

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 474 (which corresponds to Litir 778). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

Until recently I was never in the Gaidhealtachd in Nova Scotia. I'm pleased to say, however, that I was there last month. I really enjoyed the place.

Many images come to my mind when I remember my journey. One of them is something that happened on my final morning. I was in the capital of the province, Halifax. I was with a companion who speaks good Gaelic. He works on behalf of the language in Nova Scotia. We were taking breakfast together in a hotel.

I rose to get a bowl of fruit and yoghurt. When I returned, my companion was speaking to the waitress – a young lass. And what language were they speaking? Gaelic! I was saying to myself – ‘You're not in Scotland, lad, but in a foreign country!’

Well, I must admit that Nova Scotia didn't feel like a foreign country. Sometimes, when I was among Gaels, I was feeling as happy as I would among Gaels at home. I spoke plenty of Gaelic there. And many people were

Gus o chionn ghoirid cha robh mi riamh air a' Ghàidhealtachd ann an Alba Nuaidh. Tha mi toilichte a ràdh, ge-tà, gun robh mi ann air a' mhìos sa chaidh. Agus chòrd an t-àite rium glan.

'S iomadh iomhaigh a thig do mo cheann nuair a chuimhnicheas mi an turas agam. 'S i tè dhiubh rudeigin a thachair air a' mhadainn mu dheireadh agam. Bha mi ann am prìomh bhaile na mòr-roinne, Halifax. Bha mi cuide ri companach aig a bheil deagh Ghàidhlig. Bidh esan ag obair airson a' chànan ann an Alba Nuaidh. Bha sinn a' gabhail bracaist còmhla ann an taigh-òsta.

Dh'èirich mi airson bobhla mheasan is iogairt fhaighinn. Nuair a thill mi, bha mo chompanach a' bruidhinn ri tè-fhrithealaidh nam bòrd – tè òg. Agus dè an cànan anns an robh iad a' bruidhinn? A' Ghàidhlig! Bha mi ag ràdh rium fhìn – ‘Chan eil thu ann an Alba, a bhalaich, ach ann an dùthaich chèin!’

Uill, feumaidh mi ràdh nach robh Alba Nuadh mar dhùthaich chèin. Uaireannan, nuair a bha mi am measg Ghàidheal, bha mi a' faireachdainn cho toilichte 's a bhithinn am measg Ghàidheal aig an taigh. Bhruidhinn mi Gàidhlig gu leòr ann. Agus bha iomadh

sympathetic to the language because it was spoken by a parent or grandparent.

The girl who was waiting on the tables was not fully fluent in Gaelic. But her sister is nearly fluent. And her brother is fully fluent.

Another image comes to my mind's eye. I was beside the road on Cape Breton Island. I stopped the car to take a picture of a bilingual sign. On top it said 'Long Point'. And below that 'An Rubha Fada'.

The postman was delivering letters. He lowered the vehicle's window. 'Do you have the Gaelic?' he asked. 'Tha gu leòr,' I replied in Gaelic. And a big smile came across his face. Gaelic was his parents' first language and he understood me. Many's a time pleasurable things like that happened to me when I was in Nova Scotia.

duine bàigheil ris a' chànan oir bha i aig pàrant no seana-phàrant.

Cha robh an tè a bha a' frithealadh nam bòrd buileach fileanta ann an Gàidhlig. Ach tha a piuthar faisg air a bhith fileanta. Agus tha a bràthair gu tur fileanta.

Tha ìomhaigh eile a' tighinn gu sùil mo chuimhne. Bha mi ri taobh an rathaid ann an Eilean Cheap Bhreatainn. Stad mi an càr airson dealbh a thogail de shoidhne dhà-chànanach. Gu h-àrd bha 'Long Point' oirre. Agus gu h-ìosal 'An Rubha Fada'.

Bha am post a' lìbhrigeadh litrichean. Chuir e uinneag a charbaid sìos. 'Do you have the Gaelic?' dh'fhaighnich e. 'Tha gu leòr,' fhreagair mise ann an Gàidhlig. Agus thàinig gàire mhòr air aodann. B' i a' Ghàidhlig prìomh chànan a phàrantan agus thuig e mi. 'S iomadh turas a thachair rudan tlachdmhor mar sin dhomh nuair a bha mi ann an Alba Nuaidh.