

## **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 1,047 (which corresponds to Litir 1,351). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot).

*In the last Litir, I told a traditional story from Galloway. I have another one for you this week. It is about leann-fraoich. Heather ale.*

*The Picts had the recipe for making heather ale. Or some of them [the Picts] in Galloway. But they kept the recipe secret.*

*In the fourth century after Christ, Niall of the Nine Hostages was the high king in Ireland. He took an army with him to Britain. He attacked the Picts who were still governing the south-west of Scotland – the area called 'Galloway' today.*

*The Irish Gaels drove the Picts out of Galloway. They killed a lot of them. There was only one tribe left in the Rannaibh – the Rhinns of Galloway. That is the large double-headed peninsula in the west of Galloway. The southern end of the Rhinns ends in Maol Ghall-Ghàidheil or the Mull of Galloway.*

*Niall of the Nine Hostages had a spy by the name – or nickname – of An Sionnach ('the fox'). He was a Pict. He was useful to Niall, but the high king was of*

Anns an Litir mu dheireadh, dh'inns mi sgeulachd thraidiseanta à Gall-Ghàidhealaibh. Tha tè eile agam dhuibh an t-seachdain seo. Tha i mu dheidhinn leann-fraoich. Heather ale.

Bha an reasabaidh airson leann-fraoich a dhèanamh aig na Cruithnich. No feadhainn aca ann an Gall-Ghàidhealaibh. Ach chum iad an reasabaidh dìomhair.

Anns a' cheathramh linn an dèidh Chrìosd, bha Niall Naoi-ghiallach na àrd-rìgh ann an Èirinn. Thug e armailt leis a Bhreatainn. Thug e ionnsaigh air na Cruithnich a bha fhathast a' riaghladh ceann an iar-dheas na h-Alba – an sgìre air a bheil 'Gall-Ghàidhealaibh' an-diugh.

Dh'iomain na Gàidheil Èireannach na Cruithnich a-mach à Gall-Ghàidhealaibh. Mharbh iad gu leòr dhiubh. Cha robh air fhàgail ach aon treubh anns na Rannaibh – na Rhinns of Galloway. 'S e sin an rubha mòr dà-cheannach air taobh an iar Ghall-Ghàidhealaibh. Tha an ceann as fhaide deas de na Rannaibh a' crìochnachadh aig Maol Ghall-Ghàidheil no Mull of Galloway.

Bha fear-brathaidh aig Niall Naoi-ghiallach air an robh 'An Sionnach' mar ainm – no frìth-ainm. Bha e na Chruithneach. Bha e feumail do Niall, ach

<p><i>the opinion that he was untrustworthy.</i></p> <p><i>Niall had decided to kill all of the Picts in Galloway. But the Sionnach came to him. He said to the king that those folk had been making heather ale for a long time. And that they were the only people who had the recipe. They were keeping that secret. 'Wouldn't you like to get the recipe from them?' asked the Sionnach.</i></p> <p><i>Niall considered the situation. Certainly, it would be good to possess that secret. He sent a messenger to speak to the Picts. The messenger told the Picts that the king was willing to allow them to live if they would tell him their recipe for heather ale.</i></p> <p><i>But the Picts were not willing to do that. They were keeping the matter secret. Niall was angry. He ordered that all of the Picts be put to death. We'll see what happened when I conclude the tale next week.</i></p>	<p>bha an t-Ard-rìgh dhen bheachd gun robh e cealgach.</p> <p>Bha Niall air a chur roimhe na Cruithnich gu lèir ann an Gall-Ghàidhealaibh a chur gu bàs. Ach thàinig an Sionnach thuige. Thuir e ris an rìgh gun robh an fheadhainn sin air a bhith a' dèanamh leann-fraoich bho chionn fhada. Agus gur iad na h-aon daoine aig an robh an reasabaidh. Bha iad a' cumail sin dìomhair. 'Nach biodh sibh fhèin ag iarraidh an reasabaidh fhaighinn bhupa?' dh'fhaighnich an Sionnach.</p> <p>Mheòraich Niall air an t-suidheachadh. Gu dearbh, bhiodh e math dìomhaireachd mar sin a bhith aige. Chuir e teachdaire a bhruidhinn ris na Cruithnich. Dh'inns an teachdaire do na Cruithnich gun robh an rìgh deònach leigeil leotha maireachdainn beò nan innseadh iad dha an reasabaidh aca airson leann-fraoich.</p> <p>Ach cha robh na Cruithnich deònach sin a dhèanamh. Bha iad a' cumail a' ghnòthaich dìomhair. Bha Niall feargach. Dh'òrdaich e gum biodh a h-uile duine de na Cruithnich air an cur gu bàs. Chì sinn dè thachair nuair a bheir mi an sgeul gu crìch an-ath-sheachdain.</p>
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