

# **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 520 (which corresponds to Litir 824). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*I was telling you about Eilean Donan Castle. The chief of Clan Matheson was living there at the time of King Alexander II. He obtained the gift of understanding the speech of birds. That gave him advantages. He went overseas. He made a fortune. When he returned to Scotland, the King asked him to build a castle on Eilean Donan in order to protect the kingdom.*

*Clan MacKenzie controlled the island in the 13th century. In the 14th century, Clan MacRae appeared in Kintail. The MacKenzies trusted them. The MacRaes were protecting the castle from that point onwards. There is a link between the MacRaes and the castle to this day.*

*It was destroyed in the 18th century. The Spanish were assisting the Jacobites in 1719. Three hundred Spanish soldiers came to the Highlands in April. They took over Eilean Donan Castle.*

*Government forces were in pursuit of them. Three warships appeared in the loch in May. They*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Chaisteal Eilean Donnain. Bha ceann-cinnidh Clann 'ic Mhathain a' fuireach ann ri linn Rìgh Alasdair II. Fhuair e comas cainnt nan eun a thuigsinn. Thug sinn buannachdan dha. Chaidh e a-null thairis. Rinn e fortan. Nuair a thill e a dh'Alba, dh'iarr an Rìgh air caisteal a thogail air Eilean Donnain airson a bhith a' dìon na rìoghachd.

Bha smachd aig Clann 'ic Coinnich air an eilean anns an treas linn deug. Anns a' cheathramh linn deug, nochd Clann 'ic Rath ann an Cinn Tàile. Ghabh Clann 'ic Coinnich earbsa annta. Bha Clann 'ic Rath a' dìon a' chaisteil bho sin a-mach. Tha ceangal eadar an caisteal agus Clann 'ic Rath chun an latha an-diugh.

Chaidh a sgrìobhadh anns an ochdamh linn deug. Bha na Spàinntich a' toirt taic do na Seumasaich ann an seachd ceud deug is naoi-deug (1719). Thàinig trì cheud saighdear Spàinnteach don Ghàidhealtachd anns a' Ghiblean. Ghabh iad smachd air Caisteal Eilean Donnain.

Bha feachdan an riaghaltais air an tòir. Nochd trì soithichean cogaidh anns an loch anns a' Chèitean. Thug iad

*attacked the castle. Most of the Spanish soldiers had fled. The British destroyed the castle with gunpowder. On the tenth of June, a British force defeated the Spanish at the Battle of Glenshiel.*

*The castle was a ruin until the 20th century. Between the end of the First [World] War and 1932, Lt. Colonel John MacRae-Gilstrap rebuilt it.*

*Tourists love the place. Eilean Donan is the third most visited Scottish castle.*

*Last year, my wife and myself were spending a few days in Applecross. It takes an hour and a quarter to drive between Applecross and Eilean Donan. There is no direct road between them. My wife was taking a stroll out of doors at six o' clock in the morning, when a car stopped next to her. A woman – a tourist from a foreign land – opened the window and asked, 'Is this the road to Eilean Donan?' Sometimes a map or sat-nav are very useful!*

ionnsaigh air a' chaisteal. Bha a' chuid a bu mhotha de na saighdearan Spàinnteach air teicheadh. Leig na Breatannaich an caisteal gu làr le fùdar-gunna. Air an deicheadh latha dhen Ògmhios rinn armailt Bhreatannach a' chùis air na Spàinntich ann am Blàr Ghleann Seile.

Bha an caisteal na thobhta chun an fhicheadamh linn. Eadar deireadh a' Chiad Chogaidh agus naoi ceud deug, trithead 's a dhà (1932), rinn an Lt. Coirneal Iain MacRath-Gilstrap ath-thogail air.

'S fìor though le luchd-turais an t-àite. 'S e Eilean Donnain an treas caisteal Albannach as motha dhan tèid luchd-turais.

An-uiridh, bha mi fhìn 's a' bhean agam a' cur seachad beagan làithean air a' Chomraich. Cosgaidh e uair a thìde is cairteal dràibheadh eadar a' Chomraich agus Eilean Donnain. Chan eil rathad dìreach ann eatarra. Bha a' bhean agam a' gabhail cuairt a-muigh aig sia uairean sa mhadainn, nuair a stad car ri a taobh. Dh'fhosgail tè – neach-turais à dùthaich chèin – uinneag, agus dh'fhaighnich i, 'An e seo an rathad gu Eilean Donnain?' Uaireannan, tha mapa no sat-nav gu math feumail!