

## **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 1,037 (which corresponds to Litir 1,341). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot).

*In a remote location in Strathspey, there is a small farm called Dalnhatnich. I reckon that is Dail na h-Aitnich 'the meadow of the juniper-place'. The juniper tree is common enough in that area.*

*It was in Dalnhatnich that Iain Beag MacAnndra was living. Although Iain was small, he wasn't soft. I want to tell you about him.*

*His farm was near 'The Reiver's Road'. That is a route on which cattle plunderers would take cattle home. Lochaber men would plunder near the Moray Firth and return home with stolen cattle.*

*Iain Beag MacAnndra from Dalnhatnich was a famous archer. Some people maintain that there was no better archer than Iain in the whole of the Highlands. Here is one tale about Iain from Strathspey oral tradition.*

*The laird of Achluachrach in Lochaber was in charge of a gang that raided the land of the Roses. That was at Kilravock, near Inverness. They were returning home with their booty through Strathdearn. Messages had been sent to the people of Strathdearn to stop them. If they did that, they would get a reward from Rose.*

Ann an àite iomallach ann an Srath Spè, tha baile beag ann air a bheil Dalnhatnich mar ainm. Saoilidh mi gur e sin Dail na h-Aitnich 'the meadow of the juniper-place'. Tha a' chraobh-aitinn cumanta gu leòr anns an sgìre sin.

'S ann ann an Dail na h-Aitnich a bha Iain Beag MacAnndra a' fuireach. Ged a bha Iain beag, cha robh e bog. Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu dheidhinn.

Bha am baile aige faisg air 'Rathad nam Mèirleach'. 'S e sin slighe air am biodh luchd-togail na creiche a' toirt sprèidh dhachaigh. Bhiodh fir Abrach a' togail na creiche faisg air Linne Mhoireibh agus a' tilleadh a Loch Abar le feudail.

Bha Iain Beag MacAnndra à Dail na h-Aitnich na bhoghadair ainmeil. Tha cuid a' cumail a-mach nach robh boghadair na b' fheàrr na Iain air a' Ghàidhealtachd air fad. Seo agaibh aon sgeul mu Iain à beul-aithris Shrath Spè.

Bha uachdaran an Achaidh Luachraich, ann an Loch Abar, os cionn gràisg a thog creach air an fhearann aig na Ròsaich. Bha sin ann an Cill Ràthaig, faisg air Inbhir Nis. Bha iad a' tilleadh dhachaigh leis an fheudail aca tro Shrath Èireann. Bha fios air a dhol a-mach gu muinntir Shrath Èireann stad a chur orra. Nan dèanadh iad sin, gheibheadh iad duais bhon Ròsach.

*They were waiting for the robbers in Kyllachy in Strathdearn. The people of Kilravock were also following the raiders. The laird of Kyllachy had asked Iain Beag to help because he was so skilful with the bow. According to reports, Iain was in Strathdearn at that time on another matter.*

*In Kyllachy there was great conflict. Iain killed many of the Lochaber men with his bow. Among them was their leader – the laird of Achluachrach. Unfortunately for Iain, Kyllachy shouted out in a loud voice, ‘Thank you, Iain Beag MacAnndra from Dalnahatnich, it’s your hand that did this!’ The Lochaber people would know who was responsible. They were going to exact revenge on Iain Beag MacAnndra.*

Bha iad a’ feitheamh ris na mèirlich ann an Coileachaidh ann an Srath Èireann. Bha muinntir Chill Ràthaig a’ leantainn nan creachadairean cuideachd. Bha uachdaran Choileachaidh air iarraidh air Iain Beag taic a thoirt dha, leis gun robh e cho sgileil leis a’ bhogha. A rèir aithris, bha Iain ann an Srath Èireann aig an àm air gnothach eile.

Ann an Coileachaidh bha còmhrag mhòr ann. Mharbh Iain gu leòr de na h-Abraich le a bhogha. Nam measg, bha an ceannard – uachdaran an Achaidh Luachraich. Gu mì-fhortanach do dh’Iain, dh’èigh uachdaran Choileachaidh ann an guth mòr, ‘Tapadh leat, Iain Bhig MhicAnndra à Dail na h-Aitnich, ’s e do làmh fhèin a rinn sin!’ Bhiodh fios aig na h-Abraich cò a bu choireach. Bha iad a’ dol a ghabhail dìoghaltas air Iain Beag MacAnndra.