

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 127 (which corresponds to Litir 431). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

O chionn ghoirid bha mi aig Loch Laomainn. Bha mi air eilean anns an loch. Bha mi ag obair ann. Bha mi a' toirt clann le Gàidhlig a-mach a choimhead air an eilean. Bha sin mar phàirt de phròiseact aig Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba.

Ann am Beurla 's e *Inchcailloch* an t-ainm air an eilean. 'S e ainm Gàidhlig a tha ann – Innis Chailleach no 's dòcha Innis Caillich. Bha cailleachan dubha a' fuireach ann. *Nuns*. Cailleachan dubha. Bha an Naomh Centigerna ann. Chaochail i anns an eilean ann an seachd ceud, trithead 's a ceithir (734).

Tha an t-eilean brèagha. Tha e le Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba an-diugh. Tha iadsan ga ruith mar thèarmann nàdair. Ach bha sluagh a' fuireach ann uaireigin. 'S e tuathanaich a bha annta. Bha crodh is caoraich aca.

Bha eaglais agus cladh anns an eilean cuideachd. Tha an cladh ann fhathast. Dh'fhalbh an sluagh aig deireadh an ochdamh linn deug. Ach an dèidh sin bha daoine fhathast a' tiodhlacadh an càirdean anns an eilean.

Carson a dh'fhalbh na daoine? Uill, bha an t-uachdaran ag iarraidh craobhan a chur. Craobhan-daraich. Cha robh e ag iarraidh crodh is caoraich anns an eilean. Bha iad a' cleachdadh rùsg daraich airson leathar a chartadh. "For the tanning of leather" mar a chanas iad ann am Beurla. Airson leathar a chartadh.

Tron naoidheamh linn deug, bha Innis Caillich air a còmhdachadh le craobhan daraich. Agus tha fhathast. Tha a' choille an-diugh gu math brèagha. As t-earrach tha bròg na cuthaig pailt.

Thug mi an teaghlach agam don eilean cuideachd. Chùm mise sùil air a' bhàta. Chaidh iadsan air chuairt. Cha tuirt mi guth ro làimh mu bheathach sònraichte a tha a' fuireach ann.

Nuair a thill iad, thuirt iad, "Chunnaic sinn rudeigin mòr. Bha e bàn. Bha e coltach ri gobhar."

"Seadh," fhreagair mi, "ach chan e gobhar a bha ann."

"Dè bha ann ma-thà?"

Innsidh mi dhuibh an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan is abairtean: Loch Laomainn: *Loch Lomond*; bha mi a' toirt clann le Gàidhlig a-mach a choimhead air an eilean: *I was taking Gaelic-speaking children*

out to look at the island; mar phàirt de phròiseact aig Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba: as part of a Scottish Natural Heritage project; cailleachan dubha: nuns; o chionn fhada: a long time ago; Naomh Centigerna: St Kentigerna; chaochail i anns an eilean: she died on the island; tha iadsan ga ruith mar thèarmann nàdair: they run it as a nature reserve; bha sluagh a' fuireach ann uaireigin: a population lived there at one time; 's e tuathanaich a bha annta: they were farmers; crodh is caoraich: cattle and sheep; cladh: cemetery; an dèidh sin bha daoine fhathast a' tiodhlacadh an càirdean anns an eilean: after that people were still burying their relatives on the island; bha an t-uachdaran ag iarraidh craobhan a chur: the landlord wanted to plant trees; craobhan-daraich: oak trees; a' cleachdadh rùsg daraich airson leather a chartadh: using oak bark to tan leather; tron naoidheamh linn deug: through the nineteenth Century; air a còmhdachadh le: covered in; a' t-earrach tha bròg na cuthaig pailt: in spring the wild hyacinth (English bluebell) is plentiful; thug mi an teaghlach agam: I took my family; chùm mise sùil air a' bhàta: I kept an eye on the boat; air chuairt: for a walk; cha tuirt mi guth ro làimh mu bheathach sònraichte: I didn't say anything beforehand about a special animal; nuair a thill iad: when they returned; chunnaic sinn rudeigin mòr: we saw something big; bha e coltach ri gobhar: it was like a goat; chan e gobhar a bha ann: it wasn't a goat.

ends