e 'air a dhùsgadh suas mar leòmhann ... a rùnaich ... gun rotadh e mach ... a h-uile Sasannach ... eadar ceann a tuath agus ceann a deas na h-Alba.'

Bha an duine beò o chionn còrr is seachd ceud bliadhna. 'S e Uilleam Uallas a bha ann. Bha e an sàs ann an cogaidhean neo-eisimeileachd na h-Alba.

Tha an cunntas anns an leabhar 'Eachdraidh na h-Alba'. B' e an t-ùghdar Aonghas MacCoinnich à Geàrrloch. An do thuig sibh an tuairisgeul dheth? Bha e garbh-chnàmhach. Gu litreachail, 'he was rough-boned', a' ciallachadh 'heavy boned', tha mi cinnteach. Bha falt soilleir donn aige. He had light-brown hair. Agus sùilean soilleir geur-sheallach. And bright, keen eyes. Agus bha sgor air taobh clì na smiogaid. And there was a gash on the left side of his chin.

Chan eil sinn cinnteach a bheil an fhìrinn ghlan againn mu Uilleam Uallas.

the information comes from a poem written by the bard, Blind Harry. Harry wrote the poem nearly two hundred years after Wallace's death. And perhaps he didn't know the truth.

I'm going to tell you an anecdote or two about William Wallace. They came from Angus Mackenzie's book.

William was born around the year 1270. At that time, Alexander III was on the throne. When William was a teenager, the king died. The heir to the throne was Margaret, the Maid of Norway.

But Margaret was a child. She was living in Norway. A group was set up to govern Scotland. When Margaret went to Scotland, she died on the journey. Scotland was without a king or queen. William Wallace was about twenty years of age. I'll tell more about him next week.

Tha tòrr dhen fhiosrachadh a' tighinn bho dhàn aig a' bhàrd, Eanraig Dall. Sgrìobh Eanraig an dàn faisg air dà cheud bliadhna an dèidh bàs Uallais. Agus 's dòcha nach robh an fhìrinn aige.

Tha mi a' dol a dh'innse dhuibh naidheachd no dhà mu dheidhinn Uilleim Uallais. Thàinig iad bhon leabhar aig Aonghas MacCoinnich.

Rugadh Uilleam timcheall na bliadhna dà cheud deug is seachdad (1270). Aig an àm sin, bha Alasdair III air an rìgh-chathair. Nuair a bha Uilleam na dheugaire, chaochail an rìgh. B' i oighre a' chrùn Mairead, a' Mhaighdean Lochlannach.

Ach bha Mairead na pàiste. Bha i a' fuireach ann an Nirribhidh. Chaidh buidheann a chur air chois airson Alba a riaghladh. Nuair a chaidh Mairead a dh'Alba, chaochail i air an turas. Bha Alba gun rìgh no banrigh. Bha Uilleam Uallas mu fhichead bliadhna a dh'aois. Innsidh mi tuilleadh mu dheidhinn an-ath-sheachdain.