

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 875 (which corresponds to Litir 1,179). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

A short while ago, I gave you an account of Saint Drostan. In this Litir, I want to tell you about another saint. That is Saint Finan.

Finan was a Gael. He was from Ireland. He was recognised as a holy man when he was young.

It's not certain if Finan was on Iona. But there were links between Iona and the island of Lindisfarne in Northumbria. And Finan was in Lindisfarne.

Aodhan, or Aidan, was a bishop in Lindisfarne previously. Aidan was also a Gael. The Aberdeen Breviary tells us that Aidan's life came to end in the year 651.

When Aidan died, Finan was chosen as Bishop of Lindisfarne. In the congregation that chose him were men, women and church officials. Finan worked among the English. He baptised Peada, the King of the Middle Angles.

He died on the 17th of February 661. His feast-day is the 17th of February.

Just three years after his death, a disagreement in the

O chionn ghoirid, thug mi cunntas dhuibh air Naomh Drostan. Anns an Litir seo, tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu naomh eile. 'S e sin Naomh Fìonan.

'S e Gàidheal a bha ann am Fìonan. 'S ann à Èirinn a bha e. Bha e aithnichte mar dhuine naomh nuair a bha e òg.

Chan eil e soilleir an robh Fìonan ann an Eilean Ì. Ach bha ceanglaichean ann eadar Ì agus eilean Lindisfarne ann an Northumbria. Agus bha Fìonan ann an Lindisfarne.

Bha Aodhan, no Aidan, na easbaig ann an Lindisfarne roimhe. 'S e Gàidheal a bh' ann an Aodhan cuideachd. Tha Leabhar Ùrnaighean Obar Dheathain ag innse dhuinn gun tàinig beatha Aodhain gu ceann anns a' bhliadhna sia ceud, caogad 's a h-aon (651).

Nuair a chaochail Aodhan, chaidh Fìonan a thaghadh mar Easbaig Lindisfarne. Anns a' choitheanal a thagh e, bha fir is boireannaich agus pearsaichean-eaglais. Dh'obraich Fìonan am measg nan Sasannach. Bhaistich e Peada, Rìgh nan Anglach Meadhanach.

Chaochail e air an t-seachdamh latha deug dhen Ghearran, sia ceud, seasgad 's a h-aon (661). 'S e a latha-fèille an seachdamh latha deug dhen Ghearran.

Dìreach trì bhliadhna an dèidh a bhàis, thàinig eas-aonta anns an Eaglais gu

Church came to a head. That was at the Synod of Whitby. There was a new Roman method for working out the date of Easter. The Gaels, including Finan, were continuing with the old method. But the English church officials agreed to accept the new system.

Finan appears here and there in Scottish place-names. St Finans Isle, where there was an old cell, is in Loch Shiel. In Aberdeenshire, there is Lumphanan. That's thought by some to be Lann Fhìonain, or Lann Fionain in olden times.

There are at least three places called Kilfin(n)an/Killianan. One of them is near Abriachan on Loch Ness-side. In Strathnairn, it's said that Saint Finan was at one time preaching in Dunlichity. There was an image of him there but it was destroyed following the Reformation. That was almost a hundred years after the saint's death.

ceann. Bha sin aig Seanadh Whitby. Bha dòigh ùr Ròmanach ann airson ceann-latha na Càisge obrachadh a-mach. Bha na Gàidheil, Fìonan nam measg, a' leantainn leis an t-seann dòigh. Ach dh'aontaich na pearsaichean-eaglais Sasannach gabhail ris an t-siostam ùr.

Tha Fìonan a' nochdadh an siud 's an seo ann an ainmean-àite na h-Alba. Tha Eilean Fhìonain, far an robh seann chill, ann an Loch Seile. Ann an Siorrachd Obar Dheathain, tha Lumphanan. Tha beachd ann gur e sin *Lann Fhìonain*, no *Lann Fìonain* o shean.

Tha co-dhiù trì àiteachan air a bheil *Cill Fhìonain* mar ainm. Tha fear dhiubh faisg air Obar Itheachan, taobh Loch Nis. Ann an Srath Narann, thathar ag ràdh gun robh Naomh Fìonan a' searmonachadh uaireigin ann an Dùn Fhlichididh. Bha ìomhaigh dheth ann ach chaidh a sgrios an dèidh an Ath Leasachaidh. Bha sin cha mhòr mìle bliadhna an dèidh bàs an naoimh.