

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 584 (which corresponds to Litir 888). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

'Rian is riaghailt! Rian is riaghailt!' Who would say those words? The answer is the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament – if he or she were speaking Gaelic in the chamber. It means 'Order, order!' Rian is riaghailt.

I found the phrase on the parliament's website. Here is another phrase or two – Gearan! 'objection', Chan eil mi a' dol leibh idir 'I strongly disagree' and Fàilte gu Taigh an Ròid 'welcome to Holyrood'. And here is an interesting phrase. Na togaibh mi gus an tuit mi. Na togaibh mi gus an tuit mi. Literally, it means 'don't lift me until I fall'. But it stands for 'please don't interrupt me'. Na togaibh mi gus an tuit mi.

I did a little more research on 'Gaelic' and 'parliament' on the internet. I found a mention of a man whom I 'knew' a little – in New Zealand. Sir John McKenzie was famous as a politician there at the end of the nineteenth century. He was a minister for lands. And he was Deputy Prime Minister.

I made mention of McKenzie in Litrichean Beaga 179 to 181. He was

'Rian is riaghailt! Rian is riaghailt!' Cò chanadh na faclan sin? 'S e am fuasgladh Oifigeair Riaghlaidh Pàrlamaid na h-Alba – nam biodh e no i a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig anns an t-seòmar. Tha e a' ciallachadh 'Order, order!' Rian is riaghailt.

Lorg mi an abairt air làrach-lìn na pàrlamaid. Seo abairt no dhà eile air an làraich – Gearan! 'objection', Chan eil mi a' dol leibh idir 'I strongly disagree' agus Fàilte gu Taigh an Ròid 'welcome to Holyrood'. Agus seo abairt inntinneach: Na togaibh mi gus an tuit mi. Na togaibh mi gus an tuit mi. Gu litreachail, tha e a' ciallachadh 'don't lift me until I fall'. Ach tha e a' seasamh airson 'please don't interrupt me'. Na togaibh mi gus an tuit mi.

Rinn mi beagan a bharrachd rannsachaidh air 'Gàidhlig' agus 'pàrlamaid' air an eadar-lìon. Lorg mi iomradh air fear air an robh mi car 'eòlach' – ann an New Zealand. Bha Sir Iain MacCoinnich ainmeil mar neach-poilitigs an sin aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug. Bha e na mhinistear airson an fhearainn. Agus bha e na Leas Phrìomh Mhinistear.

Rinn mi iomradh air MacCoinnich ann an Litrichean Beaga ceud, seachdad 's

from Easter Ross and he spoke Gaelic as his first language. He was famous in New Zealand for using Gaelic in the parliament. I came to 'know' him, as it were, when I made a television program about him.

The New Zealand Parliament was debating the rights of the populace to walk in the outdoors. A member of parliament raised McKenzie's name and legacy during the debate. He said that the situation had not improved since McKenzie's day. That was more than a hundred years ago.

Anyway, New Zealand established a commission that regulates walkers' access. But it appears that the rights are not as wide as they are in Scotland.

Please excuse me for returning to John McKenzie as a subject. But, as the proverb says, it doesn't harm to tell a good story twice. Farewell.

a naoi (179) gu ceud, ochdad 's a h-aon (181). Bha e à Ros an Ear agus bha Gàidhlig aige mar chiad chànan. Bha e ainmeil ann an New Zealand airson a bhith a' cleachdadh Gàidhlig sa phàrlamaid. Dh'fhàs mi, mar gum biodh, 'eòlach' air nuair a rinn mi prògram telebhisein mu dheidhinn.

Bha Pàrlamaid New Zealand a' deasbad còraichean an t-sluaigh ann a bhith a' coiseachd air a' bhlàr a-muigh. Thog ball pàrlamaid ainm is dìleab MhicCoinnich anns an deasbad. Thuir e nach robh piseach air tighinn air an t-suidheachadh bho linn MhicCoinnich fhèin. Bha sin còrr is ceud bliadhna air ais.

Co-dhiù, stèidhich New Zealand coimisean a chumas rian air inntreigeadh do luchd-coiseachd. Ach tha e a' coimhead coltach nach eil na còraichean aca cho farsaing 's a tha iad ann an Alba.

Gabhaibh mo leisgeul airson tilleadh gu Iain MacCoinnich mar chuspair. Ach, mar a chanas an seanfhacal, cha mhiste sgeul math aithris dà uair. Beannachd leibh.