

## 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 456 (which corresponds to Litir 760). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk).

*At the end of the nineteenth century, a death in Strathspey was on the front pages of newspapers throughout the world. Constable Thomas King from Nethy Bridge was killed.*

*The man who killed him was Allan Macallum. Allan was raised in Lochaber. He was really keen on poaching. When he was a young man he went to live in Patagonia. He was there for seven years.*

*Around 1890, Allan returned to Scotland. His father had died. His mother had moved to Strathspey. Allan's brother – Donald – was working there as a gamekeeper.*

*Allan went to live with them. He returned to his old ways, poaching. He was selling venison to buyers all over the country. He was putting the meat on the train at Boat of Garten.*

*He wasn't an easygoing man. He abused the gamekeepers. He and Donald fell out with each other over the poaching. Allan threatened Donald. Donald told the police in Aviemore about it.*

Aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug, bha bàs ann an Srath Spè air duilleagan aghaidh phàipearan-naidheachd air feadh an t-saoghail. Chaidh an Constabal Tòmas King à Drochaid Neithich a mharbhadh.

B' e am fear a mharbh e Ailean MacCaluim. Thogadh Ailean ann an Loch Abar. Bha e cianail measail air poidseadh. Nuair a bha e na dhuine òg, dh'fhalbh e a dh'fhuireach ann am Patagonia. Bha e ann fad seachd bliadhna.

Timcheall air ochd ceud deug is naochad (1890), thill Ailean a dh'Alba. Bha athair air bàs fhaighinn. Bha a mhàthair air gluasad a Shrath Spè. Bha bràthair Ailein – Dòmhnall – ag obair an sin mar gheamair.

Chaidh Ailean a dh'fhuireach aca. Thill e do na seann dòighean aige, a' poidseadh. Bha e a' reic sitheann do luchd-ceannach air feadh na dùthcha. Bha e a' cur na feòla air an trèana ann an Coit Ghartain.

Chan e duine dòigheil a bha ann. Bha e a' maoidheadh air na geamairean. Chaidh e fhèin is Dòmhnall a-mach air a chèile mun phoidseadh. Mhaidh Ailean air Dòmhnall. Dh'inns Dòmhnall do na poilis anns an Aghaidh Mhòir mu dheidhinn.

*The police looked into Allan. He was bodily strong. He was forty three years old. He had no close friend except for his dog. He was also adept with a gun.*

*Macallum continued with his poaching. He was prosecuted but he didn't appear in court. He was sentenced to pay five shillings or spend seven days in prison. A policeman from Nethy Bridge went to get the money. That was Constable Thomas King. He was tall and powerful. He was married with eight children. He received help from another police officer, John MacNiven.*

*Allan Macallum was now living in a small two-roomed house in Milton of Tulloch in Abernethy. The police went to the house.*

*'Hey, Macallum!' they shouted*

*'What do you want?' shouted Macallum back.*

*The police went into the house. MacNiven went into the bedroom. King went into the kitchen. And I'll tell you what happened then in the next Litir.*

Rinn na poilis rannsachadh air Ailean. Bha e làidir na bhodhaig. Bha e ceathrad 's a trì bliadhna a dh'aois. Cha robh dlùth-charaid aige ach a-mhàin an cù aige. Bha e cuideachd sgileil le gunna.

Lean MacCaluim le a phoidseadh. Chaidh a dhìteadh ach cha do nochd e sa chùirt. Chaidh binn a chur air – càin còig sgillinn no seachd latha sa phrìosan. Chaidh poileas à Drochaid Neithich a dh'iarraidh an airgid. B' esan an Constabal Tòmas King. Bha e àrd is foghainteach. Bha e pòsta le ochdnar cloinne. Fhuair e taic bho phoileas eile, Iain MacGilleNaoimh.

Bha Ailean MacCaluim a-nise a' fuireach ann an taigh beag dà-sheòmraich ann am Baile Mhuilinn an Tulaich ann an Obar Neithich. Chaidh na poilis don taigh.

'Hai, MhicCaluim!' dh'èigh iad.

'Dè tha sibh ag iarraidh?' dh'èigh MacCaluim air ais.

Chaidh na poilis a-steach don taigh. Chaidh MacGilleNaoimh don t-seòmra-chadail. Chaidh King don chidsin. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh dè thachair an uair sin anns an ath Litir.