

**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 296 (which corresponds to Litir 600). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.macleam@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.macleam@bbc.co.uk).

*In the seventeenth century, many people in the Church in Scotland were opposed to the Gaelic language. Thus, no translation was made of the Bible into Gaelic.*

*But the situation was better in Ireland. In the seventeenth century, the New Testament and the Old Testament appeared in Irish Gaelic. They had surplus copies of the Old Testament. They sent some to Scotland.*

*But it took time for the Church in Edinburgh to send these Old Testaments to the Highlands. There was hostility to Gaelic within the Church. And it wasn't easy for Scottish Gaels to read the Irish texts. The language was a bit different.*

*And there was also another difficulty. The Irish texts were written in the Irish typefont. That was difficult for Scots to read.*

*There are three characters in this story. To begin with, Robert Boyle, an Irish gentleman. He was a son of the Earl of Cork. He sent the Irish texts to Scotland. The second man was James Kirkwood,*

Ann an t-seachdamh linn deug, bha mòran anns an Eaglais ann an Alba an aghaidh na Gàidhlig. Mar sin, cha deach eadar-theangachadh a dhèanamh dhen Bhìoball gu Gàidhlig.

Ach bha an suidheachadh nas fheàrr ann an Èirinn. Anns an t-seachdamh linn deug, nochd an Tiomnadh Nuadh agus an Seann Tiomnadh ann an Gàidhlig na h-Èireann. Bha cus lethbhreac dhen t-Seann Tiomnadh aca. Chuir iad feadhainn a dh'Alba.

Ach thug e ùine don Eaglais ann an Dùn Èideann na Seann Tiomnaidhean seo a chur a-mach don Ghàidhealtachd. Bha nàimhdeas don Ghàidhlig taobh a-staigh na h-Eaglaise. Agus cha robh e furasta do Ghàidheil na h-Alba na teacsaichean Èireannach a leughadh. Bha an cànan rud beag eadar-dhealaichte.

Agus bha duilgheadas eile ann cuideachd. Bha na teacsaichean Èireannach sgrìobhte anns a' chlà Èireannach. Bha sin doirbh a leughadh do dh'Albannach.

Tha trì caractaran anns an stòiridh seo. An toiseach, Robert Boyle, dùin-uasal Èireannach. B' esan mac Iarla Chorcaigh. Chuir e na teacsaichean Èireannach gu ruige Alba. B' e an dàrna fear Seumas

*a minister from England. He was born in the [Scottish] Lowlands. At one time he was living in Breadalbane. And the third man – Robert Kirk, the minister in Aberfoyle in the Trossachs. Kirk was a native Gaelic speaker.*

*Kirkwood and Boyle were wanting to distribute the Irish Bible in Scotland. But they were thinking that it would be better to be written in Roman (Latin) type, rather than Irish type.*

*That work was given to Rev Robert Kirk. In April 1690 he was ready. The Irish Bible appeared in Roman type for the people of Scotland. Three thous-and Bibles and a thousand New testaments were printed. And three thousand catechism books were made also.*

*But still, the Church was dilatory. The Bibles weren't getting out speedily to the Gaelic parishes. And they weren't in Scottish Gaelic anyway. We'll see how things changed – eventually – next week.*

Kirkwood, ministear à Sasainn. Rugadh esan air a' Ghalltachd. Bha e uaireigin a' fuireach ann am Bràghad Albainn. Agus an treas duine – Raibeart Kirk, am ministear ann an Obar Phuill anns na Tròiseachan. Bha Gàidhlig aig Kirk bho dhùthchas.

Bha Kirkwood agus Boyle ag iarraidh am Bìoball Èireannach a sgaoileadh ann an Alba. Ach bha iad a' smaoinichadh gum biodh e na b' fheàrr a bhith sgrìobhte ann an clò Ròmanach, seach clò Èireannach.

Chaidh an obair sin a thoirt don Urramach Raibeart Kirk. Anns a' Ghiblean sia ceud deug is naochad (1690) bha e deiseil. Nochd am Bìoball Èireannach ann an clò Ròmanach airson muinntir na h-Alba. Chaidh trì mìle Bìoball agus mìle Tiomnadh Nuadh a chur an clò. Agus chaidh trì mìle leabhar cheist a dhèanamh cuideachd.

Ach fhathast, bha an Eaglais slaodach. Cha robh na Bìobaill a' faighinn a-mach gu luath gu na paraistean Gàidhlig. Agus cha robh iad ann an Gàidhlig na h-Alba co-dhiù. Chì sinn mar a dh'atharraich cùisean – tro thìde – an-ath-sheachdain.