

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 867 (which corresponds to Litir 1,171). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about James McPherson. He was working as a sheep shearer. The farmer refused to pay McPherson. The Scot returned with a gun and he got the money. Then, he and two others stole stuff from an inn. The innkeeper tried to stop them. McPherson fired a bullet through his mouth. Fortunately, he survived.

The police put £75 forward as a reward for information that would bring the robbers to justice. Because the police in Queensland were in pursuit of him, McPherson went to New South Wales.

He started to steal horses. However, other bushrangers were already working in that area. The police were looking for them. The police saw McPherson. They noticed that he had no beard. That was unusual at that time. They fired on him, but he was on a fast horse and he fled.

A fortnight later, two police officers found McPherson. But he got away. At this time, the police did not know who he was – but that he was a Scot. They were calling him 'the Scottish

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Sheumas Mac a' Phearsain. Bha e ag obair mar lomadair chaorach. Dhiùlt an tuathanach Mac a' Phearsain a phàigheadh. Thill an t-Albannach le gunna agus fhuair e an t-airgead. An uair sin, ghoid e fhèin agus dithis eile stuth bho thaigh-seinnse. Dh'fheuch an t-òstair ri stad a chur orra. Chuir Mac a' Phearsain peilear tro a bheul. Gu fortanach, mhair e beò.

Chuir na poilis seachdad 's a còig notaichean air adhart mar dhuais airson fiosrachadh a bheireadh na mèirlich gu ceartas. Leis gun robh na poilis ann an Tìr na Banrigh air a thòir, dh'fhalbh Mac a' Phearsain gu ruige Cuimrigh Nuadh a Deas.

Thòisich e air eich a ghoid. Ge-tà, bha mèirlich eile ag obair anns an sgìre sin mu-thràth. Bha na poilis a' coimhead air an son. Chunnaic na poilis Mac a' Phearsain. Mhothaich iad gun robh e gun fheusag. Bha sin annasach aig an àm. Loisg iad air, ach bha e air each luath agus theich e.

Ceala-deug an dèidh sin, lorg dithis phoileas Mac a' Phearsain. Ach fhuair e air falbh. Aig an ìre seo, cha robh fios aig na poilis cò bha ann – ach gun robh e Albannach. Bha iad a' gabhail 'the

bushranger’ or ‘Scotchie, the highwayman’.

In February 1865, McPherson was arrested. He was camping near a river, reading a newspaper. A group of police came upon him without him realising. To begin with, he said his name was John Bruce. But finally he admitted his name was Alpin McPherson. That was true. His full name was James Alpin McPherson.

There wasn’t too much against him in New South Wales. However, intelligence came from Queensland that the police there were looking for him. He made a journey, in the custody of the police, to the north of Queensland. But his career as a bushranger was not over – as we’ll see next week.

Scottish bushranger’ air no ‘Scotchie, the highwayman’.

Anns a’ Ghearran, ochd ceud deug, seasgad ’s a còig (1865), chaidh Mac a’ Phearsain a chur an grèim. Bha e a’ campachadh faisg air abhainn, a’ leughadh pàipear-naidheachd. Thàinig buidheann de phoilis air gun fhiosta dha. An toiseach, thuirt e gur e John Bruce a bha air mar ainm. Ach mu dheireadh, dh’aidich e gum b’ e Ailpean Mac a’ Phearsain a bha air. Bha sin firinneach. B’ e ainm slàn Seumas Ailpean Mac a’ Phearsain.

Cha robh cus na aghaidh ann an Cuimrigh Nuadh a Deas. Ge-tà, thàinig fios bho Tìr na Banrigh gun robh na poilis an sin ga shireadh. Chaidh a chur air bòrd soitheach ann an Sydney. Ghabh e turas, fo chùram poilis, a cheann a tuath Tìr na Banrigh. Ach cha robh a dhreuchd mar mhèirleach seachad – mar a chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain.