

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 745 (which corresponds to Litir 1,049). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

There is a man in the White House in Washington DC just now who has Scottish ancestry. But here's a question for you. Who is the first American president who came to Scotland? Well, he wasn't president at the time. He had just given up his job after eight years.

Do you have the solution? Ulysses S. Grant. The President of the United States between 1869 and 1877. He was famous as a soldier also. He commanded the Union Army in the Civil War.

Shortly after his second term as president came to an end, Grant, his wife and their son left on a world tour. They were away for two and a half years.

They reached Scotland on the last day of August and received a big welcome. Grant had Scottish ancestry on both sides. They went to Edinburgh Castle and also to Abbotsford in the Borders – the old home of the famous writer, Sir Walter Scott.

They reached Inverness on the 8th of September. There was a public meeting where the Town Council

Tha fear anns an Taigh Gheal ann am Washington DC an-dràsta aig a bheil sinnsireachd Albannach. Ach seo ceist dhuibh. Cò a' chiad cheann-suidhe Ameireaganach a thàinig a dh'Alba? Uill, cha robh e na cheann-suidhe aig an àm. Bha e dìreach air a dhreuchd a leigeil seachad an dèidh ochd bliadhna.

A bheil am fuasgladh agaibh? Ulysses S Grant. Ceann-suidhe nan Stàitean Aonaichte eadar ochd ceud deug, seasgad 's a naoi (1869) agus seachdad 's a seachd (1877). Bha e ainmeil mar shaighdear cuideachd. Bha e os cionn Arm an Aonaidh anns a' Chogadh Chatharra.

Goirid an dèidh don dàrna teirm aige mar cheann-suidhe thighinn gu ceann, dh'fhalbh Grand, a bhean agus am mac air turas air feadh an t-saoghail. Bha iad air falbh airson dà bhliadhna gu leth.

Ràinig iad Alba air an latha mu dheireadh dhen Lùnastal agus fhuair iad fàilte mhòr. Bha sinnsireachd Albannach aig a' Ghranndach air gach taobh. Chaidh iad a Chaisteal Dhùn Èideann agus cuideachd a dh'Abbotsford anns na Crìochan – an t-seann dachaigh aig an sgrìobhadair ainmeil, Sir Bhaltair Scott.

Ràinig iad Inbhir Nis air an ochdamh latha dhen t-Sultain. Bha coinneamh phoblach ann far an do bhuilich Comhairle

bestowed Freedom of the Burgh on Grant. He was the first American ever to have that honour bestowed on him.

He went to visit the Duke of Sutherland in Dunrobin but refused an opportunity to go hunting in East Sutherland. Unlike many American presidents, he was not a hunter.

Grant was interested in technology. And he went to Dundee to see the longest bridge in the world. That was the one across the Tay estuary which was not quite complete at the time. Two years later, the bridge would fall in a storm, causing the deaths of 75 people.

And how did he enjoy Scotland? I'm not sure. Unfortunately, he didn't get an opportunity to go to Grantown on Spey. And, anyway, apparently it was Japan he most enjoyed among countries of the world.

Inbhir Nis Saorsa a' Bhaile air a' Ghrannnach. B' esan a' chiad Ameireaganach riamh air an deach an t-urram sin a bhuileachadh.

Chaidh e a thadhal air a' Mhorair Chat ann an Dùn Robain ach dhiùlt e cothrom a dhol a shealg ann an Cataibh. Eucoltach ri gu leòr de chinn-suidhe Ameireaganach, cha robh e na shealgair.

Bha ùidh aig a' Ghrannnach ann an teicneòlas. Agus chaidh e a Dhùn Dè airson an drochaid as fhaide anns an t-saoghal fhaicinn. B' e sin an tè thar Linne Thatha nach robh buileach deiseil aig an àm. Dà bhliadhna an dèidh sin, bhiodh an drochaid a' tuiteam ann an stoirm, ag adhbharachadh bàs seachdad 's a còig duine.

Agus ciamar a chòrd Alba ris? Chan eil mi cinnteach. Gu mì-fhortanach, cha d' fhuair e cothrom a dhol a Bhaile nan Grannnach. Agus co-dhiù, a rèir choltais, 's e Iapan a b' fheàrr a chòrd ris am measg dhùthchannan an t-saoghail.