

## **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 961 (which corresponds to Litir 1,265). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot).

*I was telling you about the wedding of Alexander III, King of Scotland. That was in 1251. He was only ten years of age.*

*Nine years after that, Alexander and his wife, Margaret, journeyed to England to visit the royal court. Margaret would have an opportunity to visit her parents – the King and Queen. Margaret was expecting a child before she left Scotland. Henry wrote a letter to Alexander, promising that they would all be free to go home.*

*After a while, Alexander went home, leaving his wife at Windsor. A daughter was born there on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1261. She was called Margaret.*

*When Alexander reached the age of 21, he said that he was going to follow his father's work in bringing the Western Isles under the control of Scotland. Against him was the King of Norway, Hákon IV, who wanted to keep the islands under his own control. That was in addition to the Isle of Man and other lands in the north-west of Scotland.*

*Hákon was among the most powerful kings that Norway ever had.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun bhanais aig Alasdair III, Rìgh na h-Alba. Bha sin ann an dà cheud deug, caogad 's a h-aon (1251). Cha robh e ach deich bliadhna a dh'aois.

Naoi bliadhna an dèidh sin, chaidh Alasdair agus a bhean, Mairead, air turas a Shasainn airson tadhal air a' chùirt rìoghail. Bhiodh cothrom aig Mairead tadhal air a pàrantan – an Rìgh agus a' Bhanrìgh. Bha Mairead an dùil leanabh mus do dh'fhàg i Alba. Sgrìobh Eanraig litir gu Alasdair, a' gealltainn gum biodh iad uile saor a dh'fhàg.

An dèidh greis, dh'fhalbh Alasdair dhachaigh, a' fàgail a mhnà ann am Windsor. Rugadh leanabh-nighinne an sin air an ochdamh latha fichead dhen Ghearran, dà cheud deug, seasgad 's a h-aon (1261). Bha Mairead oirre mar ainm.

Nuair a ràinig Alasdair aois bliadhna air fhichead, thuirt e gun robh e a' dol a leantainn air obair athar ann a bhith a' toirt nan Eilean Siar air ais fo smachd na h-Alba. Na aghaidh bha Rìgh Nirribhidh, Hákon IV, a bha airson na h-Eileanan a chumail fo a smachd fhèin. Bha sin a bharrachd air Eilean Mhanainn agus dùthchannan eile ann an ceann an iar-thuath na h-Alba.

Bha Hákon am measg nan rìghrean a bu chumhachdaiche a bha riamh aig

*But Alexander wasn't short of self-confidence. He sent information to Hákon that he wanted the islands on the west of Scotland to be under the control of the Scottish King. Hákon refused the appeal. The Earl of Ross made a bloody attack, on behalf of King Alexander, on a community on Skye. Others were working on Alexander's behalf in Argyll as well. The Scots were posing a severe challenge to Hákon. Hákon ordered a large powerful fleet to be assembled. They were going to attack the Scottish Fleet.*

*Over the winter of 1262-3, the Scandinavian fleet was assembled. It would be meeting the Scottish fleet in a few months' time near Largs.*

Nirribhidh. Ach cha robh Alasdair gann de mhisneachd. Chuir e fios gu Hákon gun robh e ag iarraidh eileanan taobh siar na h-Alba a bhith fo smachd Rìgh na h-Alba. Dhiùlt Hákon an tagradh. Thug Iarla Rois ionnsaigh mharbhtach, às leth Rìgh Alasdair, air coimhearsnachd anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Bha feadhainn eile ag obair às leth Alasdair ann an Earra-Ghàidheal cuideachd. Bha na h-Albannaich a' toirt dùbhlàn mòr do Hákon. Dh'òrdaich Hákon gum biodh cabhlach mòr, cumhachdach air a chur ri chèile. Bha iad a' dol a thoirt ionnsaigh air Cabhlach na h-Alba.

Thairis air a' gheamhradh ann an dà cheud deug, seasgad 's a dhà agus seasgad 's a trì (1262-3), chaidh an cabhlach Lochlannach a chur ri chèile. Bhiodh e a' coinneachadh ri cabhlach na h-Alba an ceann grunn mhìosan faisg air an Leargaidh Ghallda.