

# **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 543 (which corresponds to Litir 847). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk).

*One thousand, four hundred and fifty years ago, there was a famous journey across Scotland from west to east. Here is a list of the people that were involved: Baithene, Cobthach, Ernan, Diormit, Rus, Fechno, Scandal, Luguid, Echoid, Tochannu, Cairnan and Grillan. In addition to those, there was Saint Columba. They were going from Iona to Inverness. Columba was going to visit King Brude of the Picts. The list of people is given by Adamnan in his book, The Life of Columba.*

*But were some others in the group who are not on the list? Another account tells us that there were two other saints there. Adamnan keeps quiet about them.*

*Saint Comhghall was from Bangor in Ireland. According to his biography, he and a friend of his were with Columba on the journey. His friend was Saint Cainneach, or Coinneach, who belonged to Aghaboe in County Laois.*

*According to the account, they went there because they spoke*

O chionn mìle, ceithir cheud is caogad bliadhna, bha turas ainmeil tarsainn Alba bhon taobh an iar chun an taoibh an ear. Seo liosta de na daoine a bha an sàs ann: Baithene, Cobthach, Ernan, Diormit, Rus, Fechno, Scandal, Luguid, Echoid, Tochannu, Cairnan agus Grillan. A bharrachd orra sin, bha Calum Cille. Bha iad a' dol bho Eilean Ì gu ruig' Inbhir Nis. Bha Calum Cille a' dol a thadhal air Rìgh Brùd nan Cruithneach. Tha an liosta de dhaoine aig Adamnan anns an leabhar aige *Vita Columbae*.

Ach an robh feadhainn eile anns a' bhuidhinn nach eil air an liosta? Tha cunntas eile ag innse dhuinn gun robh dithis naomh eile ann. Tha Adamnan a' cumail sàmhach mun deidhinn.

Bha Naomh Comhghall à Bangor ann an Èirinn. A rèir cunntas a bheatha, bha e fhèin agus caraid dha còmhla ri Calum Cille air an turas. B' e a charaid Naomh Cainneach, no Coinneach, a bhuineadh do dh'Achadh Bhó ann an Contae Laoise.

A rèir a' chunntais, chaidh iad ann oir bha Cruithnis aca. Bha iad

*Pictish. They were able to converse with Scottish Picts. Columba did not speak Pictish. In The Life of Comhghall, the three saints performed miracles in the Great Glen. In Adamnan's account, however, it was only Columba that performed the miracles.*

*If Comhghall spoke Pictish, it is possible that he learned it when he was living on Tiree. He built a monastery on that island. But the monastery was destroyed.*

*Coinneach was four years younger than Columba. He had been a cleric in several monasteries, both in Ireland and Wales. He was working for a while among the Picts on Mull.*

*Perhaps it is that the pair spoke Pictish that was responsible for them accompanying Columba on his great journey. On the other hand, the three saints were friends to each other. Perhaps Columba simply wanted to be surrounded by Christian friends when he made his way through the rugged country of the pagans.*

comasach air còmhradh ri Cruithnich Albannach. Cha robh Cruithnis aig Calum Cille. Ann am *Beatha Chomhghaill*, rinn an triùir naomh mìorbhailean anns a' Ghleann Mhòr. Anns a' chunntas aig Adamnan, ge-tà, 's e Calum Cille a-mhàin a rinn na mìorbhailean.

Ma bha Cruithnis aig Comhghall, 's dòcha gun do dh'ionnsaich e i nuair a bha e a' fuireach ann an Tiriodh. Thog e manachainn anns an eilean sin. Ach chaidh a' mhanachainn a sgrios.

Bha Coinneach ceithir bliadhna na b' òige na Calum Cille. Bha e air a bhith na phears-eaglais ann an grunn mhanachainnean, an dà chuid ann an Èirinn agus sa Chuimrigh. Bha e ag obair greis am measg nan Cruithneach ann am Muile.

'S dòcha gur e gun robh Cruithnis aig an dithis a bu choireach gun robh iad ann an cuideachd Chalum Chille air a thuras mhòr. Air an làimh eile, bha an triùir naomh nan caraidean do chèile. 'S dòcha gun robh Calum Cille dìreach ag iarraidh a bhith air a chuirteachadh le caraidean Crìosdail nuair a rinn e a shlighe tro gharbh-chrìochan nam pàganach.