

**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 281 (which corresponds to Litir 585). Ruairidh can be contacted at

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*The Scot Gregor MacGregor was involved in deceit. He created an imaginary country. That was Poyais. It was in the Gulf of Honduras in Central America. MacGregor was saying that he was His Serene Highness Gregor I, Prince of Poyais. Was he out of his mind. No. But he was dishonest.*

*He set up offices in Edinburgh and Glasgow. He sold land there. For three shillings and three pence people were "buying" an acre of land in Poyais. MacGregor made Poyais money in Edinburgh. On the notes there was a little Gaelic - 'S Rìoghail mo Dhream [my race is royal]. That's the MacGregors' slogan. But the money had no value.*

*MacGregor published a book. The title was Sketch of the Mosquito Shore, including the Territory of Poyais. The "author" of the book was Captain Thomas Strangeways. Strangeways praised the country. It was rich, with much silver and gold. There were no tropical diseases. It was a dishonest book. But "Mosquito Shore" was true. The mosquitoes were terrible.*

*In the autumn of 1822, a ship*

Bha an t-Albannach Griogair MacGriogair an sàs ann am foill. Chruthaich e dùthaich mhacmean-mnach. B' e sin Poyais. Bha i air Bàgh Honduras ann am Meadhan Ameir-eagaidh. Bha MacGriogair ag ràdh gum b' esan His Serene Highness Gregor I, Prince of Poyais. An robh e às a rian? Cha robh. Ach bha e breugach.

Chuir e oifisean air dòigh ann an Dùn Èideann is Glaschu. Reic e fearann annta. Airson trì tastain agus trì sgillinn, bha daoine "a' ceannach" acaire fearainn ann am Poyais. Rinn MacGriogair airgead Phoyais ann an Dùn Èideann. Air na notaichean bha beagan Gàidhlig - 'S Rìoghail mo Dhream. 'S e sin sluagh-ghairm nan Griogarach. Ach cha robh luach sam bith anns an airgead.

Dh'fhoillsich MacGriogair leabhar. B' e an tiotal *Sketch of the Mosquito Shore, including the Territory of Poyais*. B' e "ùghdar" an leabhair Captain Thomas Strangeways. Mhol Strange-ways an dùthaich. Bha i beartach, le airgead is òr gu leòr. Cha robh galairean tropaigeach ann. 'S e leabhar breugach a bha ann. Ach bha "Mosquito Shore" fìor. Bha na mosgiotothan uabhasach.

As t-fhoghar ochd ceud deug is

*left London. There were seventy people on board. Three months after that, another ship left the Port of Leith in Scotland. There were two hundred people on board. They were going to Poyais.*

*And what did the people find there? They found an enormous forest. There was no European colony whatsoever. There was no gold or silver.*

*Matters didn't go well. Some of them fell out with each other. Some suffered tropical diseases. One man committed suicide.*

*After two months, they received help. The government in London were told. They sent out ships from the Royal Navy. They stopped five other ships that were going to Poyais. The newspapers in London heavily criticized MacGregor.*

*But there was no sign of MacGregor. He was in France. Was he keeping his head down in France? Certainly not, as we'll see next week.*

dhà air fhichead (1822), dh'fhàg soith-each Lunnainn. Bha seachdad duine air bòrd. Trì mìosan an dèidh sin, dh'fhàg long eile Port Lìte ann an Alba. Bha dà cheud duine air bòrd. Bha iad a' dol a Phoyais.

Agus dè lorg na daoine ann? Lorg iad coille mhòr mhòr. Cha robh tuineachas Eòrpach ann idir. Cha robh òr no airgead ann.

Cha deach cùisean gu math. Chaidh feadhainn a-mach air a chèile. Dh'fhuiling feadhainn galairean trop-aigeach. Chuir aon duine a làmh na bheatha fhèin.

Às dèidh dà mhìos chaidh cobhair a dhèanamh orra. Chaidh fios a chur don riaghaltas ann an Lunnainn. Chuir iadsan soithichean bhon Chabhlach Rìoghail a-mach. Chuir iad stad air còig longan eile a bha a' dol a Phoyais. Thug na pàipearan-naidheachd ann an Lunnainn slaic mhòr air MacGriogair.

Ach cha robh sgeul air MacGriogair. Bha esan anns an Fhraing. An robh e a' cumail a chinn sìos anns an Fhraing? Cha robh, gu dearbh, mar a chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain.