

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 177 (which corresponds to Litir 481). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Four hundred years ago – next year – there was a bad event. It had a bad effect on the Gaels. In 1609, the Statutes of Iona were put in place. In English that's the Statutes of Iona. But will people remember that next year? They should!

James VI was on the throne. He obtained the English crown in 1603. Then he started to be hard on the Gaels. He hated the Gaels. He wanted to get rid of the Gaelic language. He wanted to abolish the power of the clans.

The clan chiefs of the west were arrested. Those chiefs were from islands between Islay and Harris. It happened like this. The chiefs received an invitation to go to a meeting in Mull. They were invited to go on board a vessel (boat). The Bishop of the Isles was going to preach on board the vessel.

The clan chiefs went there. They were arrested. They agreed to go to another meeting on Iona. Well, they had no choice! They

O chionn ceithir cheud bliadhna – an ath-bhliadhna – bha droch thachartas ann. Thug e droch bhuaidh air na Gàidheil. Ann an sia ceud deug 's a naoi (1609), chaidh Reachdas Ì a chur an sàs. Ann am Beurla 's e sin *The Statutes of Iona*. Ach am bi daoine a' cuimhneachadh sin an ath-bhliadhna? Bu chòir dhaibh!

Bha Seumas VI air an rìgh-chathair. Fhuair e crùn Shasainn ann an sia ceud deug 's a trì (1603). Thòisich e an uair sin a bhith cruaidh air na Gàidheil. Bha gràin aige air na Gàidheil. Bha e ag iarraidh cur às don Ghàidhlig. Bha e ag iarraidh cur às do chumhachd nam fineachan.

Chaidh cinn-chinnidh an taoibh an iar a chur an grèim. Bha na cinn-chinnidh sin às eileanan eadar Ìle agus Na Hearadh. Thachair e mar seo. Fhuair na cinn-chinnidh cuireadh dhol gu coinneamh ann am Muile. Fhuair iad cuireadh dhol air bòrd soitheach. Bha Easbaig nan Eilean a' dol a shearmonachadh air bòrd an t-soithich.

Chaidh na cinn-chinnidh ann. Chaidh an cur an grèim. Dh'aontaich iad dhol gu coinneamh eile ann an Ì. Uill, cha robh roghainn aca! Bha aca

had to put their names to the Statues of Iona on Iona. That was in 1609.

There were a dozen sections in the statutes. Here are a few of them:

- 1. The clan chiefs had to give support to the Protestant Church.*
- 2. They had to establish inns.*
- 3. The clan chiefs were not permitted to keep many gentlemen in their house[s].*
- 4. Islanders were not allowed to buy wine from overseas. But they were allowed to make whisky for themselves..*
- 5. People were not permitted to use a gun. It was not even permitted to shoot deer, hares or birds.*

But there were two other sections in the Statutes of Iona that were even worse. They thrust a knife in the heart[s] of the Gaels. We'll look at those sections in the next Litir.

ris na h-ainmean aca a chur ri Reachdas Ì ann an Eilean Ì. Bha sin ann an sia ceud deug 's a naoi (1609).

Bha dusan earrann anns an reachdas. Seo feadhainn dhiubh:

1. Bha aig na cinn-chinnidh ri taic a thoirt don Eaglais Phròstanaich.
2. Bha aca ri taighean-òsta a stèidheachadh.
3. Cha robh cead aig na cinn-chinnidh mòran dhaoine-uaisle a chumail anns an dachaigh aca.
4. Cha robh cead aig eileanach fìon a cheannach bho thall thairis. Ach bha cead aca uisge-beatha a dhèanamh dhaibh fhèin.
5. Cha robh cead aig duine gunna a chleachdadh. Cha robh e ceadaichte eadhon losgadh air fèidh, maighich no eòin.

Ach bha dà earrainn eile ann an Reachdas Ì a bha na bu mhiosa buileach. Shàth iad sgian ann an cridhe nan Gàidheal. Bheir sinn sùil air na h-earrannan sin anns an ath Litir.