

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 192 (which corresponds to Litir 496). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was at the National Mod in Falkirk. That was [held] in October. When I was there, I took a look at the Antonine Wall. The wall runs through Falkirk. The wall is the biggest thing the Romans built in Scotland. It is now listed on the World Heritage List.

In the year 138 (AD), the Emperor Hadrian died. He built Hadrian's Wall. That wall is famous.

Then Antoninus Pius became the Emperor. And what did he do? He built a wall as well! But that was north of Hadrian's Wall. It was in central Scotland, or what is now central Scotland.

The Antonine Wall wasn't like Hadrian's Wall. For the most part, it was built of turf, rather than stone. There was a big ditch to the north. There was a big road to the south. But, as was [the case] with Hadrian's Wall, there were forts connected with it. The soldiers lived [were living] in the forts.

I'm going to look at the forts on the Antonine Wall. I'm going to start at the western end. The first

Bha mi aig a' Mhòd Nàiseanta anns an Eaglais Bhric. Bha sin ann san Dàmhair. Nuair a bha mi ann, thug mi sùil air Balla Antonine. Tha am balla a' ruith tron Eaglais Bhric. 'S e am balla an rud as motha a thog na Ròmanaich ann an Alba. Tha e clàraichte a-nise air Clàr Dualchas na Cruinne.

Anns a' bhliadhna ceud, trith-ead 's a h-ochd (138 AD), chaochail an t-Ìompaire Hadrian. Thog esan Balla Hadrian. Tha am balla sin ainmeil.

An uair sin, fhuair Antoninus Pius dreuchd an Ìompaire. Agus dè rinn esan? Thog esan balla cuideachd! Ach bha sin gu tuath air Balla Hadrian. Bha e ann am meadhan na h-Alba, no far a bheil meadhan na h-Alba an-diugh.

Cha robh Balla Antonine mar a tha Balla Hadrian. Anns a' chuid mhòir, bha e air a thogail de sgrathan, seach clachan. Bha dìg mhòr air an taobh a tuath. Bha rathad mòr air an taobh a deas. Ach, mar a bha le Balla Hadrian, bha dùin co-cheangailte ris. Bha na saighdearan a' fuireach anns na dùin.

Tha mi a' dol a thoirt sùil air na dùin air Balla Antonine. Tha mi a' dol a thòiseachadh air a' cheann an iar. 'S

one is Old Kilpatrick Fort. That's near the north end of the Erskine Bridge. That bridge goes across the River Clyde, west of Glasgow. The fort covers four acres. Perhaps it was there before the Romans built the big wall.

East of Old Kilpatrick there is Duntocher. Well it's now Duntocher. But in olden times it was called Druim Tòchair. That means "the ridge of the causeway". Not much of that fort is left.

Did you notice something? It's from Gaelic that the English names for those forts came. The next fort is Cleddans Fortlet. Cleddans. Is that a Gaelic name? We'll see – next week.

e a' chiad fhear Dùn Chill Phàdraig no *Old Kilpatrick Fort*. Tha sin faisg air ceann a tuath Drochaid Arasgain. Tha an drochaid sin a' dol thar Abhainn Chluaidh, gu siar air Glaschu. Tha an dùn a' còmhdachadh ceithir acaire. 'S dòcha gun robh e ann mus do thog na Ròmanaich am balla mòr.

Gu sear air Cill Phàdraig tha Dùn Tòchair. Uill, Dùn Tòchair a-nise. Ach o shean 's e *Druim Tòchair* a bha air. Tha sin a' ciallachadh *the ridge of the causeway*. Chan eil mòran dhen dùn sin air fhàgail.

An do mhothaich sibh rudeigin? 'S ann bhon Ghàidhlig a thàinig na h-ainmean Beurla air na dùin sin. 'S e an t-ath dhùn *Cleddans Fortlet*. Cleddans. An e ainm Gàidhlig a tha sin? Chì sinn – an ath-sheachdain.