

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 658 (which corresponds to Litir 962). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I went through the Caledonian Canal in the summer, and I really enjoyed it. The whole route was beautiful. And I met nice people. Many were from other countries in addition to Scotland.

The Caledonian Canal is very historic. It's James Watt that made the first survey for a canal through the Great Glen in 1773. But it's thirty years after that that an act for it went through the Parliament. That allocated funding for the project. The government gave permission to the engineer, Thomas Telford, to design the canal. He did that along with Willam Jessop until Jessop died in 1814. Then Telford did the rest by himself.

Telford was among the most famous engineers of his day. He was born in 1757 in Eskdale in Dumfriesshire. His father died when Thomas was a baby. The young lad was raised by his mother in poverty. He learned masonry to begin with, but he wanted to be an architect. He went to London and then to Shropshire.

Chaidh mi tron Chanàl Chailleannach as t-samhradh, agus abair gun do chòrd e rium. Bha an t-slighe brèagha air fad. Agus thachair mi ri daoine laghach. Bha gu leòr ann à dùthchannan eile a bharrachd air Alba.

Tha an Canàl Cailleannach gu math eachdraidheil. B' e Seumas Watt a rinn a' chiad shuirbhuidh airson canàl tron Ghleann Mhòr ann an seachd ceud deug, seachdad 's a trì (1773). Ach 's ann trithead bliadhna an dèidh sin a chaidh achd air a shon tron Phàrlamaid. Chuir sin airgead mu choinneimh a' phròiseict. Thug an riaghaltas cead don einnseanair, Tòmas Telford, an canàl a dhealbhadh. Rinn e sin cuide ri fear Uilleam Jessop gus an do chaochail Jessop ann an ochd ceud deug is ceithir-deug (1814). An uair sin, rinn Telford an còrr leis fhèin.

Bha Telford am measg an luchd-einnseanairidh a b' ainmeile ri a linn. Rugadh e ann an seachd ceud deug, caogad 's a seachd (1757) ann an Eskdale ann an Siorrachd Dhùn Phris. Chaochail athair nuair a bha Tòmas na leanabh. Bha an gille òg air a thogail le a mhàthair ann am bochdainn. Dh'ionnsaich e clachaireachd an toiseach, ach bha e airson a bhith na ailtire. Chaidh e a Lunnainn agus an uair sin gu Shropshire.

In 1793, Telford got involved in designing canals. Among those were aqueducts in England and Wales that were made of iron. They are still part of the canal system today. Then the big project – the Caledonain Canal, which lasted more than twenty years.

The government was initially hoping that the project would only last seven years, rather than twenty. And they expected it to cost four hundred and seventy thousand pounds. In the end it cost nine hundred thousand pounds.

A team began at each end at the same time. It was easier then to transport material to the workplace when each part of it was finished. Next week, I'll tell you more about this amazing project.

Ann an seachd ceud deug, naochad 's a trì (1793) chaidh Telford an sàs ann an dealbhachadh chanàlaichean. Am measg sin bha amaran-uisge ann an Sasainn agus sa Chuimrigh a bha air an dèanamh de dh'iarann. Tha iad fhathast mar phàirt de shiostam nan canàlaichean an-diugh. An uair sin am pròiseact mòr – an Canàl Cailleannach, a thug còrr is fichead bliadhna.

Bha an riaghaltas an dòchas an toiseach nach toireadh am pròiseact ach seachd bliadhna, seach fichead. Agus bha iad an dùil gun cosgadh e ceithir cheud is seachdad mìle not. Aig a' cheann thall, chosg e naoi ceud mìle not.

Thòisich sgioba aig gach ceann aig an aon àm. Bha e na b' fhasa an uair sin stuth a thoirt don àite-obrach nuair a bha gach pìos dheth deiseil. An ath-sheachdain, innsidh mi dhuibh tuilleadh mun phròiseact iongantach seo.