

## 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 193 (which corresponds to Litir 497). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*We're looking at the forts on the Antonine Wall. Last week, we looked at the first two. They were Old Kilpatrick and Duntocher – two forts with Gaelic names. We reached the third fort – Cleddans Fortlet.*

*Some people say Cleddans is a Gaelic name. It comes from the word cladhan. That means a channel or a ditch. East of Claddens there is Castlehill Fort. Then Bearsden Fort. The ruin of the bath-house is still there.*

*The name Bearsden is unusual. In Gaelic it's called Cill Phàdraig Ùr [New Kilpatrick]. And it's New Kirk that the area was called in English. But a railway line and station were built in 1863. And the station was called Bearsden Station. Some people say that Bearsden was the name of a house near the station.*

*If we continue on the Antonine Wall, we reach Balmuirdy Fort. That's next to the River Kelvin. That fort was big.*

*The next fort is Cadder Fort. It is from the British language –*

*Tha sinn a' toirt sùil air na dùin air Balla Antonine. An t-seachd-ain sa chaidh, thug sinn sùil air a' chiad dhà. B' iad sin Dùn Chill Phàdraig agus Dùn Tòchair – dà dhùn le ainmean Gàidhlig. Ràinig sinn an treas dùn – Cleddans Fortlet.*

*Tha cuid ag ràdh gur e Cleddans ainm Gàidhlig. Tha e a' tighinn bhon fhacal cladhan. Tha sin a' ciallachadh channel no ditch. Gu sear air Claddens tha Castlehill Fort. An uair sin Bearsden Fort. Tha tobhta an taigh-ionnlaid an sin fhathast.*

*Tha an t-ainm Bearsden annasach. Ann an Gàidhlig 's e Cill Phàdraig Ùr a tha air. Agus 's e New Kirk a bha air an sgìre ann am Beurla. Ach chaidh rathad-iarainn agus stèisean a thogail ann an ochd ceud deug, seasgad 's a trì (1863). Agus chaidh an stèisean ainmeachadh mar Bearsden Station. Tha cuid ag ràdh gum b' e Bearsden ainm taigh a bha faisg air an stèisean.*

*Ma leanas sinn oirnn air Balla Antonine, ruigidh sinn Balmuirdy Fort. Tha sin ri taobh Abhainn Chealbhainn. Bha an dùn sin mòr.*

*'S e an t-ath dhùn – Cadder Fort. 'S ann à canan nam Breatannach*

*old Welsh – that Cadder came. It means “fort”. After that we reach Kirkintilloch. That name means the “fort at the end of the hill”.*

*East of that is Auchendavy Fort. Auchendavy looks like a Gaelic name. We obtained the name of one of the soldiers that was living in that fort. He was Marcus Cocceius Firmus. He was a centurion. He was born in eastern Europe.*

*Bar Hill Fort comes next, and Croy Hill Fort. I reckon Bar in Bar Hill comes from the Gaelic bàrr – “the uppermost part”. The ruins are still there – and an old Roman well.*

*Perhaps Croy comes from the Gaelic cruaidh [“hard”]. This is the one piece of the Antonine Wall where there was not a ditch. Why was there not a ditch? The stone was too hard to dig a ditch. Hard, indeed.*

– seann Chuimris – a thàinig Cadder. Tha e a’ ciallachadh “dùn”. Às dèidh sin, ruigidh sinn *Kirkintilloch* no Cathair Cheann Tulaich. Tha an t-ainm sin a’ ciallachadh “*fort at the end of the hill*”.

Gu sear air sin tha *Auchendavy Fort*. Tha *Auchendavy* a’ coimhead coltach ri ainm Gàidhlig. Fhuair sinn ainm fear de na saighdearan a bha a’ fuireach anns an dùn sin. B’ esan Marcus Cocceius Firmus. ’S e *centurion* a bha ann. Rugadh e ann an taobh sear na Roinn Eòrpa.

Tha *Bar Hill Fort* a’ tighinn an uair sin, agus *Croy Hill Fort*. Tha mi an dùil gu bheil *Bar* ann am *Bar Hill* a’ tighinn bhon Ghàidhlig *bàrr* – “*the uppermost part*”. Tha na tobhtaichean ann fhathast – agus seann tobar Ròmanach.

’S dòcha gu bheil *Croy* a’ tighinn bhon Ghàidhlig *cruaidh*. ’S e seo an aon phìos de Bhalla Antonine far nach robh dìg ann. Carson nach robh dìg ann? Bha a’ chlach ro chruaidh airson dìg a chladhach. Cruaidh dha-rìribh.