

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 793 (which corresponds to Litir 1,097). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about Robert Armstrong from Perthshire. He published a Gaelic dictionary in 1825. Unfortunately for him, another Gaelic dictionary appeared only three years after that. That was the Dictionarium Scoto-Celticum of the Highland Society of Scotland. I reckon it reduced the number of Armstrong's dictionary that was sold.

Armstrong received two honours – Gaelic Lexicographer Royal to the King and a doctorate from the University of St Andrews. But there was no income attached to either of those. Armstrong put much of his own money into the dictionary. He lost a lot.

He resigned from his post in 1852. He didn't have much money. And he was married, with three daughters. Luckily, he had friends in the government. He got a public (civil list) pension. After his death in 1867, his widow received a pension from the Queen.

A fortnight ago, I started this series about Robert Armstrong. I was telling you about an article in

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Raibeart Armstrong. Dh'fhoillsich e faclair Gàidhlig ann an ochd ceud deug, fichead 's a còig (1825). Gu mì-fhortanach dha, nochd faclair Gàidhlig eile dìreach trì bliadhna an dèidh sin. B' e sin an *Dictionarium Scoto-Celticum* aig Comunn Gàidhealach na h-Alba. Tha mi a' dèanamh dheth gun do rinn sin cron air an uiread de na faclairean aig Armstrong a chaidh a reic.

Chaidh dà urram a bhuileachadh air Armstrong – Faclairiche Gàidhlig Rìoghail don Rìgh agus dotaireachd à Oilthigh Chill Rìmhinn. Ach cha robh tuarastal sam bith co-cheangailte ri fear seach fear dhiubh sin. Chuir Armstrong mòran dhen airgead aige fhèin a-steach don fhaclair. Chaill e tòrr.

Leig e dheth a dhreuchd ann an ochd ceud deug, leth-cheud 's a dhà (1852). Cha robh mòran anns an sporan aige. Agus bha e pòsta, le trìuir nighean. Gu fortanach, bha caraidean aige anns an riaghaltas. Fhuair e peinnsean poblach. An dèidh a bhàis ann an ochd ceud deug, seasgad 's a seachd (1867), fhuair a bhantrach peinnsean bhon Bhanrigh.

Thòisich mi o chionn ceala-deug air an t-sreath seo mu Raibeart Armstrong. Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu alt anns an iris 'An

the periodical 'An Gàidheal'. The author told us that students in the early part of the 19th century had named Perthshire as the best place in Scotland for Gaelic. In the article, another renowned Gaelic speaking Perthshire man was named. He was the Rev. Alexander Stewart. He wrote the book 'Elements of Gaelic Grammar'.

The book was well received. I myself have a copy of the second edition. It appeared in print in 1812.

Alexander Stewart was born in the manse at Blair Atholl in 1764. His father was renowned for how good his Gaelic was. He was excellent as a preacher. He died in 1780.

Alexander got his education at home, and with an uncle (in his home). But what a sharp mind he had. You'll hear more about him next week.

Gàidheal'. Dh'inns an t-ùghdar dhuinn gun robh oileanaich tràth san naoidheamh linn deug air Siorrachd Pheairt ainmeachadh mar an t-àite a b' fheàrr ann an Alba airson na Gàidhlig. Anns an alt, chaidh Peairteach cliùiteach Gàidhealach eile ainmeachadh. B' esan an t-Urr. Alasdair Stiùbhart. Sgrìobh e an leabhar 'Elements of Gaelic Grammar'.

Bha fèill air an leabhar. Tha lethbreac dhen dàrna eagraan agam fhìn. Nochd e ann an clò ann an ochd ceud deug 's a dhà-dheug (1812).

Rugadh Alasdair Stiùbhart sa mhansa ann am Blàr Athall ann an seachd ceud deug, seasgad 's a ceithir (1764). Bha athair cliùiteach airson cho math 's a bha a' Ghàidhlig aige. Bha e fìor mhath mar shearmonaiche. Chaochail e ann an seachd ceud deug is ochdad (1780).

Fhuair Alasdair a chuid foghlaim aig an taigh, agus aig uncail dha. Ach abair gun robh comas inntinn aige. Cluinnidh sibh tuilleadh mu dheidhinn an-ath-sheachdain.