

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 212 (which corresponds to Litir 516). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

Archibald Cook was a famous preacher. He was a minister in the Free Church in Daviot, near Inverness. That was in the middle of the 19th Century. Hundreds went to listen to his sermons. He was preaching in Gaelic and English. It is Gaelic congregations he had in every place where he was a minister. That was in Caithness, Inverness and Daviot.

Cook had unusual opinions on some things. He was of the opinion that the soul of a man came from his parents. Most of the people in his church were of the opinion that the soul came from God.

And Cook wasn't supportive of the campaign against alcohol. Many in the Free Church were against alcohol. Cook was of the opinion that people needed spiritual renewal. He didn't look on the avoidance of alcohol as spiritual renewal.

And Cook was against music and dancing. He was of the opinion that they were sinful. But he wasn't alone in that opinion.

Bha Gilleasbaig, no Archibald, Cook na shàr-shearmonaiche. Bha e na mhinistear anns an Eaglais Shaoir ann an Deimhidh, faisg air Inbhir Nis. Bha sin ann am meadhan an naoidheamh linn deug. Bha na ceudan a' dol a dh'èisteachd ris na searmonan aige. Bha e a' searmonachadh ann an Gàidhlig agus ann am Beurla. 'S e coitheanalan Gàidhlig a bha aige anns gach àite far an robh e na mhinistear. Bha sin ann an Gallaibh, Inbhir Nis agus Deimhidh.

Bha beachdan neo-àbhaisteach aig Cook air cuid de rudan. Bha e dhen bheachd gun robh anam duine a' tighinn bho a phàrantan. Bha a' chuid mhòr anns an eaglais aige dhen bheachd gun robh an t-anam a' tighinn bho Dhia.

Agus cha robh Cook taiceil don iomairt an aghaidh deoch làidir. Bha mòran anns an Eaglais Shaoir an aghaidh deoch làidir. Bha Cook dhen bheachd gur e ùrachadh spioradail a bha a dhìth air daoine. Cha robh e a' coimhead air seachnadh deoch làidir mar ùrachadh spioradail.

Agus bha Cook an aghaidh ceòl is dannsadh. Bha e dhen bheachd gun robh iad peacach. Ach cha robh e leis fhèin

Cook was strongly against the clearances. Even in Daviot clearances were happening. That was at the end of the fifties. There was an auction for crofts. People were renting a croft. The rent was increasing. Poor people were evicted from their crofts. "They covet their neighbour's land," said Cook about the people that were putting others out.

Before Cook went to Daviot, a congregation in Canada was wanting him as a minister. That was on Cape Breton Island. They asked the famous minister over there – Rev. Norman MacLeod – to write to Cook. MacLeod did that. Letters passed between MacLeod and Cook. But it appears that MacLeod criticized Cook. That was the end of the matter. Cook remained in Scotland.

Cook suffered strokes. He died in 1865. But people still remember him in Daviot and Strathnairn.

anns a' bheachd sin.

Bha Cook gu làidir an aghaidh nam fuadaichean. Eadhon ann an Deimhidh bha fuadaichean a' tachairt. Bha sin aig deireadh nan caogadan. Bha rup ann airson cHroitean. Bha daoine a' faighinn croit air mhàl. Bha am màl a' dol suas. Bha daoine bochda air an cur a-mach às na croitean aca. "Sanntaichidh iad fearann an nàbaidh," thuirt Cook mu na daoine a bha a' cur feadhainn eile a-mach.

Mus deach Cook gu Deimhidh, bha coitheanal ann an Canada ga iarraidh mar mhinistear. Bha sin ann an Ceap Breatainn. Dh'iarr iad air a' mhinistear ainmeil thall an sin – an t-Urramach Tormod MacLeòid – sgrìobhadh gu Cook. Rinn MacLeòid sin. Chaidh litrichean eadar MacLeòid is Cook. Ach tha e coltach gun do chàin MacLeòid Cook. B' e sin deireadh a' ghnothaich. Dh'fhuirich Cook ann an Alba.

Dh'fhuiling Cook stròcan. Chaochail e ann an ochd ceud deug, seasgad 's a còig (1865). Ach tha daoine ga chuimhneachadh fhathast ann an Deimhidh is Srath Narann.