

## 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 224 (which corresponds to Litir 528). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I'm looking at a picture (photograph) just now. It is of an old Gaelic village. There are thatched houses in the village.*

*The village was on a small island. The island is still there. But the village is not there. The people left a long time ago.*

*The island is Boreray. Boreray means "fort-island" in Old Norse. It's close to North Uist and Berneray. I understand there is only one person living there today.*

*But in 1904, when the picture was taken, there was a community there. The picture was taken by a certain Erskine Beveridge. Beveridge was from Dumfermline but he was particularly fond of the Highlands. At the start of the twentieth century, he bought an estate in North Uist. And he built a house on [the island of] Vallay, near the coast of Uist.*

*The picture of Boreray is in a collection of old photographs. They appeared recently in a book called Wanderings with a Camera in*

Tha mi a' coimhead air dealbh an-dràsta. Tha e de sheann bhaile Gàidhealach. Tha taighean tughaidh anns a' bhaile.

Bha am baile air eilean beag. Tha an t-eilean fhathast ann. Ach chan eil am baile ann. Dh'fhalbh na daoine o chionn fhada.

'S e an t-eilean Boraraigh. Tha Boraraigh a' ciallachadh "dùn-eilean" no "borgh-eilean" ann an seann Lochlannais. Tha e faisg air Uibhist a Tuath agus Beàrnaraigh. Tha mi a' tuigsinn gu bheil dìreach aon duine a' fuireach ann an-diugh.

Ach, ann an naoi ceud deug 's a ceithir (1904), nuair a bha an dealbh air a thogail, bha coimhearsnachd ann. Chaidh an dealbh a thogail le fear Erskine Beveridge. 'S ann à Dùn Phàrlain a bha Beveridge, ach bha e gu math measail air a' Ghàidhealtachd. Aig toiseach an fhicheadamh linn, cheannaich e oighreachd ann an Uibhist a Tuath. Agus thog e taigh ann an Eilean Bhàlaigh faisg air cladach Uibhist.

Tha an dealbh de Bhoraraigh ann an cruinneachadh de sheann dealbhan-camara. Nochd iad o chionn ghoirid ann an leabhar air a

Scotland. *There are other places in the Western Isles in the book. And there are also Coll, Tiree, Lismore, Lochaber, Argyll, Perthshire – and Fife. Some of the best photos in the book are of the small fishing villages in Fife.*

*Beveridge was a businessman. He was wealthy. He was interested in archaeology, history and photography [camera work].*

*In 1896 he had holidays in Coll and Tiree. He did research on the old archaeological sites on those islands. He published a book – Coll and Tiree: Their Prehistoric Forts and Ecclesiastical Antiquities.*

*He also did research on archaeological sites in Uist. He published the book North Uist: Its Archaeology and Topography.*

*And what happened to the community in Boreray? Well, the people left in 1923. That was three years after the death of Erskine Beveridge. It wasn't a clearance. According to the new book, the crofters themselves were wanting to leave.*

bheil *Wanderings with a Camera in Scotland*. Tha àiteachan eile anns na h-Eileanan an Iar anns an leabhar. Tha, agus Colla, Tiriodh, Lios Mòr, Loch Abar, Earra-Ghàidheal, Siorrachd Pheairt – agus Fìobh. 'S ann de na bailtean beaga iasgaich ann am Fìobh a tha cuid de na dealbhan as fhèarr anns an leabhar.

'S e fear-gnothaich a bha ann am Beveridge. Bha e beartach. Bha ùidh aige ann an àrc-eòlas, eachdraidh agus obair a' chamara.

Ann an ochd ceud deug, naochad 's a sia (1896) bha làitheansaora aige ann an Colla is Tiriodh. Rinn e rannsachadh air na seann làraichean arc-eòlach anns na h-eileanan sin. Dh'fhoillsich e leabhar – *Coll and Tiree: Their Prehistoric Forts and Ecclesiastical Antiquities*.

Rinn e rannsachadh cuideachd air làraichean arc-eòlach ann an Uibhist. Dh'fhoillsich e an leabhar *North Uist: Its Archaeology and Topography*.

Agus dè thachair don choimhearsnachd ann am Boreray? Uill, dh'fhalbh na daoine ann an naoi ceud deug, fichead 's a trì (1923). Bha sin trì bliadhna às dèidh bàs Erskine Beveridge. Chan e fuadach a bha ann. A rèir an leabhair ùir, bha na croitearan fhèin ag iarraidh falbh.