

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 1,030 (which corresponds to Litir 1,334). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you about the Kessock Ferry. There was a ferryboat running at one time between Inverness and the Black Isle. That was before there was the Kessock Bridge

People swim over and back every year. I want to tell you about the history of that swim. I have drawn this summary from the booklet 'The History of the Kessock Ferry Swim' by Jennifer Morag Henderson.

In 1912, a female – 'Miss Duncan' – swam over. There was a boat beside her. She did the breaststroke. The journey took seventeen minutes. Two years after that, a sixteen-year-old lad did the same thing. He was [called] Charles Jack.

Through the wars, there were armed forces based in the area. It doesn't appear that people were swimming across the Kessock Narrows during those years or in the inter-war years.

It's in 1946 that groups started to swim over together. About a dozen people went to begin with. A year after that, four young people, aged about twelve years, swam from the

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Aiseag Cheasaig. Bha bàt'-aiseig uaireigin a' dol eadar Inbhir Nis agus an t-Eilean Dubh. Bha sin mus robh Drochaid Cheasaig ann.

Bidh daoine a' snàmh a-null 's anall a h-uile bliadhna. Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu eachdraidh an t-snàimh sin. Tharraing mi an gearr-chunntas seo bhon leabhran 'The History of the Kessock Ferry Swim' le Jennifer Morag NicEanraig.

Ann an naoi ceud deug 's a dhà-dheug (1912), shnàmh tè – 'Miss Duncan' – a-null. Bha bàta ri a taobh. Rinn i buille-bhroillich no *breaststroke*. Thug an turas seachd mionaidean deug. Dà bhliadhna an dèidh sin, rinn gille sia bliadhna deug a dh'aois an aon rud. B' esan Teàrlach Jack.

Tro na cogaidhean, bha feachdan armaichte stèidhichte anns an sgìre. Chan eil e a' coimhead coltach gun robh daoine a' snàmh thar Caolas Cheasaig anns na bliadhnaichean sin, no anns na bliadhnaichean eadar an dà chogadh.

'S ann ann an naoi ceud deug, ceathrad 's a sia (1946) a thòisich buidhnean air snàmh a-null còmhla. Chaidh mu dhusan ann an toiseach. A' bhliadhna an dèidh sin, shnàmh ceathrar

north to the south. They all used the front crawl or backstroke.

The number of swimmers was increasing. In 1950, about thirty participated. They were all under fourteen years of age.

Ian Black was one of the swimmers in the fifties. He was an excellent swimmer. In 1958, he won three gold medals at the European championships in Budapest. And he won a gold medal and two silver medals at the Commonwealth Games in Cardiff. At the age of seventeen, he won BBC Sports Personality of the Year.

At the end of the seventies, the Kessock Ferry Swim stopped. It began again in 2022 as a charity event. Hundreds of people take part. With the interest that people have today in swimming in cold water, it's expected that it will continue for many years to come.

òigrìdh, aois mu dhusan bliadhna, bho thuath gu deas. Chleachd iad a' bhuille-shnàigeach 'front crawl' no a' bhuille-chùil 'backstroke'.

Bha an àireamh de shnàmhadairan a' dol am meud. Ann an naoi ceud deug is caogad (1950), ghabh mu thrìthead duine pàirt. Bha iad uile fo aois ceithir-deug.

B' e Ian Black fear de na snàmhadairan anns na caogadan. Bha e fìor mhath air snàmh. Ann an naoi ceud deug, caogad 's a h-ochd (1958) bhuannaich e trì buinn òir aig na farpaisean Eòrpach ann am Budapest. Agus bhuannaich e bonn òir is dà bhonn airgid aig Geamannan a' Cho-fhlaitheis ann an Cardiff. Aig aois seachd-deug, bhuannaich e BBC Sports Personality of the Year.

Aig deireadh nan seasgadan, sguir an Kessock Ferry Swim. Thòisich e às ùr ann am fichead, fichead 's a dhà (2022) mar thachartas carthannais. Bidh na ceudan a' gabhail pàirt ann. Leis an ùidh a th' aig daoine an-diugh ann an snàmh ann an uisge fuar, tha dùil gum bi e a' dol airson mòran bhliadhnaichean fhathast.