

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 822 (which corresponds to Litir 1,126). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

In Litir Bheag 630, I told you a little about the links between Scotland and slavery. I made mention of Frederick Douglass, a black American man. He was raised as a slave in Maryland. Some people have been examining his journey to Scotland and what Hugh Miller wrote about him.

In 1837, Frederick met Anna Murray. He fell in love with her. She was a black woman who was living in Baltimore. She was free. She helped Douglass to make his way to freedom in the North. They married in a Presbyterian church and they made their home in Massachusetts

Frederick began to give lectures against slavery and prejudice. He wrote a book about his own life. That made him famous. Friends of his were worried that the man in Maryland – who still owned him – was wanting him back. They encouraged him to go to Ireland and Britain to give lectures about slavery. He did that in 1845. Slavery had come to an end in the

Ann an Litir Bheag 630, dh'inns mi beagan dhuibh mu dheidhinn nan ceanglaichean eadar Alba agus tràilleachd. Thug mi iomradh air Frederick Douglass, fear dubh Ameireaganach. Bha e air a thogail mar thràill ann am Maryland. Tha feadhainn air a bhith a' sgrùdadh a thuras a dh'Alba, agus na sgrìobh Ùisdean Mac a' Mhuilleir mu a dheidhinn.

Ann an ochd ceud deug, trithead 's a seachd (1837), thachair Frederick ri Anna Mhoireach. Ghabh e gaol oirre. Bha i na boireannach dubh a bha a' fuireach ann am Baltimore. Bha i saor. Thug i taic do Dhouglass a rathad a dhèanamh gu saorsa anns a' Cheann a Tuath. Phòs iad ann an eaglais Chlèireach agus rinn iad an dachaigh ann am Massachusetts.

Thòisich Frederick air òraidean a dhèanamh an aghaidh tràilleachd agus claon-bhreith. Sgrìobh e leabhar mu a bheatha fhèin. Rinn sin ainmeil e. Bha caraidean aige a' gabhail dragh gum biodh am fear ann am Maryland – aig an robh sealbh laghail air fhathast – ga iarraidh air ais. Bhrosnaich iad e a dhol a dh'Èirinn is Breatainn airson òraidean a dhèanamh mu thràilleachd. Rinn e sin ann an ochd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a còig (1845). Bha tràilleachd air tighinn gu ceann ann an

British Empire only seven years before that.

Douglass was travelling in Ireland when the Great Famine was starting. But, despite all the injustices there, he enjoyed being in a country where people respected him. He and Daniel O'Connell, the 'Liberator' of the Irish Catholics, got on well together. O'Connell was very opposed to slavery or any injustice.

After a while, Douglass went to Scotland. In a letter to a friend in the United States, he wrote, 'Scotland is a blaze of anti-slavery agitation ...' He was pleased that there were so many people in Scotland campaigning against slavery, particularly in southern states in America. However, not all people – or churches – were like that, as we shall see next week.

Ìmpireachd Bhreatainn dìreach seachd bliadhna roimhe sin.

Bha Douglass a' siubhal ann an Èirinn nuair a bha a' Ghort Mhòr a' tòiseachadh. Ach, a dh'aindeoin gach ana-cheartais an sin, chòrd e ris a bhith ann an dùthaich far an robh daoine a' toirt spèis dha. Fhuair e fhèin agus Daniel O'Connell, 'Saoradair' nan Caitligeach Èireannach, air adhart gu math còmhla. Bha O'Connell gu mòr an aghaidh tràilleachd no ana-cheartas sam bith.

An dèidh greis, chaidh Douglass a dh'Alba. Ann an litir gu caraid anns na Stàitean Aonaichte, sgrìobh e, '*Scotland is a blaze of anti-slavery agitation ...*' Bha e toilichte gun robh uiread de dhaoine ann an Alba ag iomairt an aghaidh tràilleachd, gu h-àraidh anns na stàitean deasach ann an Ameireagaidh. Ge-tà, chan ann mar sin a bha a h-uile duine – no eaglais – ann an Alba, mar a chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain.