

# **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 721 (which corresponds to Litir 1,025). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*I was telling you about William Speirs Bruce. He was in charge of a national Scottish expedition to the Antarctic in 1902. His vessel, the Scotia, reached ice around the Antarctic. She returned to South Orkney. Bruce established a research institute there – which is still going.*

*The Scotia went to Buenos Aires for more goods. At the beginning of 1904, she went south again for two months.*

*Bruce and his companions did a lot of research – on weather, sea and wildlife. Some people reckon they created a basis for researching climate change.*

*Four years after that, Bruce put forward a plan for a large Scottish expedition to the Antarctic. He wanted to put a group across the continent, via the South Pole. He received help from The Royal Scottish Geographical Society and from the Royal Society of Edinburgh. But he didn't receive any help from the Royal Society in London. They were giving help to Robert Scott. And Bruce didn't go ahead with his plan.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Uilleam Speirs Brus. Bha e os cionn triall nàiseanta Albannach don Antartaig ann an naoi ceud deug 's a dhà (1902). Ràinig a shoitheach, an Scotia, deigh timcheall na h-Antartaig. Thill i do dh'Arcaibh a Deas. Chuir Brus ionad-rannsachaidh air chois an sin – a tha a' dol fhathast.

Chaidh an Scotia gu Buenos Aires airson tuilleadh bathair. Aig toiseach naoi ceud deug 's a ceithir (1904), chaidh i gu deas a-rithist airson dà mhìos.

Rinn Brus agus a chompanaich tòrr rannsachaidh – air an aimsir, air a' mhuir agus air fiadh-bheatha. Tha feadhainn dhen bheachd gun do chruthaich iad bunait airson rannsachadh air atharrachadh anns a' ghnàth-thìde.

Ceithir bliadhna an dèidh sin, chuir Brus plana air adhart airson triall mòr Albannach don Antartaig. Bha e ag iarraidh buidheann a chur tarsainn na mòr-thìr, thairis air a' Phòla a Deas. Fhuair e taic bho Chomann Rìoghail Cruinn-eòlais na h-Alba agus bho Chomann Rìoghail Dhùn Èideann. Ach cha d' fhuair e taic sam bith bhon Chomann Rìoghail ann an Lunnainn. Bha iadsan a' toirt an taic do Raibeart Scott. Agus cha deach Brus air adhart le a phlana.

*Although he was born and raised in England, Bruce was a Scottish nationalist. His tongue could be sharp if people were showing disrespect to Scotland. And he had a sharp tongue anyway!*

*Every member that went to Antarctica under the Union Flag received a Polar Medal. But the members of the Scottish expedition didn't receive anything. Bruce received many awards in Scotland, and a medal from the American Geographical Society*

*Bruce was in Spitzbergen – or Svalbard – at the beginning of the century. He discovered coal and iron there. He established a company – The Scottish Spitzbergen Syndicate – to develop mining. But the First [World] War put a stop to that.*

*Bruce died in Edinburgh in 1921. His ashes were scattered in the sea off the coast of South Georgia.*

*Many people have forgotten about William Speirs Bruce today. If there is a statue of him in a public place in Scotland, I don't know [of] it.*

Ged a rugadh is thogadh e ann an Sasainn, bha Brus na nàiseantach Albannach. Dh'fhaodadh a theanga a bhith biorach nam biodh daoine a' dèanamh dì-meas air Alba. Agus bha teanga bhiorach aige co-dhiù!

Fhuair a h-uile ball a chaidh don Antartaig fo bhratach an Aonaidh Bonn Pòlach. Ach cha d' fhuair buill dhen triall Albannach sgath. Fhuair Brus tòrr dhuaisean ann an Alba fhèin, agus bonn bho Chomann Cruinn-eòlais Ameireagaidh.

Bha Brus ann an Spitzbergen – no Svalbard – aig toiseach an linn. Lorg e gual is iarainn an sin. Chuir e companaidh air dòigh – *The Scottish Spitzbergen Syndicate* – airson mèinneadh a leasachadh. Ach chuir a' Chiad Chogadh stad air sin.

Chaochail Brus ann an Dùn Èideann ann an naoi ceud deug 's aon air fhichead (1921). Chaidh a luathre a sgaoileadh anns a' mhuir far costa South Georgia.

Tha mòran air diochuimhneachadh mu Uilleam Speirs Brus an-diugh. Ma tha ìomhaigh ann dheth ann an àite poblach ann an Alba, chan aithne dhòmhs' e.