

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 1,085 (which corresponds to Litir 1,389). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you about the Book of Kells, and the opinion that it was made in the coastlands of Easter Ross in the eighth century. It is thought that it was Picts who were working on it.

The scholar Victoria Whitworth wrote the book 'The Book of Kells: Unlocking the Enigma'. She examined the artwork in the Book of Kells. She also examined the artwork on old sculpted Pictish stones.

Among the stones are three that belong to Hilton (of Cadboll), Shandwick and Nigg – places that are close to Portmahomack. The artwork on them is reminiscent of what is on the pages of the Book of Kells. They are even more alike if we remember that those stones at one time were painted in bright colours – as is the Book of Kells.

Something was in the favour of the sculptors in Portmahomack. That was their stone – the Old Red Sandstone. It's easy enough to work.

That's not how the stone is on Iona in the West Highlands. That stone is very hard. It's more

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Leabhar Cheannanais, agus am beachd gun robh e air a dhèanamh ann am Machair Rois. Bha manachainn ann am Port mo Cholmaig anns an ochdamh linn. Thathar a' smaoinichadh gur e Cruithnich a bha ag obair ann.

Sgrìobh an sgoilear Victoria Whitworth an leabhar *The Book of Kells: Unlocking the Enigma*. Thug i sùil gheur air an obair-ealain ann an Leabhar Cheannanais. Thug i sùil cuideachd air an obair-ealain air seann chlachan snaighte nan Cruithneach.

Am measg nan clach, tha na trì a bhuineas do Bhaile a' Chnuic, Seannduaig agus An Eig – àiteachan a tha faisg air Port mo Cholmaig. Tha an obair-ealain orra rudeigin coltach ris na tha ann air duilleagan Leabhar Cheannanais. Tha iad nas coltaiche buileach ma chuimhnicheas sinn gun robh na clachan sin uaireigin air am peantadh ann an dathan brèagha – mar a tha Leabhar Cheannanais.

Bha rudeigin ann am fàbhar nan snaigheadairean ann am Port mo Cholmaig. 'S e sin a' chlach a bha aca – an Seann Chlach-ghainmhich. Tha e furasta gu leòr a' chlach seo obrachadh.

Chan ann mar sin a tha a' chlach ann an Eilean Ì air taobh an iar na Gàidhealtachd. Tha a' chlach sin gu math

difficult to work. There are large old crosses on Iona, certainly. But there is no artwork on the stones of the type we see in the coastlands of Easter Ross, or in the Book of Kells.

It's thought that there were links between the monasteries in Portmahomack and Iona. And it was easy enough to sail on the sea between Portmahomack and the monastery on Lindisfarne off the north-east coast of England. There were religious links between Lindisfarne and Iona.

And who was the saint named in Portmahomack? Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne in the seventh century. He went to Lindisfarne from Iona.

In the next Litir, we'll look at the technology they had in Portmahomack for making manuscripts. Does that add to the story of the Book of Kells?

cruaidh. Tha i nas dorra obrachadh. Tha seann chroisean mòra ann an Ì, ceart gu leòr. Ach chan eil obair-ealain air na clachan dhen t-seòrsa a chì sinn ann am Machair Rois, no ann an Leabhar Cheannanais.

Thathar a' smaoinichadh gun robh ceanglaichean ann eadar na manachainnean ann am Port mo Cholmaig agus Eilean Ì. Agus bha e furasta gu leòr seòladh aig muir eadar Port mo Cholmaig agus a' mhanachainn ann an Eilean Lindisfarne far costa an ear-thuath Shasainn. Bha ceanglaichean creideimh ann eadar Lindisfarne agus Eilean Ì.

Agus cò bha anns an naomh a tha ainmichte ann am Port mo Cholmaig? Bha Colman, Easbaig Lindisfarne anns an t-seachdamh linn. Chaidh esan gu ruige Lindisfarne à Eilean Ì.

Anns an ath Litir bheir sinn sùil air an teicneòlas a bha aca ann am Port mo Cholmaig airson làmh-sgrìobhainnean a dhèanamh. A bheil sin a' cur ri sgeul Leabhar Cheannanais?