

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 229 (which corresponds to Litir 533). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was in an unusual garden recently. It is called Kerracher Gardens. There is no road to it at all. I went there in a boat. The garden is on the shore of Loch a' Chàirn Bhàin in Assynt. It's open to the public. But this is the last year it will be open.

The garden is beautiful. It's full of plants of many types. The area around it is also beautiful, but in a different way. It's rough, with mountains and bogs. Peter and Trish Kohn live in Kerracher now. But there were other families there before them. One of the ones who were there before them wrote a book about it. The book's title is The Kerracher Man.

It's Eric MacLeod that wrote the book. Eric was born in Dingwall. He went to work as an accountant. He was living in other countries. He and his wife were living in London, Chester, Johannesburg and Reading. Then they moved to Kerracher. They had two daughters.

Eric's father was brought up in Kerracher. Eric visited it when he was young. At that time, his grandfather, his grandmother and his uncle

Bha mi ann an leas àraidh o chionn ghoirid. 'S e Leas Chearachair an t-ainm air. Chan eil rathad a' dol ann idir. Chaidh mi ann ann am bàta. Tha an leas air cladach Loch a' Chàirn Bhàin ann an Asainte. Tha e fosgailte don mhòr-shluagh. Ach seo a' bhliadhna mu dheireadh a bhios e fosgailte.

Tha an leas brèagha. Tha e làn lusan de dh'iomadh seòrsa. Tha an sgìre mu a thimcheall brèagha cuideachd, ach ann an dòigh eadar-dhealaichte. Tha i garbh le beanntan is boglaichean. Tha Peter is Trish Kohn a' fuireach ann an Cearachar a-nise. Ach bha teaghlaichean eile ann romhpa. Sgrìobh fear dhen fheadhainn a bh' ann romhpa leabhar mu dheidhinn. 'S e ainm an leabhair *The Kerracher Man*.

'S e Eric MacLeòid a sgrìobh an leabhar. Rugadh Eric ann an Inbhir Pheofharain. Bha e ag obair mar chunntasair. Bha e a' fuireach ann an dùthchannan eile. Bha e fhèin is a bhean a' fuireach ann an Lunnainn, Chester, Johannesburg agus Reading. An uair sin, ghluais iad a Cearachar. Bha dithis nighean aca.

Thogadh athair Eric ann an Cearachar. Thadhail Eric air nuair a bha e òg. Aig an àm sin, bha a sheanair, a

[father's brother] were living there. The house was now empty. It was in a bad condition.

The family wasn't living in the house to begin with. The sitting room was without a floor. There was a sheep's carcass in the room! To begin with, they were living in a caravan. But how were they going to move a caravan to Kerracher?

They took the caravan down Loch a' Chàirn Bhàin from the road in Kylesku. That was in 1976. The bridge wasn't there. There was a ferry across the kyle. But the Council in Inverness wasn't willing to use the ferry to take the caravan down the loch.

Eric built a raft to take the caravan there. He did that with wood and old oil barrels. And he got help from a Gaelic fisherman. I'll tell you more about that fisherman next week.

sheanmhair agus bràthair athar a' fuireach ann. Bha an taigh a-nise falamh, ge-tà. Bha e ann an droch staid.

Cha robh an teaghlach a' fuireach anns an taigh an toiseach. Bha an seòmair-suidhe gun ùrlar. Bha closach caorach anns an t-seòmair! An toiseach bha iad a' fuireach ann an carabhan. Ach ciamar a bha iad a' dol a ghluasad carabhan gu ruige Cearachar?

Thug iad an carabhan sìos Loch a' Chàirn Bhàin bhon rathad anns a' Chaolas Chumhang. Bha seo ann an naoi ceud deug, seachdad 's a sia (1976). Cha robh an drochaid ann. Bha bàt'-aiseig ann thar a' chaolais. Ach cha robh a' Chomhairle ann an Inbhir Nis deònach am bàt'-aiseig a chleachdadh airson an carabhan a thoirt sìos an loch.

Thog Eric ràth airson an carabhan a thoirt ann. Rinn e sin le fiodh agus seann bharraillean ola. Agus fhuair e taic bho iasgair Gàidhealach. Innsidh mi dhuibh mu dheidhinn an iasgair sin an ath-sheachdain.