

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 1,115 (which corresponds to Litir 1,419). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Were you ever in Dail a' Mhuilinn in Caithness? Dalnawillan in English. It's very hard to reach. No public road goes there. And from the nearest railway station, it's a few miles down a track.

Dalnawillan is in an area called 'The Flow Country'. It is registered by UNESCO as having World Heritage status.

There is an old lodge there called Dalnawillan Lodge. At one time, many people came there for hunting the deer. But today the two-storey building is empty and locked. I fear that it won't be long until it becomes ruinous.

Many in Caithness connect Dalnawillan Lodge with the late Sir Gilleasbaig Mac na Ceàrdaich. He is known in English as Sir Archibald Sinclair, 1st Viscount Thurso. He was born in Caithness in 1890. But he went to Eton College and the Military College at Sandhurst. He wasn't your average Gollach (Caithnessian)!

He had a long career in politics. He was the leader of the Liberal Party. Winston Churchill was among his friends. He was the

An robh sibh riamh ann an Dail a' Mhuilinn ann an Gallaibh? Dalnawillan ann am Beurla. Tha e uabhasach doirbh a ruigsinn. Chan eil rathad poblach a' dol ann. Agus bhon stèisean-rèile as fhaisge, tha e beagan mhiltean sìos frith-rathad.

Tha Dail a' Mhuilinn ann an sgìre ris an canar 'The Flow Country' no 'Dùthaich nam Boglaichean'. Tha i clàraichte aig UNESCO mar phàirt de 'Dhualchas na Cruinne'.

Tha seann loidse ann air a bheil Dalnawillan Lodge. Bha uaireigin gu leòr a' tighinn ann airson sealg nam fiadh. Ach an-diugh, tha an togalach dà-ùrlarach falamh agus glaiste. Tha eagal orm nach fhada gum bi e a' tuiteam às a chèile.

Tha mòran ann an Gallaibh a' ceangal Loidse Dhail a' Mhuilinn ri Sir Gilleasbaig Mac na Ceàrdaich nach maireann. Tha e aithnichte ann am Beurla mar Sir Archibald Sinclair, 1st Viscount Thurso. Rugadh e ann an Gallaibh ann an ochd ceud deug is naochad (1890). Ach chaidh e gu Colaiste Eton agus Colaiste an Airm ann an Sandhurst. Chan e Gallach àbhaisteach a bha ann!

Bha dreuchd fada aige ann am poilitigs. Bha e na cheannard air a' Phàrtaidh Libearalach. Bha Winston Churchill am measg nan caraidean aige.

<i>Secretary of State for the Air at a time when the Royal Air Force saved Britain from the Luftwaffe. Often, friends of his from the south would stay as guests at Dalnawillan.</i> <i>There is an old cemetery on a hillock opposite the lodge. It is said that St. Ciaran was buried there in ancient times. He was connected to the spread of the Christian religion in Scotland. According to local tradition, Ciaran was put to death on the Isle of Eigg, along with St. Donan.</i> <i>Most of the people that were buried in the cemetery – or at least those with [head]stones – belong to the Sinclairs. One family still lives near the cemetery. I reckon they are gamekeepers. The deer greatly outnumber the humans in that area.</i>	Bha e ann an dreuchd Rùnaire na Stàite airson an Adhair ag àm nuair a ghlèidh Feachd Rìoghail an Adhair Breatainn bhon Luftwaffe. Gu tric, bhiodh caraidean aige on cheann a deas a’ fuireach mar aoighean ann an Dail a’ Mhuilinn. Tha seann chladh air tom mu choinneamh na loidse. Thathar ag ràdh gun robh Naomh Ciaran air a thiodhlacadh ann o shean. Bha esan co-cheangailte ri sgaoileadh a’ Chreideimh Chrìosdail ann an Alba. A rèir beul-aithris na sgìre, bha Ciaran air a chur gu bàs ann an Eilean Eige, cuide ri Naomh Donnan. Buinidh a’ chuid as motha de na daoine a chaidh a thiodhlacadh anns a’ chladh – no co-dhiù an fheadhainn aig a bheil clachan – do na <i>Sinclairs</i>. Tha aon teaghlach fhathast a’ fuireach faisg air a’ chladh. Tha mi a’ dèanamh dheth gur e geamairean a tha annta. Tha na fèidh mòran nas pailte na na daoine anns an sgìre sin.
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