

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 303 (which corresponds to Litir 607). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

Do you know the National Gallery of Scotland? It's in Edinburgh. There are good pictures in it. In the big chamber, on your right, there is the largest painting in the gallery.

In the picture, a Scottish King has fallen from a horse. He and some others were hunting in the Highlands. The King – Alexander III – is lying on the ground. He is in danger from a stag. The stag is angry. Another man is going to thrust a spear into the stag. There are dogs, hunters and other horses.

*The name of the painting is Alexander III of Scotland Rescued from the Fury of a Stag by the Intrepidity of Colin Fitzgerald. The title's a big long, isn't it! But there's a reason for naming Colin Fitzgerald, as we shall see. For short, people call it The Death of the Stag in English. I'm going to call it *Bàs an Daimh* (The Death of the Stag).*

The Death of the Stag was done by the American painter, Benjamin West. West was born in Pennsylvania in 1738. His father was a publican. Benjamin didn't

A bheil sibh eòlach air Gailearaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba? Tha i ann an Dùn Èideann. Tha dealbhan matha na broinn. Anns an t-seòmar mhòr, air do làimh dheis, tha an dealbh as motha anns a' ghailearaidh.

Anns an dealbh, tha Rìgh Albannach air tuiteam far each. Bha e fhèin is feadhainn eile a' sealg air a' Ghàidhealtachd. Tha an Rìgh – Alasdair III – na laighe air an talamh. Tha e ann an cunnart bho dhamh. Tha an damh feargach. Tha fear eile a' dol a chur sleagh anns an damh. Tha coin ann, sealgairean agus eich eile.

'S e an t-ainm a tha air an dealbh *Alexander III of Scotland Rescued from the Fury of a Stag by the Intrepidity of Colin Fitzgerald*. Tha an tiotal car fada, nach eil! Ach tha adhbhar ann airson Colin Fitzgerald ainmeachadh, mar a chì sinn. Mar ainm goirid, bidh daoine a' gabhail *The Death of the Stag* air ann am Beurla. Canaidh mise *Bàs an Daimh* ris.

Bha *Bàs an Daimh* air a dhèanamh leis a' pheantair Ameireaganach, Benjamin West. Rugadh West ann am Pennsylvania ann an seachd ceud deug, trithead 's a h-ochd (1738). Bha athair na òstair. Cha d' fhuair Benjamin

get much of a formal education.

A Scotsman who was living in Philadelphia got to know West. He was William Smith. Smith was the Provost of the Academy in Philadelphia. He was acquainted with Benjamin Franklin. He saw one of Benjamin West's pictures. He liked the picture. He assisted West.

In 1760, West went to Italy. He received assistance for that from Smith and William Allen, the richest man in Philadelphia. In Italy he developed his painting skills. Three years after that, he moved to England. He got a commission from the King, George III. That was for painting portraits of members of the royal family.

Next week I'll tell you how he painted The Death of the Stag. And I'll tell how some people reckon that the painting is nothing but propaganda.

mòran foghlaim foirmeil.

Fhuair fear Albannach a bha a' fuireach ann am Philadelphia eòlas air West. B' esan Uilleam Mac a' Ghobhainn. Bha Mac a' Ghobhainn na Phròbhost anns an Acadamaidh ann am Philadelphia. Bha e eòlach air Benjamin Franklin. Chunnaic e fear de na dealbhan aig Benjamin West. Chòrd an dealbh ris. Thug e taic do West.

Ann an seachd ceud deug is seasgad (1760), chaidh West gu ruige an Eadailt. Fhuair e taic airson sin bho Mhac a' Ghobhainn agus Uilleam Allen, am fear a bu bheartaiche ann am Philadelphia. Anns an Eadailt leasaich e na sgilean peantaidh aige. Trì bliadhna às dèidh sin, ghluais e a Shasainn. Fhuair e coimisean bhon Rìgh, Deòrsa III. Bha sin airson dealbhan a pheantadh de bhuill an teaghlaich rìoghail.

An ath-sheachdain innsidh mi dhuibh mar a pheant e Bàs an Daimh. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh mar a tha cuid dhen bheachd nach eil anns an dealbh ach propaganda.