

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 559 (which corresponds to Litir 863). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

A short while ago I went past a waterfall called 'Victoria Falls'. But I wasn't in Africa. I was in Scotland.

'Victoria Falls' are between Kinlochewe and Gairloch in Wester Ross. They are [it is] in the Abhainn Garbhaig next to Loch Maree.

But why on earth do they [does it] have an English name? Well, they [it] remember[s] the subject of the name – Queen Victoria – and a journey she made to the area in 1877.

It's not entirely clear why the Queen went there. She liked the Highlands, certainly. She was spending a lot of time at Balmoral. And in September 1877, she left Balmoral. She went by train to Aberdeen, then to Inverness, Dingwall and finally to Achnasheen.

She was taken in a coach with horses to Kinlochewe. They got new horses at the inn there. They still had ten miles to go to their destination. But that was the most beautiful part of the journey. Is there a more beautiful place in Scotland

O chionn ghoirid chaidh mi seachad air eas air a bheil 'Victoria Falls' mar ainm. Ach cha robh mi ann an Afraga. Bha mi ann an Alba.

Tha Victoria Falls eadar Ceann Loch Iù agus Geàrrloch ann an Ros an Iar. Tha e ann an Abhainn Garbhaig ri taobh Loch Ma-ruibhe.

Ach carson fon ghrèin a tha ainm Beurla air? Uill, tha e a' cuimhneachadh cuspair an ainm – a' Bhanrigh Bhictoria – agus turas a rinn i don sgìre ann an ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a seachd (1877).

Chan eil e uile-gu-lèir soilleir carson a chaidh a' Bhanrigh ann. Bha i measail air a' Ghàidhealtachd, ceart gu leòr. Bha i a' cur seachad mòran ùine ann am Both Mhoireil. Agus as t-Sultain ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a seachd (1877), dh'fhàg i Both Mhoireil. Chaidh i air an tràna gu ruige Obar Dheathain, an uair sin Inbhir Nis, Inbhir Pheofharain agus mu dheireadh a dh'Ach' na Sìne.

Chaidh a toirt ann an coidse le eich gu ruige Ceann Loch Iù. Fhuair iad eich ùra aig an taigh-seinnse an sin. Bha fhathast deich mìle aca ri dhol chun a' chinn-uidhe aca. Ach b' e sin am pìos a bu bhòidhche dhen turas. A bheil àite nas brèagha ann an Alba na Loch Ma-ruibhe?

than Loch Maree? There are high mountains and beautiful forests there. The Queen saw a double rainbow above the loch. She was captivated by the place.

She reached the Loch Maree [Talladale] Hotel slightly after 7pm. For a few days she was based there. But she took a coach to other settlements. She went to Gairloch and Torridon. And she took a trip by boat on Loch Maree. But she made a mistake that day. It was a Sunday. Many people in the area were unhappy that she was, in their opinion, breaking the Sabbath.

Was the Queen pleased that her name was given to the waterfall following her trip? I don't know. Apparently she said that it wasn't as impressive as the waterfalls at Balmoral. Be that as it may. The falls are called 'Victoria Falls' to this day.

Tha beanntan àrda is coilltean àlainn ann. Chunnaic a' Bhanrigh bogha-froise dùbailte os cionn an locha. Bha i air a beò-ghlacadh leis an àite.

Ràinig i Taigh-òsta Thealldhadal goirid an dèidh seachd uairean feasgar. Airson beagan làithean bha i stèidhichte an sin. Ach thug i coidse gu bailtean eile. Chaidh i a Gheàrrloch agus Toirbheartan. Agus thug i turas air bàta air Loch Maruibhe. Ach rinn i mearachd an latha sin. 'S e Latha na Sàbaid a bha ann. Bha mòran anns an sgìre mì-thoilichte gun robh i, nam beachd-san, a' briseadh na Sàbaid.

An robh a' Bhanrigh toilichte gun deach a h-ainm a chur air an eas an dèidh a turais? Chan eil fhios a'm. A rèir choltais, thuir i nach robh e cho drùidhteach idir ris na h-easan aig Both Mhoireil! Biodh sin mar a bhitheadh e. 'S e 'Victoria Falls' a tha air an eas chun an latha an-diugh.