

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 1009 (which corresponds to Litir 1,313). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

The Comyns, who owned Lochindorb Castle, were very powerful. When Margaret, Maid of Norway, died, Black John Comyn was among the people that could take the throne of Scotland. But, instead of that, John Balliol was chosen. Black John Comyn was upset at that. He went to live in Lochindorb Castle. He died in the year 1302.

When John Balliol lost his place as king, Black John's son – Red John – was wanting to replace him. But the King of England, Edward I, wanted to bring Scotland under his own control. In 1296, Edward brought an army with him to Scotland. Red John was captured at the Battle of Dunbar. It's about that time that the Stone of Scone [Destiny] was stolen and taken to London.

After months, Red John was in Flanders, fighting on behalf of Edward. He heard that the people of Scotland had risen. He fled. He got back to Scotland by ship. It isn't clear if he was at the Battle of Stirling Bridge where the Scots defeated the English.

Bha na Cuimeanaich, leis an robh Caisteal Loch nan Doirb, gu math cumhachdach. Nuair a chaochail Mairead, Òigh Nirribhidh, bha Iain Dubh Cuimeanach am measg nan daoine a dh'fhaodadh rìgh-chathair na h-Alba a ghabhail thairis. Ach, an àite sin, chaidh Iain Balliol a thaghadh. Bha Iain Dubh Cuimeanach diombach ri sin. Chaidh e a dh'fhuireach ann an Caisteal Loch nan Doirb. Chaochail e an sin anns a' bhliadhna trì cheud deug 's a dhà (1302).

Nuair a chaill Iain Balliol àite mar rìgh, bha mac Iain Duibh – Iain Ruadh – ag iarraidh a dhol na àite. Ach bha Rìgh Shasainn, Eideard I, airson Alba a thoirt fo a smachd-san. Sheas Iain Ruadh na aghaidh Eideird. Ann an dà cheud deug, naochad 's a sia (1296) thug Eideard armailt leis a dh'Alba. Chaidh Iain Ruadh a chur an grèim aig Blàr Dhùn Barra. 'S ann mun àm sin a chaidh Clach Sgàin a ghoid agus a thoirt a Lunnainn.

An dèidh mhìosan, bha Iain Ruadh ann am Flànras, a' sabaid às leth Eideird. Chuala e gun robh muinntir na h-Alba air èirigh. Theich e. Fhuair e air ais a dh'Alba air long. Chan eil e soilleir an robh e aig Blàr Drochaid Shruighlea far an do rinn na h-Albannaich a' chùis air na Sasannaich.

But Edward returned with an army in 1303. He reached Lochindorb Castle. The king lived in the castle for a while. We say that Lochindorb is a castle where a king of England lived, but in which a Scottish king never lived.

Three years later, Red John was killed by Robert the Bruce. The Comyns lost their power in the north of Scotland.

For a period, Lochindorb was under the control of the English. But finally it was in the hands of the Scots. In the 1370s it was owned by a man who had a fearsome reputation. He was Alasdair Mòr mac an Rìgh – the Wolf of Badenoch. I'll have more about him in the next Litir.

Ach thill Eideard le armailt ann an trì cheud deug 's a trì (1303). Ràinig e Caisteal Loch nan Doirb. Dh'fhuirich an rìgh anns a' chaisteal airson ùine. Bidh sinn ag ràdh gur e Loch nan Doirb caisteal anns an do dh'fhuirich Rìgh Shasainn, ach nach robh Rìgh Albannach riamh a' fuireach ann.

Trì bliadhna an dèidh sin, chaidh Iain Ruadh a mharbhadh le Raibeart am Brusach. Chaill na Cuimeanaich an cumhachd ann an ceann a tuath na h-Alba.

Airson ùine bha Loch nan Doirb fo smachd nan Sasannach. Ach mu dheireadh bha e an làmhnan nan Albannach. Anns na seachdadan dhen cheathramh linn deug, bha e le fear aig an robh fìor dhroch chliù. B' esan Alasdair Mòr mac an Rìgh – *the Wolf of Badenoch*. Bidh tuilleadh agam airsan san ath Litir.