

# **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 612 (which corresponds to Litir 916). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*Cill Mhunnu, or Kilmun, is in Cowal. It's connected to Munnu, an old Celtic saint. But who was Munnu? Well, the saints had a nickname. Finten was Munnu's baptismal name.*

*The scholar Gilber Markús has written an interesting booklet about Munnu. The booklet is called 'Brilliant Flame'. It gives an account of a report about Munnu in Vita Columbae, which was written by Adamnan, the ninth abbot of Iona. Adamnan calls him 'Finten'.*

*Finten was born and raised in Ireland. He was wanting to go to Iona as a pilgrim. He was wanting to meet Columba. He came upon two monks from Iona. They had news of Columba. 'He has gone to Christ in the last few days,' they said.*

*Finten fell to the ground. He was weeping. After a while, he asked, 'Whom did Columba leave after him as a successor?'*

*'Baithéne, to whom he was teacher,' the monks replied.*

*'If the Lord permits,' said Finten, 'I shall go to Baithéne. If he accepts me, he will be my abbot.'*

*When he reached Iona, Finten*

*Tha Cill Mhunnu, no Kilmun ann an Còmhghall. Tha e co-cheangailte ri Munnu, seann naomh Ceilteach. Ach cò bha ann am Munnu? Uill, bha far-ainm air na naoimh. B' e Finten ainm-baistidh Mhunnu.*

*Tha an sgoilear Gilbert Márkus air leabhran inntinneach a dhèanamh air Munnu. 'S e Brilliant Flame ainm an leabhra. Tha e a' dèanamh iomradh air aithris mu Mhunnu ann am Beatha Chaluim Chille, a chaidh a sgrìobhadh le Eònan, naoidheamh aba Ì. 'S e 'Finten' a chanas Eònan ris.*

*Rugadh is thogadh Finten ann an Èirinn. Bha e ag iarraidh a dhol a dh'Eilean Ì mar eilthreach. Bha e airson coinneachadh ri Calum Cille. Thachair e ri dithis mhanach às Eilean Ì. Bha naidheachd aca mu Chalum Cille. 'Tha e air a dhol gu Crìosd anns na beagan làithean a dh'fhalbh,' thuirt iad.*

*Thuit Finten don làr. Bha e a' caoineadh. An dèidh greis, dh'fhaighnich e, 'Cò dh'fhàg Calum Cille às a dhèidh mar fhear-leantainn?'*

*'Baithéne, dha robh e na oide,' fhreagair na manaich.*

*'Ma cheadaicheas an Tighearna,' thuirt Finten, 'thèid mi gu Baithéne. Ma ghabhas e rium, bidh e na aba dhomh.'*

*Nuair a ràinig e Eilean Ì, chaidh*

*appeared in front of Baithéne. He went on to his knee(s). The abbot asked him to get up. He posed questions of the young man.*

*The abbot recognised that this was the man of whom Columba had prophesied. 'I give thanks to God that you came,' said the abbot. 'But, certainly, you shall not be a monk here.'*

*That news made Finten sad. 'It appears that I'm not worthy of being a monk,' he said.*

*'It's not that you're not worthy, son,' said the old man. 'But I can't go against the command of Columba. One day, he said to me, "Shortly after I depart this world, a brother will come from Ireland – a man called Finten, son of Talchan. He will want to be your monk. But he cannot be your monk."' Why did Columba say that? I'll tell you next week.*

Finten air beulaibh Bhaithéne. Chaidh e air a ghlùin. Dh'iarr an t-aba air èirigh. Chuir e ceistean air an fhear òg.

Dh'aithnich an t-aba gum b' e seo an duine air an do rinn Calum Cille fàidheadaireachd. 'Tha mi a' toirt taing do Dhia gun tàinig thu,' ars an t-aba. 'Ach, gu dearbh, cha bhi thu nad mhanach an seo.'

Rinn an naidheachd sin Finten brònach. 'Tha e coltach nach eil mi airidh air a bhith nam mhanach,' thuirt e.

'Chan e nach eil thu airidh, a mhic,' thuirt an seann duine. 'Ach chan urrainn dhomh a dhol an aghaidh stiùireadh Chalum Chille. Aon latha, thuirt e rium, "Goirid às dèidh dhomh an saoghal seo fhàgail, thig bràthair às Èirinn – fear Finten mac Thalchain. Bidh e ag iarraidh a bhith na mhanach dhut. Ach chan fhaod e a bhith na mhanach dhut.'" Carson a thuirt Calum Cille sin? Innsidh mi dhuibh an ath sheachdain.