

# **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 629 (which corresponds to Litir 933). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*I was speaking about sugar cane last week. Sugar cane. Sugar cane. Many a Scot got land under the auspices of the Empire and grew sugar cane on it. That was particularly true in the West Indies.*

*And that brings me to slavery. Many a beautiful building in Scotland was built with money from slavery. Many a black person, with ancestry in the West Indies, carries a Scottish surname.*

*In Inverness, the Royal Academy was built at the end of the eighteenth century. A third of the capital to build it came from the West Indies. Some of it was from estates where sugar cane was growing. And where slaves were working.*

*The academy was on a new street – [called] New Street – near where Inverness Railway Station is today. The school received a royal charter from King George III. It was on that site for a hundred years. A new name was given to the street – Academy Street. That's still the street's name. Since then, the school has moved to different sites. It's the high school in Inverness where subjects are taught through the medium of Gaelic.*

Bha mi a' bruidhinn mu chuile an t-siùcair an t-seachdain sa chaidh. *Sugar cane*. Cuile an t-siùcair. 'S iomadh Albannach a fhuair fearann fo sgèith na h-Ìmpireachd agus a dh'fhàs cuile an t-siùcair air. Bha sin gu h-àraidh fìor anns na h-Innseachan an Iar.

Agus tha sin gam thoirt gu tràilleachd. 'S iomadh togalach brèagha ann an Alba a chaidh a thogail le airgead à tràilleachd. 'S iomadh duine dubh, le sinnsireachd anns na h-Innseachan an Iar, air a bheil ainm-cinnidh Albannach.

Ann an Inbhir Nis, chaidh an Acadamaidh Rìoghail a thogail aig deireadh an ochdamh linn deug. Thàinig an treas cuid dhen chalpa airson a togail às na h-Innseachan an Iar. Bha cuid dheth às oighreachdan far an robh cuile an t-siùcair a' fàs. Agus far an robh tràillean ag obair.

Bha an acadamaidh air sràid ùr – *New Street* – faisg air far a bheil Stèisean-rèile Inbhir Nis an-diugh. Fhuair an sgoil cùmhnant rìoghail bho Rìgh Deòrsa III. Bha i air an làraich sin airson ceud bliadhna. Chaidh ainm ùr a thoirt air an t-sràid – Sràid na h-Acadamaidh. 'S e sin ainm na sràide fhathast. On uair sin, tha an sgoil air gluasad gu diofar làraichean ùra. 'S i an àrd-sgoil ann an Inbhir Nis far a bheil cuspairean air an teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig.

*The historian David Alston did research on black children in Highland schools in the nineteenth century. He found out that there were black pupils at Inverness Royal Academy. They were children of men from the Highlands. The men had married black women when they were running or working on sugar estates in the West Indies. Some of the women were slaves.*

*David Alston reckons that the people of Scotland were pretty open about black people at that time. They were somewhat free from racial prejudice, although that was going to change. Next week I'll look at a famous journey an American slave made to Scotland and how he criticized the Free Church for taking money from slavery.*

Rinn an t-eòlaiche-eachdraidh, Daibhidh Alston, rannsachadh air clann dubha ann an sgoiltean na Gàidhealtachd anns an naoidheamh linn deug. Fhuair e a-mach gun robh sgoilearan dubha ann an Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis. 'S e a bh' annta ach clann aig fir às a' Ghàidhealtachd. Bha na fir air boireannaich dhubha a phòsadh nuair a bha iad a' ruith no ag obair air tuathanasan siùcair anns na h-Innseachan an Iar. Bha cuid de na boireannaich nan tràillean.

Tha Daibhidh Alston dhen bheachd gun robh muinntir na h-Alba gu math fosgailte mu dhaoine dubha aig an àm sin. Bha iad car saor de ghràin-chinnidh, ged a bha sin a' dol a dh'atharrachadh. An-ath-sheachdain bheir mi sùil air turas ainmeil a rinn tràill Ameireaganach a dh'Alba agus mar a thug e slaic air an Eaglais Shaoir airson airgead a ghabhail à tràilleachd.