

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 965 (which corresponds to Litir 1,269). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you about the Treaty of Perth. Today I'm going to tell you about the rest of the life of Alexander III, King of Scotland.

He had three children. He had a daughter – Margaret. Then he had two boys – Alexander and David. However, the three [of them] died while Alexander III was still King.

David died first in 1281 in Stirling Castle. He was only eight years of age.

Margaret died in 1283. She was married to the King of Norway, Erik (son of Magnus, grandson of Hákon). She was living in Norway. She had one daughter – Margaret (another one!) But the mother of the child died at the time of the birth or shortly after that. Young Margaret was a princess of Scotland. However, according to the law of the day, a woman could not sit on the Norwegian throne.

The only one of the King of Scotland's children that was [still] alive was Alexander. But he also died, a year after Margaret.

Alexander III was only in his forties and he was fit and healthy. He had a grandchild in Norway – Margaret 'Maid of Norway'. Despite

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Cho-chòrdadh Pheairt. An-diugh tha mi a' dol a dh'innse dhuibh mun chòrr de bheatha Alasdair III, Rìgh na h-Alba.

Bha triùir chloinne aige. Bha nighean aige – Mairead. An uair sin bha dithis bhalach aige – Alasdair agus Daibhidh. Ge-tà, fhuair an triùir bàs fhad 's a bha Alasdair III fhathast na Rìgh.

Chaochail Daibhidh an toiseach, ann an dà cheud deug, ochdad 's a h-aon (1281) ann an Caisteal Shruighlea. Bha e dìreach ochd bliadhna a dh'aois.

Chaochail Mairead ann an dà cheud deug, ochdad 's a trì (1283). Bha i pòsta aig Rìgh Nirribhidh, Erik (mac Mhànais, ogha Hákon). Bha i a' fuireach ann an Nirribhidh. Bha aon nighean aice – Mairead (eile!) Ach chaochail màthair na h-ìghne aig àm na breithe no goirid an dèidh sin. Bha Mairead òg na bana-phrionnsa aig Alba. Ge-tà, a rèir an lagh aig an àm, cha robh cead aig boireannach suidhe air rìgh-chathair Nirribhidh.

Cha robh beò de chloinn Rìgh na h-Alba ach Alasdair. Ach chaochail esan cuideachd, bliadhna an dèidh Mairead.

Bha Alasdair III dìreach anns na ceathradan agus bha e slàn, fallain. Bha ban-ogha aige ann an Nirribhidh – Mairead, 'Maighdean Nirribhidh'. A dh'aindeoin sin,

that, pressure came on him to take a new young wife so that Scotlnad would have a prince or princess. Alexander married one of the French aristocracy – Yolande de Dreux – in 1285.

But just five months later, the King fell from his horse. He was riding to Kinghorn in Fife to see his wife. He was by himself in the darkness of the night. The weather was bad. He broke his neck.

Yolande was pregnant but the pregnancy did not last. Margaret ‘Maid of Norway’ was now the heir to the Crown of Scotland. She was too young to leave Norway. Four years later, she crossed the ocean to Scotland. But she died on the way.

Scotland was now left without a king or queen or heir to the Crown. Dark days and the wars of independence were on the horizon.

thàinig ìmpidh air Alasdair bean ùr òg a ghabhail, gus am biodh prionnsa no bana-phrionnsa aig Alba. Phòs Alasdair tè de dh’uaislean na Frainge – Yolande de Dreux – ann an dà cheud deug, ochdad ’s a còig (1285).

Ach dìreach còig mìosan an dèidh sin, thuit an Rìgh far an eich aige. Bha e a’ marcachd a dh’ionnsaigh Kinghorn ann am Fìobh airson a’ bhean fhaicinn. Bha e leis fhèin ann an dorchadas na h-oidhche. Bha droch shìde ann. Bhris e amhaich.

Bha Yolande trom le leanabh ach cha do mhair an leatromachd. B’ i Mairead ‘Maighdean Nirribhidh’ a-nise oighre do Chrùn na h-Alba. Bha i ro òg airson Nirribhidh fhàgail. Ceithir bliadhna an dèidh sin, chaidh i thar a’ chuain a dh’Alba. Ach chaochail i air an t-slighe.

Bha Alba a-nis às aonais rìgh no banrigh no oighre don Chrùn. Bha làithean dorcha agus cogaidhean na neo-eisimeileachd air fàire.