

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 707 (which corresponds to Litir 1,011). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I want to tell you about Dugald Carmichael from Lismore. He was famous as a botanist in the nineteenth century. In 1810 Carmichael was involved in a British military campaign to take Mauritius from the French. When Carmichael's ship reached Mauritius, there was already a British fleet there. They had sailed from India.

When he reached the capital, Port Louis, there were white flags up. The French had surrendered. But they did that on the condition that they would retain the law of France and their language.

Three years after that, Carmichael took leave to go to the Isle of Bourbon or, as they call it today, Réunion. He wrote a lot about nature there as well. He sailed to Tristan da Cunha to capture those remote islands for Britain.

In 1818, he left the army and he returned to Scotland. He went to live in Appin opposite the island of his birth. He was a farmer there. He continued with his research on plants. He wrote a book called Mosses of

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Dhùghall MacIlleMhìcheil à Lios Mòr. Bha e ainmeil mar lus-eòlaiche anns an naoidheamh linn deug. Ann an ochd ceud deug 's a deich (1810), bha MacIlleMhìcheil na shaighdear, an sàs ann an iomairt armaichte aig Breatainn airson Mauritius a ghabhail thairis bho na Frangaich. Nuair a ràinig long MhicIlleMhìcheil Mauritius, bha cabhlach Breatannach ann mu-thràth. Bha iadsan air seòladh bho na h-Innseachan.

Nuair a ràinig e am prìomh bhaile, Port Louis, bha brataich gheala an-àirde. Bha na Frangaich air gèilleadh. Ach rinn iad sin air cumha gun gleidheadh iad lagh na Frainge agus an cànan aca.

Trì bliadhna an dèidh sin, ghabh MacIlleMhìcheil fòrladh airson a dhol gu Eilean Bourbon no, mar a chanas iad ris an-diugh, Réunion. Sgrìobh e tòrr mu dheidhinn nàdar an sin cuideachd. Sheòl e gu ruige Tristan da Cunha airson na h-eileanan iomallach sin a ghabhail thairis às leth Bhreatainn.

Ann an ochd ceud deug is ochd-deug (1818), dh'fhàg e an t-arm agus thill e a dh'Alba. Chaidh e a dh'fhuireach anns an Apainn mu choinneimh eilean a bhreith. Bha e na thuathanach ann. Lean e air le a chuid rannsachaidh air lusan. Sgrìobh e

Lorn. *He wasn't keeping well and, at the age of fifty-five, he died. He was buried in the old cemetery beside St Moluag's church on Lismore.*

He was pretty well-known in his day. Charles Darwin commended him as an expert on natural science. He was a good friend of Sir William Jackson Hooker who was the first director of Kew Gardens in London. Hooker named several plants after Carmichael, including Carmichaeliana or New Zealand Broom.

I hope people remember Dugald Carmichael in the future. Outside Lismore he is not as well known as he should be. We'll look next week at another Liosach called 'Carmichael'. I suspect that some of you will know him well, at least if you are familiar with Carmina Gadelica.

leabhar air a bheil *Mosses of Lorn*. Cha robh e a' cumail gu math agus, aig aois caogad 's a còig, chaochail e. Chaidh a thiodhlacadh anns an t-seann chladh ri taobh Eaglais Chill Moluag ann an Lios Mòr.

Bha e ainmeil gu leòr ri a linn. Mhol Teàrlach Darwin e mar shàr-eòlaiche air saidheans nàdarrach. Bha e na dheagh charaid aig Sir Uilleam Jackson Hooker a bha na chiad stiùiriche air Gàrraidhean Kew ann an Lunnainn. Dh'ainmich Hooker grunn lus an dèidh MhicIlleMhìcheil, a' gabhail a-steach *Carmichaeliana* no Bealaidh Sealain Nuaidh.

Tha mi an dòchas gum bi daoine a' cuimhneachadh Dhùghaill MhicIlleMhìcheil anns an ùine a tha romhainn. Taobh a-muigh Lios Mòr chan eil e cho aithnichte 's a bu chòir dha bhith. Bheir sinn sùil an-ath-sheachdain air Liosach eile air an robh 'MacIlleMhìcheil'. Tha amharas agam gum bi cuid agaibh gu math eòlach air, co-dhiù ma tha sibh eòlach air *Carmina Gadelica*.