

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 948 (which corresponds to Litir 1,252). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Do you know Kilravock Castle? It's between Inverness and Nairn. In English, people call it 'Kilravock Castle'. It's pronounced 'kil-ROK', but it's written K-I-L-R-A-V-O-C-K.

In the thirteenth century, it was written 'Culravock'. Thus, although we say 'Cill Ràthaig' – 'the church at the small circular fort' – perhaps 'Cùl' should be there instead of 'Cill' – 'the place behind the small circular fort'. That makes sense. I don't know that there was ever a church or cell there.

It appears there was a 'bh' in the second element, pronounced 'v'. Through time, the 'v' disappeared. There is a map in the National Library of Scotland. It was made shortly after the Battle of Culloden. On that map, the castle is marked, with its name written C-U-L-R-A-I-C-K. There is no sign of a 'v'. More about that map in a minute or two.

But a bit about the castle to begin with. It's an impressive building. There is a tower there with five storeys. It's situated on a ridge north of the River Nairn. The estate is fertile. There is a mixture of fields, pasture and woodland on it.

A bheil sibh eòlach air Caisteal Chill Ràthaig? Tha e eadar Inbhir Nis agus Inbhir Narann. Ann am Beurla, canaidh daoine 'Kilravock Castle' ris. Tha e air fhuaimneachadh 'kil-ROK', ach tha e air a sgrìobhadh K-I-L-R-A-V-O-C-K.

Ann an treas linn deug, bha e air a sgrìobhadh 'Culravock'. Mar sin, ged a chanas sinn 'Cill Ràthaig' – 'the church at the small circular fort' – 's dòcha gur e 'Cùl' a bu chòir a bhith ann an àite 'Cill' – 'the place behind the small circular fort'. Tha sin ciallach. Chan aithne dhomh gun robh eaglais no cill a-riamh ann.

Tha e coltach gun robh 'bh' anns an dàrna eileamaid, air fhuaimneachadh mar 'v'. Tro thìde dh'fhalbh am 'v'. Tha mapa ann an Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba. Chaidh a dhèanamh goirid an dèidh Blàr Chùil Lodair. Air a' mhapa sin, tha an caisteal air a chomharrachadh, le ainm air a sgrìobhadh C-U-L-R-A-I-C-K. Chan eil sgeul air 'v'. Tuilleadh mun mhapa sin ann am mionaid no dhà.

Ach beagan mun chaisteal an toiseach. Tha e na thogalach drùidhteach. Tha tùr còig-ùrlarach ann. Tha e suidhichte air druim gu tuath air Uisge Narann. Tha an oighreachd torrach. Tha measgachadh de dh'achaidhean, pàircean agus coille oirre.

The castle is still standing. People are living there. But the building goes back to 1460. Until recently, it was in the hands of the same family all that time – the Ròsaich or Roses.

Kilravock Castle became famous in connection with the Battle of Culloden. It's shown on the map that I was mentioning. The map was drawn up in 1746 by a John Finlayson.

As Finlayson shows on the map, on the night before the battle, a Jacobite army went towards Nairn. That's where the great government army was camped.

The Jacobites were going to attack them. But they stopped before they reached Nairn and they returned to Culloden. And they turned near Kilravock Castle.

Tha an caisteal fhathast na sheasamh. Tha daoine fhathast a' fuireach ann. Ach tha an togalach a' dol air ais gu ceithir ceud deug is seasgad (1460). Gu o chionn ghoirid, bha e ann an làmhnan an aon teaghlaich fad na h-ùine sin – na Ròsaich no *Roses*.

Dh'fhàs Caisteal Chill Ràthaig ainmeil ann an co-cheangal ri Blàr Chùil Lodair. Tha e air a shealltainn air a' mhapa a bha mi ag ainmeachadh. Chaidh am mapa a tharraing ri chèile ann an seachd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a sia (1746) le fear Iain MacFhionnlaigh.

Mar a tha MacFhionnlaigh a' sealltainn air a mhapa, air an oidhche ron bhatail, chaidh armailt Sheumasach a dh'ionnsaigh Inbhir Narann. Sin far an robh armailt mhòr an riaghaltais a' campachadh.

Bha na Seumasaich a' dol a thoirt ionnsaigh orra. Ach stad iad mus do ràinig iad Inbhir Narann agus thill iad a Chùil Lodair. Agus thionndaidh iad faisg air Caisteal Chill Ràthaig.