

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 186 (which corresponds to Litir 490). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclea@bbc.co.uk.

Aisir Mòr and Aisir Beag are in North-west Sutherland. They are near Cape Wrath. They are crofting townships. In English their names are Oldshoremore and Oldshorebeg.

The estate on which Oldshoremore and Oldshorebeg are [situated] is owned by the John Muir Trust. John Muir was a Scot. He encouraged the conservation of land and the creation of national parks in America.

All the land on the estate is under crofting [tenure]. Why, then, was the Trust interested in the estate? Well, there is a beautiful beach there – Bàgh Sheannabhaid, or Sandwood Bay. And there is only a small population living there.

On the other side of the estate's boundary, there is a bothy. The name of the place where it is – is Strathan. Many know the bothy as Strathan Bothy. It is maintained by the Mountain Bothies Association. Although it is now a bothy, it was once a home.

Strathan is a good distance

Tha Aisir Mòr agus Aisir Beag ann an iar-thuath Chataibh. Tha iad faisg air a' Pharbh. 'S e bailtean croitearachd a tha annta. Ann am Beurla, 's iad *Oldshoremore* agus *Oldshorebeg* na h-ainmean orra.

Tha an oighreachd air a bheil Aisir Mòr is Aisir Beag le Urras Iain Mhuir. 'S e buidheann-ghlèidhteachais a tha anns an Urras. Bha Iain Muir na Albannach. Bhrosnaich e glèidheadh fearainn agus cruthachadh phàircean nàiseanta ann an Ameireagaidh.

Tha am fearann gu lèir air an oighreachd fo chroitearachd. Carson a bha ùidh, ma-thà, aig an Urras anns an oighreachd? Uill, tha tràigh mhòr bhrèagha oirre – Bàgh Sheannabhaid, no *Sandwood Bay*. Agus chan eil ach sluagh beag a' fuireach ann.

Air taobh thall crìoch na h-oighreachd tha bothan ann. 'S e an t-ainm air an àite anns a bheil e – An Srathan. Tha mòran eòlach air a' bhothan mar *Strathan Bothy*. Tha e air a chumail an òrdugh le Comann Bothain nam Beann. Ged as e bothan a tha ann anise, 's e dachaigh a bha ann uaireigin.

Tha an Srathan pìos mòr air

from other settlements. It is miles across the moor on a rough hill-track. And it's across a river. North of Strathan, nobody lives.

Nobody was living permanently in the bothy for a long time. But a strange thing happened a few years ago. A couple moved in. They made their home there. They did not have permission from anybody. They did not have permission from the Bothies Association. Their names were Robbie and Anne Northway. Their story is very unusual.

In September 2000, Robbie and Anne moved to Strathan. They had twelve dogs and forty geese. They had hens and ducks, and a pony. The two of them weren't in good health. But they took their furniture in – on their back[s]. We'll see what happened to the Northways next week.

falbh bho bhailtean eile. Tha e mìltean thar na mòintich air frith-rathad garbh. Agus tha e air taobh thall abhainn. Gu tuath air an t-Srathan, chan eil duine sam bith a' fuireach.

Cha robh duine a' fuireach anns a' bhothan làn-ùine fad ùine mhòr. Ach thachair rud neònach o chionn beagan bhliadhnaichean. Ghluais cupall a-steach. Rinn iad an dachaigh ann. Cha robh cead aca bho dhuine sam bith. Cha robh cead aca bho Chomann nam Bothan. 'S e Robbie is Anne Northway na h-ainmean orra. Tha an stòiridh gu math annasach.

Anns an t-Sultain 2000, ghluais Robbie is Anne don t-Srathan. bha dusan cù agus ceathrad gèadh aca. Bha cearcan is tunnagan aca, agus gearran. Cha robh an dithis aca ann an deagh shlàinte. Ach thug iad an àirneis a-steach – air an druim. Chì sinn dè thachair do na Northways an ath-sheachdain.