

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 1002 (which corresponds to Litir 1,306). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

John MacNeil, the son of the weaver, was in London. He was in the company of old seamen. One old man told the others how he [had] killed a famous pirate and his three sons years before. John knew that the other man was speaking of his father and brothers. John had promised that he would get revenge on the man who [had] killed them when he was young.

He went over to speak to the man. He commended him for being so brave. The other man invited John to take food at his house the next day. He said with pride that the weaver's blood was still on his sword. He didn't understand that John MacNeil was the weaver's youngest son.

The next day, John appeared at the other man's house. John said he would not take food or drink until he saw the sword that the other man [had] used to kill the pirate.

The old man took John into another room. He opened a cupboard. He took out the sword. The weaver's blood was still on the blade. John killed the other man with a punch to his ear.

He couldn't remain in London. He went to hide in Uist. When he

Bha Iain MacNèill, mac a' bhreabadair, ann an Lunnainn. Bha e am measg sheann mharaidhean. Dh'inns aon bhodach do chàch mar a mharbh e spùinneadair ainmeil agus a thriuir mhac bliadhnaichean roimhe. Bha fios aig Iain gun robh am fear eile a' bruidhinn air athair agus a bhràithrean. Bha Iain air gealltainn gun dèanadh e dìoghaltas air an duine a mharbh iad nuair a bha esan òg.

Chaidh e a-null a bhruidhinn ris an duine. Mhol e e airson a bhith cho treun. Thug am fear eile cuireadh do dh'Iain biadh a ghabhail aig an taigh aige an ath latha. Thuirt e le moit gun robh fuil a' bhreabadair fhathast air a chloidheamh. Cha do thuig e gum b' e Iain MacNèill am mac a b' òige aig a' bhreabadair.

An ath latha nochd Iain aig taigh an fhir eile. Thuirt Iain nach gabhadh e biadh no deoch gus am fac' e an claidheamh a chleachd am fear eile airson an spùinneadair a mharbhadh.

Thug am bodach Iain a-steach gu seòmar eile. Dh'fhosgail e preas. Thug e an claidheamh a-mach. Bha fuil a' bhreabadair fhathast air an lann. Mharbh Iain an duine eile le dòrn na chluais.

Cha b' urrainn dha fuireach ann an Lunnainn. Chaidh e am falach ann an

reached his mother's house, there was an old woman sitting outside. John reckoned this was his mother. But she wasn't recognising him at all. She said to him, 'Are you a sailor? Did you ever meet my son – John MacNeil?'

John went over and gave his mother a kiss. She was so surprised that she couldn't speak for a while.

According to the story, as The Cuddy told it in 'Tales from Barra', John remained in his mother's house for more than two years. When it was safe for him, he got work as a seaman in Liverpool. I don't know if he gave himself a new name, but it is said that his descendants still live in Liverpool.

Uibhist. Nuair a ràinig e taigh a mhàthar, bha seann bhoireannach na suidhe a-muigh. Bha Iain an dùil gum b' e sin a mhàthair. Ach cha robh ise ga aithneachadh-san idir. Thuirt i ris, 'An e seòladair a tha annad? An do thachair thu riamh ris a' ghille agam – Iain MacNeill?'

Chaidh Iain a-null agus thug e pòg do a mhàthair. Bha uiread de dh'iongnadh oirre 's nach robh comas labhairt aice airson greis.

A rèir an sgeòil, mar a dh'aithris an Codaidh e ann an 'Tales from Barra', dh'fhuirich Iain ann an taigh a mhàthar airson còrr is dà bhliadhna. Nuair a bha e sàbhailte dha, fhuair e obair mar mharaidhe ann an Liverpool. Chan eil fhios agam an do ghabh e ainm ùr air fhèin, ach thathar ag ràdh gu bheil a shliochd fhathast a' fuireach ann an Liverpool.