

## 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 236 (which corresponds to Litir 540). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*We have nicknames for the islands of Scotland. For example we call Skye Eilean a' Cheò (Isle of the Mist). We call Lewis Eilean an Fhraoich (Isle of the Heather). And here now are the names of three more islands. Do you know them?*

*We call the first island An t-Eilean Tarsainn. The cross-wise island. An t-Eilean Tarsainn. The name of the second island is Rìoghachd na Forraiste Fiadhaich. The kingdom of the wild forest. Rìoghachd na Forraiste Fiadhaich. And the name of the third island is Eilean nam Ban Mòra. The island of the big women. Eilean nam Ban Mòra.*

*The three islands are close to each other. They are three of the Small Isles – Canna, Rum and Eigg.*

*Why were the people using strange names like that? Well, they were sea-kennings. That is names that fishermen or mariners were using when they were at sea. Those people were superstitious. They weren't willing to use the proper names. They were believing that the correct names were bringing [would bring] bad luck to the boat.*

Tha far-ainmean againn air eileanan na h-Alba. Mar eisimpleir, canaidh sinn *Eilean a' Cheò* airson an Eilein Sgitheanaich. Canaidh sinn *Eilean an Fhraoich* airson Eilein Leòdhais. Agus seo a-nise ainmean trì eileanan eile. A bheil sibh eòlach orra?

'S e *An t-Eilean Tarsainn* ainm a' chiad eilein. *The cross-wise island. An t-Eilean Tarsainn.* 'S e ainm an dàrna eilein *Rìoghachd na Forraiste Fiadhaich. The kingdom of the wild [deer] forest. Rìoghachd na Forraiste Fiadh-aich.* Agus 's e ainm an treas fir *Eilean nam Ban Mòra. The island of the big women. Eilean nam Ban Mòra.*

Tha na trì eileanan faisg air a chèile. 'S iad trì de na h-Eileanan Beaga – Canaigh, Rùm agus Eigg.

Carson a bha na daoine a' cleachdadh ainmean annasach mar sin? Uill, 's e ainmean-mara a bha annta. 'S e sin ainmean a bha iasgair-ean no maraichean a' cleachdadh nuair a bha iad aig muir. Bha na daoine sin saobh-chràbhach. Cha robh iad deònach na h-ainmean ceart a chleachdadh. Bha iad a' creidsinn gun robh na h-ainmean ceart a'

<p><i>Even when I was young, Gaelic-speaking fishermen were still superstitious. Some of them were not willing to go to sea if they would see a woman or a cat. On many boats the crew were not willing to say “salmon”. They had another word.</i></p> <p><i>There is a fourth island in the Small Isles – Muck. And there was a sea-kenning for Muck as well. That was Tìr Chràine. That means the land of the sow. Tìr Chràine.</i></p> <p><i>Why did they choose names like that? Uill, Tìr Chràine is obvious enough for the Isle of the Pigs. Canna lives across the sea-route between the Sea of Barra and the Minch. And Rùm was good for the hunting of [the] deer.</i></p> <p><i>And why was Eigg called The Isle of the Big Women? Well, I have a story about that. And you can [will] hear the story next week.</i></p>	<p>dèanamh droch fhortan don bhàta.</p> <p>Eadhon nuair a bha mise òg bha iasgairean Gàidhealach fhathast saobh-chràbhach. Cha robh feadhainn aca deònach dhol gu muir nam faiceadh iad boireannach no cat. Air mòran bhàtaichean cha robh an criutha ag ràdh “bradan” idir. Bha facal eile aca.</p> <p>Tha ceathramh eilean anns na h-Eileanan Beaga – Eilean nam Muc. Agus bha ainm-mara air Eilean nam Muc cuideachd. B’ e sin <i>Tìr Chràine</i>. Tha sin a’ ciallachadh <i>land of the sow</i>. Tìr Chràine.</p> <p>Carson a thagh iad ainmean mar sin? Uill, tha Tìr Chràine follaiseach gu leòr airson Eilean nam Muc. Tha Canaigh na laighe tarsainn na slighe-mara eadar an Cuan Barrach agus an Cuan Sgìth. Agus bha Rùm math airson sealg nam fiadh.</p> <p>Agus carson a bha <i>Eilean nam Ban Mòra</i> mar ainm air Eige? Uill, tha stòiridh agam mu dheidhinn sin. Agus cluinnidh sibh an stòiridh an ath-sheachdain.</p>
---	---