

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 1,111 (which corresponds to Litir 1,415). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

<i>Who was the famous Gaelic singer that was born in India? I'm thinking of a woman. The solution is Kitty MacLeod. She passed away in the year 2000.</i> <i>Kitty's father, Kenneth, was a soldier in the Seaforths in India. His wife, Anna, went over to be with him. Catrìona – or Kitty – was born in Kasauli, a hill town in India.</i> <i>However, Kitty's father was sent to Mesopotamia. Anna was informed that he was lost in battle. It was believed that he was dead. Anna took her baby, Kitty, home to Lewis. She got work as a schoolmistress. Kitty was raised in places where Gaelic was strong.</i> <i>But information was received that Kenneth was still alive. He was in hospital in Egypt. But he could not speak.</i> <i>He returned to Scotland. Apparently, his speech returned when he met Kitty. When he was strong enough, they went to Aberdeen where Kenneth learned horticulture. After that, they returned to Lewis. They were living in Skigersta in Ness.</i>	Cò an seinneadair Gàidhlig ainmeil a rugadh anns na h-Innseachan? Tha mi a' beachdachadh air boireannach. 'S e am fuasgladh – Kitty NicLeòid. Chaochail i anns a' bhliadhna dà mhìle. Bha athair Kitty, Coinneach, na shaighdear anns na Sìophortaich anns na h-Innseachan. Chaidh a bhean, Anna, a-null airson a bhith còmhla ris. Rugadh Catrìona – no Kitty – ann an Kasauli, baile monaidh anns na h-Innseachan. Ge-tà, bha athair Kitty air a chur a Mhesopotamia. Fhuair Anna fios gun robh e air chall ann am blàr. Bhathar a' creidsinn gun robh e marbh. Thug Anna a leanabh, Kitty, dhachaigh a Leòdhas. Fhuair i obair mar bhana-mhaighstir sgoile. Thogadh Kitty ann an àiteachan far an robh a' Ghàidhlig làidir. Ach fhuair eadhon fios gun robh Coinneach fhathast beò. Bha e anns an ospadal anns an Èiphit. Ach cha robh comas labhairt aige. Thill e a dh'Alba. A rèir choltais, thill a chainnt nuair a thachair e ri Kitty. Nuair a bha e làidir gu leòr, chaidh iad a dh'Obar Dheathain far an do dh'ionnsaich Coinneach tuathanachas-gàrraidh no horticulture. An dèidh sin, thill iad a Leòdhas. Bha iad a' fuireach ann an Sgiogarstaidh ann an Nis.
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<i>Kitty's brother, Kenneth Angus, was a (bag)piper. Her sister, Marietta, was good at singing. And Kitty herself would win a reputation as an excellent singer.</i> <i>When she was at the Nicolson Institute in Stornoway, Kitty heard the famous song 'An Ataireachd Àrd'. She was captivated by it. She herself recorded the song with the company Parlophone.</i> <i>Kitty won a scholarship to the University of Edinburgh. She was in much demand as a singer in concerts and ceilidhs in the capital. And she won An Comunn Gàidhealach's gold medal at the National Mod in 1936.</i> <i>Kitty was a teacher in her professional life, but she was well known as a singer. She and Marietta were involved in the People's Festival Cèilidhs in Edinburgh, something from which the Edinburgh Festival Fringe arose.</i> <i>If you are not familiar with her singing, why don't you look up 'Kitty MacLeod Calum Sgàire' on the internet. You'll hear the song 'Calum Sgàire' sung by an exceptional singer.</i>	Bha bràthair Kitty, Coinneach Aonghas, na phiobaire. Bha a piuthar, Marietta, math air seinn. Agus bhiodh Kitty fhèin a' coisinn cliù mar sheinneadair air leth. Nuair a bha i aig Àrd-sgoil MhicNeacail ann an Steòrnabhagh, chuala Kitty an t-òran ainmeil 'An Ataireachd Àrd'. Bha i air a beò-ghlacadh leis. Chlàir i fhèin an t-òran leis a' chompanaidh Parlophone. Bhuannaich Kitty sgoilearachd do dh'Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann. Bha fèill mhòr oirre mar sheinneadair ann an consartan is cèilidhean anns a' phrìomh bhaile. Agus bhuannaich i bonn òir a' Chomuinn Ghàidhealaich aig a' Mhòd Nàiseanta ann an trithead's a sia (1936). Bha Kitty na tidsear gu proifeiseanta, ach bha i cliùmhòr mar sheinneadair. Bha i fhèin agus Marietta an sàs anns na <i>People's Festival Cèilidhs</i> ann an Dùn Èideann, rud às an do dh'èirich Iomall Fèis Dhùn Èideann. Mura h-eil sibh eòlach air a seinn, nach rannsaich sibh 'Kitty MacLeod Calum Sgàire' air an eadar-lìon. Cluinnidh sibh an t-òran 'Calum Sgàire' air a ghabhail le sàr-sheinneadair.
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