

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 988 (which corresponds to Litir 1,292). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

In the last Litir, I was telling you about Loch nan Dùbhrachan in Sleat on the Isle of Skye. M.E.M. Donaldson wrote about it in her book Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands'. Donaldson was an author. She was also famous for her photography.

People knew her as M.E.M. Donaldson. Her full name was Mary Ethel Muir Donaldson. 'Mem' – as some called her – was born in Surrey in 1876. Her father was Scottish.

Early in the 20th century, she moved to the Highlands along with her companion, the artist, Isobel Bonus. They built a house in Ardnamurchan.

I expect you are familiar with two famous photographs she took. In one of them, there is a crofter on the Isle of Eigg. He is sitting with a peat-cutting iron across his knees. There is a kitten on his right knee. There is a dog next to him on the other side. The man was called Lachlan MacAskill.

The other photo is even more famous. It is called 'Girl with Firewood, Morar 1910'. In the photo there is a twelve-year-old girl. She is carrying a load on her back of

Ann an Litir mu dheireadh, bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Loch nan Dùbhrachan ann an Slèite san Eilean Sgitheanach. Sgrìobh M.E.M. Donaldson mu dheidhinn anns an leabhar aice 'Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands'. Bha Donaldson na h-ùghdar. Bha i cuideachd ainmeil airson dealbhan a thogail le camara.

Bha daoine eòlach oirre mar M.E.M. Donaldson. B' e an t-ainm slàn oirre Mary Ethel Muir Donaldson. Rugadh 'Mem' – mar a ghabh feadhainn oirre – ann an Surrey ann an ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a sia (1876). Bha a h-athair Albannach.

Tràth anns an fhicheadamh linn, ghluais i don Ghàidhealtachd cuide ris a' bhana-chompanach aice, an tè-ealain, Iseabail Bonus. Thog iad taigh ann an Àird nam Murchan.

Tha mi an dùil gu bheil sibh eòlach air dà dhealbh ainmeil a thog i. Ann am fear dhiubh, tha croitear ann an Eilean Eige. Tha e na shuidhe le tairisgeir thairis air a ghlùinean. Tha piseag air a ghlùn dheis. Tha cù na chois air an taobh eile. 'S e an t-ainm a bh' air an duine Lachlan MacAsgaill.

Tha an dealbh eile eadhon nas ainmeile. 'S e an t-ainm a tha air 'Girl with Firewood, Morar 1910'. Anns an dealbh tha nighean aois dusan bliadhna. Tha ultach-droma aice de bhiorain-teine. Tha i ri taobh

<p><i>kindling. She is next to a loch in Morar. Her name was Christina MacVarish.</i></p> <p><i>In her photos, Mem Donaldson was showing the Highlands as they were at that time, and the people who were living there. Many people in the west were still living in thatched houses.</i></p> <p><i>The photos are all black-and-white. Today, they are kept in two places. Some are in the National Museum of Scotland. And others are in Inverness Museum. You can look at many of them on the 'Am Baile' website.</i></p> <p><i>In her book 'Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands', Mem Donaldson has a photo of a mountain guide who was famous. I'll have more on him and on that book in the next Litir.</i></p>	<p>loch ann am Mòrar. 'S e an t-ainm a bha oirre – Cairistiona NicMharais.</p> <p>Anns na dealbhan aice, bha Mem Donaldson a' sealltainn na Gàidhealtachd mar a bha i aig an àm ud agus na daoine a bha a' fuireach ann. Bha daoine gu leòr air an taobh an iar fhathast a' fuireach ann an taighean-tughaidh.</p> <p>Tha na dealbhan uile dubh-is-geal. An-diugh, tha iad air an stòradh ann an dà àite. Tha feadhainn ann an Taigh-tasgaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba. Agus tha feadhainn eile ann an Taigh-tasgaidh Inbhir Nis. Faodaidh sibh sùil a thoirt air gu leòr dhiubh air làrach-lìn 'Am Baile'.</p> <p>Anns an leabhar aice '<i>Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands</i>', tha dealbh aig Mem Donaldson de neach-iùil nam beann a bha ainmeil. Bidh tuilleadh agam airsan agus air an leabhar sin anns an ath Litir.</p>
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