

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 230 (which corresponds to Litir 534). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk.

Eric MacLeod moved to Kerracher in 1976. Kerracher is on the shore of Loch a' Chàirn Bhàin in Assynt. Eric had a wife and two daughters. The old house wasn't in a good condition. Thus, they took a caravan with them to Kerracher. But there wasn't a road going there.

Eric built a big raft. He got help from a fisherman who was living in Kylesku. The fisherman pulled the raft to Kerracher with his boat.

Roddy MacLeod is the name of the fisherman. Roddy is from Scalpay Harris. But he has been living for many years in Assynt and the Mackay Country [of N Sutherland]. He did much work for Gaelic in those areas.

Eric wrote a book about his years in Kerracher – The Kerracher Man. He names Roddy MacLeod often. Anyway, Roddy pulled the raft down the loch. The caravan was now a home for the family.

Eric tried to be a fisherman. Roddy gave him work. That didn't last long, however. Eric suffered from seasickness. Roddy gave him

Ghluais Eric MacLeòid a Cearachar ann an naoi ceud deug, seachdad 's a sia (1976). Tha Cearachar air cladach Loch a' Chàirn Bhàin ann an Asainte. Bha bean agus dithis nighean aig Eric. Cha robh an seann taigh ann an staid mhath. Mar sin, thug iad carabhan leotha a Cearachar. Ach cha robh rathad a' dol ann.

Thog Eric ràth mòr. Fhuair e taic bho iasgair a bha a' fuireach sa Chaolas Chumhang. Tharraing an t-iasgair an ràth gu ruige Cearachar leis an eathar aige.

'S e Ruairidh MacLeòid an t-ainm air an iasgair. Tha Ruairidh à Sgalpaigh Na Hearadh. Ach tha e air a bhith a' fuireach mòran bhliadhnaichean ann an Asainte agus Dùthaich Mhic-Aoidh. Rinn e obair mhòr airson na Gàidhlig anns na sgìrean sin.

Sgrìobh Eric leabhar mu na bliadhnaichean aige ann an Cearachar – *The Kerracher Man*. Tha e ag ainmeachadh Ruairidh MhicLeòid gu tric. Co-dhiù, tharraing Ruairidh an ràth sìos an loch. Bha an carabhan a-nise ann mar dhachaigh don teaghlach.

Dh'fheuch Eric a bhith na iasgair. Thug Ruairidh obair dha. Cha do mhair sin fada, ge-tà. Bha cur na mara air Eric.

advice. “There’s only one cure for seasickness,” he said.

“What is it?” Eric asked.

“Standing under a tree!” said Roddy. Eric’s career as a fisherman came to an end.

But he and his family were successful in other ways. They did different things to make money – hairdressing, driving the school bus, crofting and fish-farming. They had hens. They had a peat bank.

They had big storms at times. One time there was a storm at the time of the spring tides. There was a high tide at night. The wood they had for fixing up the house was floating out to sea.

Things were difficult at times. But at other times they enjoyed the place immensely. In the end, with the girls away, they left. But their story – sixteen years at Kerracher – is very interesting.

Thug Ruairidh comhairle dha. “Chan eil ann ach aon leigheas airson cur na mara,” thuirt e.

“Dè th’ ann?” dh’fhaighnich Eric.

“A bhith nad sheasamh fo chraobh!” thuirt Ruairidh. Thàinig dreuchd Eric mar iasgair gu crìch.

Ach bha e fhèin is a theaghlach soirbheachail ann an dòighean eile. Rinn iad diofar rudan airson airgead a dhèanamh – gruagaireachd, dràibheadh bus na sgoile, croitearachd agus àrach-èisg. Bha cearcan aca. Bha poll-mònach aca.

Bha stoirmean mòra ann aig amannan. Aon turas thàinig stoirm aig àm an reothairt. Bha an làn ann air an oidhche. Bha am fiodh a bha aca airson an taigh a chàradh a’ flodadh a-mach gu muir.

Bha cùisean doirbh aig amannan. Ach aig amannan eile chòrd an t-àite riutha gu mòr. Aig a’ cheann thall, agus a’ chlann-nighean air falbh, ghluais iad a-mach. Ach tha an eachdraidh aca – sia bliadhna deug ann an Cearachar – gu math inntinneach.