

## 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 221 (which corresponds to Litir 525). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk).

*Understand the boat and the boat will understand you. Understand the boat and the boat will understand you. Understand the boat and the boat will understand you. I saw that proverb in a hotel on Mull. I was on a cruise [sailing journey] at the time. I was staying the night in Tobermory. But was the boat understanding me? And was I understanding the boat?*

*I saw the proverb in the Mishnish Hotel in Tobermory. There are other proverbs also written on the walls. And "Caileagan" [lasses] and "Balaich" [lads] are written on the toilet doors. It's good to see Gaelic in a place like that. I mean in the hotel, rather than in the toilet!*

*Before I reached Tobermory I was sailing for a fortnight. I started in Orkney. Orkney was very nice, and the people were nice.*

*On the way to Mull I saw many mountains. I had a beautiful day between Kinlochbervie and Pool-ewe. In the one view, I was seeing the mountains between Foinaven and Torridon. What a view! The day*

Tuig thus' an t-eathar agus tuigidh an t-eathar thu. *Understand the boat and the boat will understand you.* Tuig thus' an t-eathar agus tuigidh an t-eathar thu. Chunnaic mi an seanfhacal sin ann an taigh-òsta ann am Muile. Bha mi air cuairt-mhara aig an àm. Bha mi a' fuireach na h-oidhche ann an Tobar Mhoire. Ach an robh an t-eathar gam thuigsinn? Agus an robh mise a' tuigsinn an eathair?

Chunnaic mi an seanfhacal ann an Taigh-òsta Mhishnish ann an Tobar Mhoire. Tha seanfhaclan eile sgrìobhte air na ballachan cuideachd. Agus tha "Caileagan" is "Balaich" sgrìobhte air dorsan nan taighean-beaga. Tha e math a bhith a' faicinn Gàidhlig ann an àite mar sin. Tha mi a' ciallachadh san taigh-òsta, seach san taigh-bheag!

Mus do ràinig mi Tobar Mhoire, bha mi a' seòladh airson ceala-deug. Thòisich mi ann an Arcaibh. Bha Arcaibh glè shnog, agus bha na daoine laghach.

Air an t-slighe a Mhuile chunnaic mi tòrr bheanntan. Bha latha àlainn agam eadar Ceann Loch Biorbhaidh agus Poll Iù. Anns an aon sealladh, bha mi a' faicinn nam beann eadar Foinne Bheinn agus Toirbheartan. Abair

*was calm. The mountains appeared as if they were painted on a canvas.*

*I saw dolphins and porpoises. I saw one whale. And I saw lots of sea-birds as well. There were puffins, and gannets, fulmars, razorbills, common guillemots, black guillemots and bonxies (great skuas). And close to the Small Isles, there were Manx shearwaters. They nest on Rum.*

*And I heard one bird, although I didn't see it. I was near the Rubha Rèidh. That's north of Gairloch ["the short loch"]. There was a frightful sound. It was as if a woman were screaming. That was the red-throated diver. The old people were saying, when the diver sings, that rain will come. And a bit of rain did come. When you are sailing, an understanding of the boat – and of the weather – is very useful.*

sealladh! Bha an latha ciùin. Bha coltas air na beanntan gun robh iad air am peantadh air canabhas.

Chunnaic mi leumadairean agus peileagan. Chunnaic mi aon mhucmhara. Agus chunnaic mi eòin-mhara gu leòr cuideachd. Bha buthaidean ann, agus sùlairean, fulmairean, coltraichean, eòin dubha sgadain, calltagan agus fasgadain. Agus faisg air na h-Eileanan Beaga, bha fachaich ann. Tha iad a' neadachadh ann an Rùm.

Agus chuala mi aon eun ged nach fhaca mi e. Bha mi faisg air an Rubha Rèidh. Tha sin gu tuath air a' Gheàrr Loch. Bha fuaim eagallach ann. Bha e mar gun robh boireannach a' sgreuchail. B' e sin an learga mhòr – no *red-throated diver*. Bha na seann daoine ag ràdh, nuair a bhios an learga a' seinn, gun tig an t-uisge. Agus thàinig beagan uisge. Nuair a tha thu a' seòladh, tha tuigse air an eathar – agus air an aimsir – gu math feumail.