

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 693 (which corresponds to Litir 997). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

Inside the Nigg old church in Easter Ross there is an amazing large stone. It is carved with beautiful images on it. People call it the Nigg Stone. It is one thousand, two hundred years old. It was made by the Picts.

Unfortunately, the stone is not complete today. A piece that was broken off was thrown into the burn beside the church. It was discovered there twenty years ago. The stone was put together again professionally.

The biggest image on it is a Christian cross. That's the reason that I said last week that Christian worship was taking place on that site one thousand, two hundred years ago. In addition to the cross, some scholars reckon that the story of King David from the Bible is represented on the stone as well.

I don't know what the church looked like then. It was rebuilt in 1626. A bell from the Netherlands was installed in it. It's still there.

The Nigg church represents the form of the old Scottish church.

Am broinn seann eaglais an Eig ann an taobh sear Rois tha clach mhòr iongantach. Tha i snaighte le ìomhaighean brèagha oirre. Canaidh daoine Clach an Eig rithe. Tha i mìle is dà cheud bliadhna a dh'aois. Chaidh a dhèanamh leis na Cruithnich.

Gu mì-fhortanach, chan eil a' chlach slàn an-diugh. Bha pìos a bha briste dheth air a shadail don allt ri taobh na h-eaglaise. Chaidh a lorg an sin o chionn fichead bliadhna. Chaidh a' chlach a chur ri chèile a-rithist gu proifeiseanta.

'S e an ìomhaigh as motha oirre crois Chrìosdail. 'S e sin as coireach gun tuirt mi an t-seachdain sa chaidh gun robh adhradh Crìosdail a' gabhail àite air an làraich sin bho chionn mìle is dà cheud bliadhna. A bharrachd air a' chrois, tha cuid de sgoilearan dhen bheachd gu bheil sgeulachd Rìgh Dhaibhidh às a' Bhioball air a riochdachadh air a' chloich cuideachd.

Chan eil fios dè an coltas a bha air an eaglais an uair sin. Chaidh ath-thogail a dhèanamh oirre ann an sia ceud deug, fichead 's a sia (1626). Chaidh clag às an Òlaind a chur innte. Tha i innte fhathast.

Tha Eaglais an Eig a'

The pulpit is at the eastern end of the building. There is a place below it where the precentor was precenting. There is a loft where some were sitting. There are pews for the congregation in front of the pulpit.

Gaelic was strong in Easter Ross for hundreds of years. The country is flat and fertile – and thus different from many other places in the north of Scotland. But it was culturally part of the Gaidhealtachd. In the Nigg church in 1739, a spiritual awakening began. That was under the influence of preachers who were not ministers – a group that they called ‘Na Daoine’ [The Men]. From Nigg their message spread throughout the Highlands. The best known of them was a certain Donald Roy who died at the age of one hundred and five years.

riochdachadh cruth nan seann eaglaisean Albannach. Tha a’ chùbaid aig ceann an ear an togalaich. Tha àite fòidhpe far an robh fear-togail an fhuinn a’ cur a-mach na loidhne. Tha lobht ann far an robh cuid nan suidhe. Tha treastaichean airson a’ choitheanail air beulaibh na cùbaid.

Bha a’ Ghàidhlig làidir ann an Ros an Ear fad ceudan bhliadhnaichean. Tha an dùthaich còmhnaid is torrach – agus mar sin eadar-dhealaichte bho mhòran àiteachan eile ann an ceann a tuath na h-Alba. Ach bha i gu cultarail mar phàirt dhen Ghàidhealtachd. Ann an Eaglais an Eig ann an seachd ceud deug, trithead ’s a naoi (1739), thòisich ath-nuadhachadh spioradail. Bha sin fo bhuidheann shearmonaichean nach robh nam ministearan – buidheann ris an canadh iad Na Daoine. Às an Eig, sgaoil an teachdaireachd aca air feadh na Gàidhealtachd. B’ e am fear a b’ ainmeile dhiubh fear Dòmhnall Ruadh a chaochail aig aois ceud is còig bliadhna.