

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 959 (which corresponds to Litir 1,263). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Today, and in the next few Litrichean, I'm going to look at two Scottish kings. They had things in common. They had the same name. They agreed a treaty with a powerful neighbour. And they died when their death was not expected.

The first king was Alexander son of William or Alasdair II. He came to the throne with the death of his father, William son of Henry or 'Rough William' [his Gaelic nickname] in 1214. He is recognised as William the Lion in English.

Alexander was just sixteen years old when he got his place on the throne of Scotland. He had spent time in England and he got involved in the politics of that country. In 1215 he sent a Scottish army over the border. There was a conflict between the English nobles and King John. A charter was agreed called Magna Carta. Under that charter, the king was no longer all-powerful.

But the King rejected that eventually. He was reckoning that he was under duress when he agreed to Magna Carta. There was a civil war. Scotland took the side of the nobles.

An-diugh, agus anns na beagan Litrichean romhainn, tha mi a' dol a thoirt sùil air dithis rìghrean Albannach. Bha rudan anns a' chumantas eatarra. Bha an t-aon ainm orra. Dh'aontaich iad co-chòrdadh le nàbaidh cumhachdach. Agus chaochail iad nuair nach robh dùil air am bàs.

B' e a' chiad rìgh Alasdair mac Uilleim, no Alasdair a Dhà (II). Thàinig e don rìgh-chathair le bàs athar, Uilleam mac Eanraig no Uilleam Garbh, ann an dà cheud deug is ceithir-deug (1214). Tha esan aithnichte mar *William the Lion* ann am Beurla.

Bha Alasdair dìreach sia bliadhn' deug a dh'aois nuair a fhuair e àite air rìgh-chathair na h-Alba. Bha e air ùine a chur seachad ann an Sasainn agus chaidh e an sàs ann am poilitigs na dùthcha sin. Ann an dà cheud deug is còig-deug (1215) chuir e armailt Albannach a-null thar na crìche. Bha strì eadar uaislean Shasainn agus Rìgh Eòin. Chaidh cùmhnant aontachadh air a bheil *Magna Carta*. Fon chùmhnant sin, cha robh an rìgh uile-chumhachdach tuilleadh.

Ach chaidh an Rìgh an aghaidh sin aig a' cheann thall. Bha e a' cumail a-mach gun robh e fo uallach nuair a dh'aontaich e ri Magna Carta. Bha cogadh catharra ann. Ghabh Alba taobh nan uaislean.

The King of England died in 1216. Peace returned under the next king – Henry III. The Scottish army returned home.

Henry and Alexander had a difficult relationship. Alexander was married to Henry's sister. Henry was wanting Alexander to accept the overlordship of England. However, Alexander was wanting the counties in the very north of England to be part of Scotland.

The two kingdoms came to an agreement in 1237. That was in York. Thus, it is called The Treaty of York. The border between the two kingdoms was agreed. It would be between the Solway Firth in the west and the River Tweed in the east. To this day, that's pretty much where the border is between Scotland and England.

Chaochail Rìgh Shasainn ann an dà cheud deug is sia-ceud (1216). Thàinig sìth a-rithist fon ath rìgh – Eanraig III. Thill armailt na h-Alba dhachaigh.

Bha càirdeas doirbh eadar Eanraig agus Alasdair II na h-Alba. Bha Alasdair pòsta aig piuthar Eanraig. Bha Eanraig ag iarraidh air Alasdair gabhail ri àrd-uachdranachd Shasainn. Ge-tà, bha Alasdair ag iarraidh na siorrachdan ann am fìor cheann a tuath Shasainn a bhith mar phàirt de dh'Alba.

Thàinig an dà rìoghachd gu aonta ann an dà cheud deug, trithead 's a seachd (1237). Bha sin ann an York. Mar sin, 's e Co-chòrdadh York a thathar a' gabhail air. Chaidh a' chrìoch eadar an dà rìoghachd aontachadh. Bhiodh i eadar Linne Shalmhaigh air an taobh an iar agus Uisge Tuaidh air an taobh an ear. Chun an latha an-diugh, sin an ìre mhath far a bheil a' chrìoch eadar Alba 's Sasainn.