

## **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 985 (which corresponds to Litir 1,289). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot).

*I was telling you about the aluminium factory in Foyers on Loch Ness-side. The factory's history is very interesting. The British Aluminium Company bought the estate in 1895. They were aiming to create cheap electricity with hydro-electric power. A lot of electrical power is used in the manufacture of aluminium. The company built the first private hydro-electric scheme in Scotland.*

*They constructed a dam high above Foyers. They joined together two lochs – Loch Garth and Loch Farraline. They create a large loch called the Loch Mòr. Unfortunately, on maps, it is written as 'Loch Mhòr'.*

*Three roads were covered by it. The company built new roads. Bits of croftland went under the water. The crofters got additional land from the Gorthleck Farm.*

*A year later, the factory was operating. They got the ore – bauxite – through the Caledonian Canal. To begin with, the bauxite came from Ireland and from France.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun fhactaraidh aluminium ann am Foithear, taobh Loch Nis. Tha eachdraidh na factaraidh gu math inntinneach. Cheannaich am *British Aluminium Company* an oighreachd ann an ochd ceud deug, naochad 's a còig (1895). Bha iad ag amas air dealan saor a chruthachadh le cumhachd an uisge. Bithear a' cur feum air tòrr cumhachd an dealain airson aluminium a dhèanamh. Thog a' chompanaidh a' chiad sgeama hydro priobhaideach ann an Alba.

Thog iad dam gu h-àrd os cionn Foithir. Cheangail iad ri chèile dà loch – Loch Gart agus Loch Farralainn. Chruthaich iad loch mòr ùr ris an canar *An Loch Mòr*. Gu mì-fhortanach, air na mapaichean, tha e air a sgrìobhadh mar 'Loch Mhòr'.

Chaidh trì rathaidean a chòmhdachadh leis. Thog a' chompanaidh rathaidean ùra. Chaidh pìosan fearainn croite fon uisge. Fhuair na croitearan fearann a bharrachd o Thuathanas Ghoirtlig.

Bliadhna an dèidh sin, bha an fhactaraidh ag obair. Fhuair iad a' chlach-mhèinnir – *bauxite* – tron Chanàl Chailleannach. An toiseach, thàinig am bauxite à Èirinn agus às an Fhraing.

<p><i>Lord Kelvin was an adviser to them. He wanted the Highlanders to eschew tourism. He wanted them to work in factories. The factories would use hydro-electric power.</i></p> <p><i>Dozens [twenties] of people got work in the factory at Foyers. The company built a new village in which more than six hundred people were living.</i></p> <p><i>But the development wasn't without loss. Not everybody was pleased. Some thought that the head of the company had too much power. And most of the people who came from other places had no Gaelic. The development had a bad effect on Gaelic in Stratherrick. But it was important to the economy in general.</i></p> <p><i>The factory closed in 1967. It was too small – as was the canal – and the aluminium was too expensive. But the building is still standing.</i></p>	<p>Bha am Morair Kelvin na chomhairleach dhaibh. Bha esan airson 's gum biodh na Gàidheil a' cur turasachd an dàrna taobh. Bha e ag iarraidh orra obair a ghabhail ann am factaraidhean. Bhiodh na factaraidhean a' cleachdadh cumhachd dealain-uisge.</p> <p>Fhuair na ficheadan obair anns an fhactaraidh ann am Foithir. Thog a' chompanaidh baile ùr anns an robh còrr is sia ceud duine a' fuireach.</p> <p>Ach cha robh an leasachadh gun chall. Cha robh a h-uile duine toilichte. Bha cuid dhen bheachd gun robh cus cumhachd aig ceannard na companaidh. Agus cha robh Gàidhlig aig a' chuid a bu mhotha de na daoine a thàinig a-steach o àiteachan eile. Thug an leasachadh droch bhuaidh air a' Ghàidhlig ann an sgìre Shrath Fharaigaig. Ach bha e cudromach don eaconamaidh anns an fharsaingeachd.</p> <p>Dhùin an fhactaraidh ann an naoi ceud deug, seasgad 's a seachd (1967). Bha i ro bheag – mar a bha an cànal – agus bha an aluminium a rinn i ro chosgail. Ach tha an togalach na sheasamh fhathast.</p>
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