

# **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 717 (which corresponds to Litir 1,021). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk).*

*A hundred and twenty years have elapsed since the company Hozier Engineering was established. Hozier was based in Bridgeton in Glasgow. They were building cars commercially. They were making cars called Argylls.*

*It's a man called Alexander Govan that was behind the Argyll. He was raised in poverty in Blantyre in Lanarkshire. His family moved to Glasgow. But they were surrounded by poverty there as well.*

*Alex wanted to improve his own situation. He went to a technical college, where he did well. He moved to England – to Redditch in Worcestershire. He got work in an engineering factory. The company was making cars, among other things.*

*When Alex returned to Scotland, he got work at The Scottish Manufacturing Company in Glasgow. It's the entrepreneur, William A Smith, that was behind the company. He was an expert on patent law. Smith wanted to get involved in making petrol vehicles.*

Tha ceud is fichead bliadhna air a dhol seachad on a chaidh a' chompanaidh Hozier Engineering a chur air dòigh. Bha Hozier stèidhichte ann am Baile na Drochaid ann an Glaschu. Bha iad a' togail chàraichean gu coimeirsealta. Bha iad a' dèanamh chàraichean air an robh Argylls mar ainm.

'S e fear Alexander Govan a bh' air cùl an Argyll. Thogadh e ann am bochdainn ann am Baile an t-Saoir ann an Siorrachd Lannraig. Ghluais a theaghlach a Ghlaschu. Ach bha iad air an cuairteachadh le bochdainn an sin cuideachd.

Bha Ailig airson piseach a thoirt air a shuidheachadh fhèin. Chaidh e gu colaiste theicnigeach, far an do rinn e gu math. Ghluais e a Shasainn – gu Redditch ann am Worcestershire. Fhuair e obair ann am factaraidh einnseanairidh. Bha a' chompanaidh a' togail chàraichean, am measg eile.

Nuair a thill Ailig a dh'Alba, fhuair e obair aig a' Scottish Manufacturing Company ann an Glaschu. 'S e an entrepreneur, Uilleam A Mac a' Ghobhainn, a bh' air cùl na companaidh. Bha e na shàr-eòlaiche air lagh nam peutantàn. Bha Mac a' Ghobhainn airson a dhol an sàs ann an togail charbadan-ola.

*He hired Alex Govan to restructure the company. They changed its [her] name to the Hozier Engineering Company.*

*They had a car within a few months. They called it an Argyll Voiturette. It was being sold at a reasonable price – 155 guineas. It was based on a voiturette that was made by Renault in France.*

*But why didn't Renault take them to court? Well, as I was saying, Hozier's boss, William Smith, was an expert on patent law! However, they had to design a new gearbox. Hozier took out a patent for that.*

*The engine – that was in the front of the car – developed two and three-quarters horsepower. The engine was connected to the rear wheels with a driveshaft, clutch and gearbox that worked at three speeds. The Voiturette's maximum speed was eighteen miles per hour. I'll have more on the Argylls next week.*

Dh'fhastaich e Ailig Govan airson cruth-atharrachadh a thoirt air a' chompanaidh. Dh'atharraich iad a h-ainm gu *The Hozier Engineering Company*.

Bha càr aca taobh a-staigh beagan mhiosan. 'S e *Argyll Voiturette* a chanadh iad ris. Bhathar ga reic aig prìs reusanta – ceud, caogad 's a còig gini. Bha e stèidhichte air *voiturette* a chaidh a thogail le Renault san Fhraing.

Ach carson nach tug Renault gu cùirt iad? Uill, mar a bha mi ag ràdh, bha ceannard Hozier, Uilleam Mac a' Ghobhainn, na eòlaiche air lagh nam peutantan! Ge-tà, bha aca ri bogsa-ghèaraichean ùr a dhealbhadh. Thug Hozier a-mach peutant airson sin.

Bha dà is trì-chairteal *horsepower* san einnsean – a bha ann an toiseach a' chàir. Bha an t-einnsean air a cheangal ris na cuibhlichean deiridh le fearsaid-dràibhidh, cluidse agus bogsa-ghèaraichean a bha ag obair aig trì astaran. B' e an t-astar a bu luaithe aig a' Voiturette ochd mìle deug san uair. Bidh tuilleadh agam air na h-Argylls an-ath-sheachdain.