

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 1010 (which corresponds to Litir 1,314). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Alasdair Mòr mac an Rìgh ('big Alexander, son of the King') took control of Lochindorb Castle in the year 1372. Alexander's father was King Robert II. Alexander himself was Earl of Buchan, Lord of Badenoch and Earl of Ross. He had a series of castles. Lochindorb was among them.

He was a hard man. His nickname in English – the Wolf of Badenoch – tells us that! He and the Church fell out. He abused his wife and she left [him]. Then he was living with another woman as his wife. He was also saying that he owned the Church lands in Badenoch.

Because of all of that the Bishop of Moray excommunicated him. That means that Alexander was thrown out of the Church. It is reported that Alexander was in Lochindorb Castle when a monk gave him the Bishop's message.

Alexander was angry. He took a band of men with him. They destroyed places in Moray that were linked to the Church. They went to Elgin and they burned the Cathedral to the ground.

Fhuair Alasdair Mòr mac an Rìgh smachd air Caisteal Loch nan Doirb anns a' bhliadhna trì cheud deug, seachdad 's a dhà (1372). B' e athair Alasdair Rìgh Raibeart II. B' e Alasdair fhèin Iarla Bhuchain, Tighearna Bhàideanach agus Iarla Rois. Bha sreath chaistealan aige. Bha Loch nan Doirb nam measg.

'S e duine cruaidh a bha ann. Tha fhrith-ainm ann am Beurla – *the Wolf of Badenoch* – ag innse sin dhuinn! Chaidh e fhèin agus an Eaglais a-mach air a chèile. Rinn e droch-dhìol air a bhean agus theich i. An uair sin, bha e a' fuireach còmhla ri tè eile mar bhean. Bha e cuideachd ag ràdh gur ann leis-san a bha fearann na h-Eaglaise ann am Bàideanach.

Air sàillibh a h-uile càil sin, rinn Easbaig Mhoireibh ascaoineadh air. Tha sin a' ciallachadh gun robh Alasdair air a chur a-mach às an Eaglais. A rèir aithris, bha Alasdair ann an Caisteal Loch nan Doirb nuair a thug manach teachdaireachd an Easbaig dha.

Bha Alasdair feargach. Thug e feachd leis. Rinn iad sgrios air àiteachan ann am Moireibh a bha ceangailte ris an Eaglais. Chaidh iad a dh'Eilginn agus loisg iad a' Chathair-eaglais gu lár.

That was in 1390. Lochindorb appears again in the history books in the 1440s. James II was King of Scotland. Black Archibald Douglas, the Earl of Moray, was his enemy. Archibald was living in the castle

Archibald was killed at the Battle of Arkinholm in the south-west of Scotland in 1455. Lochindorb Castle's life came to an end. The King granted a contract to the Thane of Cawdor. That was for the dismantling of Lochindorb Castle.

Now there is nothing left of Lochindorb but stone walls. But I reckon the ruins are valuable. They show us how Scottish castles looked in medieval times. I wonder what will now happen to the castle. I'll look at that issue next week.

Bha sin ann an trì cheud deug is naochad (1390). Tha Loch nan Doirb a' nochdadh a-rithist anns na leabhraichean eachdraidh anns na ceathradan dhen chòigeamh linn deug. B' e Seumas II Rìgh na h-Alba. Bha Gilleasbaig Dubh Dùghlas, Iarla Mhoireibh, na nàmhaid dha. Bha Gilleasbaig a' fuireach anns a' chaisteal.

Chaidh Gilleasbaig a mharbhadh aig Blàr Arkinholm ann an ceann an iar-dheas na h-Alba ann an ceithir cheud deug, caogad 's a còig (1455). Thàinig beatha Caisteal Loch nan Doirb gu ceann. Thug an Rìgh cùmhnant do Thànaiste Chaladair, *the Thane of Cawdor*. Bha sin airson Caisteal Loch nan Doirb a thoirt às a chèile.

A-nise chan eil dad air fhàgail air Eilean Loch nan Doirb ach ballachan-cloiche. Ach saoilidh mi gu bheil an tobhta prìseil. Tha e a' sealltainn dhuinn mar a bha caistealan na h-Alba anns na meadhan-aoisean. Saoil dè thachras a-nise don chaisteal? Bheir mi sùil air a' cheist sin an-ath-sheachdain.