

## 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 211 (which corresponds to Litir 515). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk).

*Archibald and Finlay Cook were from the island of Arran. They were ministers. They were good preachers. Many Gaelic-speaking ministers in the 19th Century were from Arran.*

*Archibald Cook was born in 1789. Finlay was eleven years older. Finlay was a minister in Lewis, Caithness and Inverness. Archibald was a minister in Caithness, Inverness and Daviot, near Inverness.*

*Between 1823 and 1837, Archibald was in Latheron in Caithness. Gaelic was still alive in that area, although it was in decline. Cook was preaching in Gaelic. At communion time, he was also preaching in English. Some people were travelling from Wick to listen to him.*

*The Gaelic dialect in Arran was different from other dialects. For example, the people of Arran were pronouncing the letter "a" as a diphthong. It appears that*

Bha Gilleasbaig is Fionnladh Cook à Eilean Arainn. 'S e ministearan a bha annta. 'S e searmonaichean matha a bha annta. Bha mòran mhinistearan Gàidhealach anns an naoidheamh linn deug à Arainn.

Rugadh Gilleasbaig, no Archibald, Cook ann an seachd ceud deug, ochdad 's a naoi (1789). Bha Fionnladh aon bhliadhn' deug na bu shine. Bha Fionnladh na mhinistear ann an Leòdhas, Gallaibh agus Inbhir Nis. Bha Gilleasbaig na mhinistear ann an Gallaibh, Inbhir Nis agus Deimhidh, faisg air Inbhir Nis.

Eadar ochd ceud deug, fichead 's a trì (1823) agus trithead 's a seachd (1837), bha Gilleasbaig ann an Latharan ann an Gallaibh. Bha a' Ghàidhlig fhathast beò anns an sgìre sin, ged a bha i a' crìonadh. Bha Cook a' searmonachadh ann an Gàidhlig. Aig àm a' chomanachaidh bha e cuideachd a' searmonachadh ann am Beurla. Bha feadhainn a' siubhal à Inbhir Ùige airson èisteachd ris.

Bha dualchainnt na Gàidhlig ann an Arainn eadar-dhealaichte bho dhualchainntean eile. Mar eisimpleir, bha muinntir Arainn a' fuaimneachadh na litreach "a" mar dhà-fhoghair, no

*the people of Arran said “mweh” for math [good]. It also appears that they said “bwètuh” for bàta [boat] and “bwè” for bà [cows].*

*When he was in Caithness and in Inverness-shire, Cook absorbed non-Arran words into his speech. For example, in Arran, madadh was the word people had for dog. But Cook was also using the word cù. Cook was using the word nàbaidh, rather than coimhearsnach, for neighbour. Perhaps he picked that up among the Gaels in Caithness. And he was using the words tìm and meall which were not, it appears, in Arran Gaelic.*

*Some in Daviot said that Cook’s Gaelic was a bit strange. But people were understanding him. He was a famous preacher. Sometimes large numbers of people were coming to listen to him. The church was too small for them. He was then keeping the service outside. I’ll tell you more about that minister next week.*

*diphthong. Tha e coltach gun robh muinntir Arainn ag ràdh “mweh” airson math. Tha e coltach cuideachd gun robh iad ag ràdh “bwètuh” airson bàta agus “bwè” airson bà.*

*Nuair a bha e ann an Gallaibh agus ann an Siorrachd Inbhir Nis ghabh Cook faclan neo-Arainneach a-steach don chainnt aige. Mar eisimpleir, ann an Arainn, ’s e madadh am facal a bha aig daoine airson dog. Ach bha Cook cuideachd a’ cleachdadh an fhacail cù. Bha Cook a’ cleachdadh an fhacail nàbaidh, an àite coimhearsnach, airson neighbour. ’S dòcha gun do thog e sin am measg nan Gàidheal ann an Gallaibh. Agus bha e a’ cleachdadh nam faclan tìm is meall nach robh, a rèir choltais, ann an Gàidhlig Arainn.*

*Thuirte feadhainn ann an Deimhidh gun robh a’ Ghàidhlig aig Cook car annasach. Ach bha daoine ga thuigsinn. ’S e searmonaiche ainmeil a bha ann. Uaireannan bha na h-uibhir a’ tighinn a dh’èisteachd ris. Bha an eaglais ro bheag dhaibh. Bha e an uair sin a’ cumail na seirbheis a-muigh. Innsidh mi tuilleadh mun mhinistear sin an ath-sheachdain.*