

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 826 (which corresponds to Litir 1,130). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Archibald Campbell Fraser was one of the sons of the Old Fox, Lord Lovat. He was born in 1736. When his brother Simon died without children in 1782, Archibald gained control of the Fraser estate.

It's Archibald that built Boleskine House. That is near Foyers on Loch Ness-side. The house was finished in 1809. It was like a hunting lodge rather than the big house of an estate. There was only one floor and four bedrooms.

At the end of the 19th century, Aleister Crowley bought the house. Crowley is famous for being involved in 'witchcraft' – 'black magic' and the like. He bought the house because he was wanting a remote place for his 'magic' ceremonies.

Crowley was born as Edward Alexander Crowley in Leamington Spa in England. That was in 1875. His father was wealthy. Thus, Edward would live on the money he got from his father.

His father was an evangelist for the Plymouth Brethren. Edward

B' e Gilleasbaig Caimbeul Friseal fear de na gillean aig an t-Seann Mhadadh, am Morair MacShimidh. Rugadh e ann an seachd ceud deug, trithead 's a sia (1736). Nuair a chaochail a bhràthair Sìm gun chlann ann an seachd ceud deug, ochdad 's a dhà (1782), fhuair Gilleasbaig smachd air oighreachd nam Frisealach.

'S e Gilleasbaig a thog Taigh Bhoth Fhleisginn. Tha sin faisg air Foidhir, taobh Loch Nis. Bha an taigh deiseil ann an ochd ceud deug 's a naoi (1809). Bha e coltach ri loidse-sheilg seach taigh-mòr oighreachd. Cha robh ann ach aon ùrlar agus ceithir seòmraichean cadail.

Aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug, cheannaich Aleister Crowley an taigh. Tha Crowley ainmeil airson a bhith an sàs ann am 'buidseachd' – 'draoidheachd dhubh' is rudan dhen t-seòrsa sin. Cheannaich e an taigh a chionn 's gun robh e ag iarraidh àite iomallach airson nan deas-ghnàthan 'draoidheil' aige.

Rugadh Crowley mar Edward Alexander Crowley ann an Leamington Spa ann an Sasainn. Bha sin ann an ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a còig (1875). Bha athair beartach. Mar sin, bhiodh Eideard beò air an airgead a fhuair e bho athair.

Bha athair na shoisgeulach airson nam Plymouth Brethren. Chuir Eideard a

turned his back on the religion. When he was at Cambridge University, he changed his name to Aleister – spelt A-L-E-I-S-T-E-R. He didn't graduate from the university. But he won a reputation as a skilful chess player.

He was also skilful as a writer of poetry and as a mountain climber. He would often go to the Alps. When he owned Boleskine House, Crowley was often overseas. He attempted K2 and Kanchenjunga, the second and third highest mountains in the world. He wasn't successful. Four people lost their lives in an avalanche on Kanchenjunga. Some people maintained that Crowley did not assist them as he should have.

Crowley was enthusiastic about the heritage of the Highlands. He would often wear a kilt. But would the Gaels recognise his 'magic' happenings? I don't think so. We'll hear more next week.

chùl ris a' chreideamh. Nuair a bha e aig Oilthigh Chambridge, dh'atharraich e ainm gu Aleister – air a litreachadh A-L-E-I-S-T-E-R. Cha do cheumnaich e bhon oilthigh. Ach choisinn e cliù mar chluicheadair tàileisg sgileil.

Bha e sgileil cuideachd mar sgrìobhadair bàrdachd agus mar neach-sreap nam beann. Bhiodh e gu tric a' falbh gu na beanntan Ailpeach. Nuair a bha Taigh Bhoth Fhleisginn leis, bha Crowley thall thairis gu tric. Rinn e oidhirp air K2 agus Kanchenjunga, an dàrna agus treas beinn as àirde san t-saoghal. Cha robh e soirbheachail. Chaill ceathrar dhen sgioba aige am beatha ann am maoin-sneachda air Kanchenjunga. Bha cuid a' cumail a-mach nach do chuidich Crowley iad mar bu chòir.

Bha Crowley dèidheil air dualchas na Gàidhealtachd. Bhiodh e a' cur fèileadh-beag air gu tric. Ach am biodh na Gàidheil ag aithneachadh nan gnothaichean 'draoidheil' aige? Cha chreid mi gum bitheadh. Cluinnidh sinn tuilleadh an-ath-sheachdain.