

**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 306 (which corresponds to Litir 610). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk).

*I'm going to finish the history of the painting The Death of the Stag. It's [was] the American painter, Benjamin West, who made it. Francis Humberston MacKenzie was going to put the painting up in his castle. That was Brahan Castle in Ross-shire.*

*Through the 1790s, however, people were developing the castle. Thus, the painting remained in London. It was in Benjamin West's studio. It was there for thirty years.*

*West died in 1820. A year after that, the painting was taken to Brahan Castle. But, in 1952, the castle was demolished. The painting was moved then. It went to the Town Hall of Fortrose and Rosemarkie.*

*In the eighties, the MacKenzies sold the painting. It went to an auction in London. It's the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC that bought it. That was for more than half a million pounds.*

*But that wasn't the end of*

Tha mi a' dol a chur crìoch air eachdraidh an deilbh, *Bàs an Daimh*. 'S e am peantair Ameireaganach, Benjamin West, a rinn e. Bha Francis Humberston MacCoinnich a' dol a chur an deilbh an-àirde anns a' chaisteal aige. B' e sin Caisteal Bhrathainn ann an Siorrachd Rois.

Tro na naochadan dhen ochdamh linn deug (1790an), ge-tà, bha daoine a' leasachadh a' chaisteil. Mar sin, dh'fhuirich an dealbh ann an Lunnainn. Bha e anns an stiùidio aig Benjamin West. Bha e an sin airson trithead bliadhna.

Chaochail West ann an ochd ceud deug is fichead (1820). Bliadhna às dèidh sin, chaidh an dealbh a thoirt a Chaisteal Bhrathainn. Ach, ann an naoi ceud deug, caogad 's a dhà (1952), bha an caisteal air a leagail. Chaidh an dealbh a ghluasad an uair sin. Chaidh e gu Talla Baile na Cananaich is Ros Mhaircnidh.

Anns na h-ochdadan, reic Clann 'ic Coinnich an dealbh. Chaidh e gu rùp ann an Lunnainn. 'S e Gailearaidh Nàiseanta nan Ealain ann am Washington DC a cheannaich e. Bha sin airson còrr is leth-mhillean not.

Ach cha b' e sin deireadh an

*the story. The British Government stopped it from going overseas. It was too valuable. Then it was bought by the National Galleries of Scotland. It went up in the National Gallery in Edinburgh.*

*People didn't want to move it again. It was too big. A conservator did conservation work on it in the gallery. That commenced in 2004. There was varnish over the painting. The conservator removed the varnish. He did touch-up work on parts. It looks elegant now.*

*It appears that old sculptures were in West's mind [head] when he made the painting. Among those were The Dying Gaul in Rome and The Borghese Gladiator in the Louvre in Paris. And people think that he followed the style of Rubens.*

*The painting is amazing. It's beautiful. And it's historic. If you're in Edinburgh, why not go and see it?*

sgèoil. Chuir Riaghaltas Bhreatainn stad air bho bhith a' dol a-null thairis. Bha e ro luachmhor. An uair sin, chaidh a cheannach le Gailearaidhean Nàiseanta na h-Alba. Chaidh e suas anns a' Ghailearaidh Nàiseanta ann an Dùn Èideann.

Cha robh daoine ag iarraidh a ghluasad a-rithist. Bha e ro mhòr. Rinn glèidheadair obair gleidhidh air anns a' ghailearaidh. Thòisich sin ann an dà mhìle 's a ceithir (2004). Bha bhàrnais thairis air an dealbh. Thug an glèidheadair a' bhàrnais air falbh. Rinn e athpheantadh air pìosan. Tha e a' coimhead snasail a-nise.

Tha e coltach gun robh seann ìomhaighean snaighte ann an ceann West nuair a rinn e an dealbh. Am measg sin bha *An Gall a' Bàsachadh* anns an Ròimh agus *Fear-sabaid Bhorghese* anns an Louvre ann am Paris. Agus tha daoine a' smaoin-eachadh gun do lean e air stoidhle Rubens.

Tha an dealbh iongantach. Tha e brèagha. Agus tha e eachdraidheil. Ma tha sibh ann an Dùn Èideann carson nach tèid sibh ga choimhead?