

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 692 (which corresponds to Litir 996). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk.

Were you ever on 'the King's ferry'? Do you know where it is? It services a maritime route in Easter Ross, between Cromarty and Nigg.

The kings of Scotland were coming that way to get to Tain. Many people respected Saint Duthac. King James IV was a pilgrim to the saint's town – Tain. He went there as a pilgrim eighteen times.

I went on the ferry from Cromarty to Nigg recently, on a beautiful summer's day. The views were beautiful. There were two vehicles waiting in the queue. It was good that nobody else was waiting because the vessel takes only two vehicles. It's pretty small.

Its name is Renfrew Rose. It once worked on the River Clyde. It was a ferryboat that was going across the river. I wouldn't like to be on her in a big sea.

She has been running between Cromarty and Nigg from 2016 onwards. She took the place of the one that was there before

An robh sibh riamh air 'aiseag an Rìgh'? A bheil fios agaibh ca' bheil e? Tha e a' frithealadh slighe-mhara ann an taobh sear Rois, eadar Cromba agus Bàgh an Eig.

Bha rìghrean na h-Alba a' tighinn an rathad sin airson faighinn gu Baile Dhubhthaich. Bha meas mòr aig mòran air Naomh Dubhthach. Bha Rìgh Seumas IV na thaistalach gu baile an naoimh – Baile Dhubhthaich. Chaidh e ann mar thaistalach ochd tursan deug.

Chaidh mi air an aiseag bho Chromba gu Bàgh an Eig o chionn ghoirid, air latha brèagha samhraidh. Bha na seallaidhean air leth. Bha dà charbad a' feitheamh anns a' chiudha. Bha e math nach robh duine eile a' feitheamh oir gabhaidh an soitheach dìreach dà charbad. Tha i gu math beag.

'S e a h-ainm an Renfrew Rose. Bha i uaireigin ag obair air Abhainn Chluaidh. Bha i na soitheach aiseig a bha a' dol tarsainn na h-aibhne. Cha bu mhath leam a bhith oirre ann am muir mhòr.

Tha i air a bhith a' ruith eadar Cromba is Bàgh an Eig bho dhà mhìle is sia-deug (2016) a-mach. Ghabh i àite na tè a bha ann roimhe – Cromarty Queen agus, roimhe sin, Cromarty Rose. Bidh

her – Cromarty Queen and, before that, Cromarty Rose. The service runs in summer, from June to September. So, if you want to go on her this year, you've only got a short time left.

On the other side of the crossing, a short distance up the road, there is a gem [pearl] – the Nigg old church. Before that day, I hadn't ever been in it. It's beautiful. It's pretty certain that King James IV was on that site when he was on the way to Tain. But the church as it is today didn't exist then. It was built early in the seventeenth century.

However, it's thought that Christian worship has taken place on that site for twelve hundred years. Why am I saying that? I'll tell you next week.

an t-seirbheis a' ruith as t-samhradh, bhon Ògmhios don t-Sultain. Mar sin, ma tha sibh am beachd a dhol oirre am bliadhna, chan eil ach beagan ùine air fhàgail agaibh.

Air taobh thall na slighe, pìos beag suas an rathad, tha neamhnaid – seann eaglais an Eig. Ron latha sin, cha robh mi riamh air a bhith innte. Tha i brèagha. Tha e an ìre mhath cinnteach gun robh Rìgh Seumas IV air an làraich sin nuair a bha e air a shlighe gu Baile Dhubhthaich. Ach cha robh an eaglais mar a tha i an-diugh ann am bith aig an àm sin. Bha i air a togail tràth anns an t-seachdamh linn deug.

Ge-tà, thathar a' smaoinichadh gu bheil adhradh Crìosdail air a bhith ann air an làraich sin airson mìle is dà cheud bliadhna. Carson a tha mi ag ràdh sin? Innsidh mi dhuibh an-ath-sheachdain.