

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 919 (which corresponds to Litir 1,223). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I have a wee story for you. It's called 'Peter of the Gold'. One day, Peter and two others were fishing at sea off the south-west coast of Mull. They saw a large ship under sail. She was heading for skerries. The fishermen tried to give a warning to the captain.

Somebody saw them and the ship came close to them. The captain requested that one of the fishermen come on board. If the ship came through the skerries safely, the fisherman would receive a good reward. Peter threw them the end of a rope. He climbed on board. The ship got through the skerries.

The captain did an evil thing. He cut the rope to the fishing boat. He said they were on the way to America and that Peter would have to take work on board as a member of the crew.

When Peter reached America, he had very little money. And he spoke no English. He was taken into an office where a man spoke to him in Gaelic. Who was it but the man who owned the ship! Peter told him that he was from Iona. He explained to him what happened.

Tha sgeul beag agam dhuibh. 'S e an t-ainm a tha air 'Pàraig an Òir'. Latha a bha seo, bha Pàraig agus dithis eile ag iasgach aig muir far costa an iar-dheas Mhuile. Chunnaic iad long mhòr fo sheòl. Bha i a' dèanamh air sgeirean. Dh'fheuch na h-iasgairan ri rabhadh a thoirt don sgiobair.

Chunnaic cuideigin iad agus thàinig an long faisg orra. Dh'iarr an sgiobair gun tigeadh fear de na h-iasgairan air bòrd. Nam faigheadh an long tro na sgeirean gu sàbhailte, bhiodh an t-iasgair a' faighinn deagh dhuais. Thilg Pàraig ceann ròpa thuca. Shreap e air bòrd. Fhuair an long tro na sgeirean.

Rinn an sgiobair rud olc. Gheàrr e an ròpa don eathar. Thuirt e gun robh iad air an t-slighe a dh'Ameireagaidh agus gu feumadh Pàraig obair a ghabhail air bòrd mar bhall dhen chriutha.

Nuair a ràinig Pàraig Ameireaga, bha glè bheag de dh'airgead aige. Agus cha robh Beurla sam bith aige. Chaidh a thoirt a-steach gu oifis far an do bhruidhinn fear ris ann an Gàidhlig. Cò bha ann ach am fear leis an robh an long! Dh'inns Pàraig dha gur ann à Eilean Ì a bha e. Mhìnich e dha mar a thachair.

The man who owned the ship asked the captain to come in. The captain was scolded. 'Go,' said the shipping man to him, 'and get five hundred English pounds. Give the money to this man. Or you'll spend the rest of your life in [the] prison!'

The captain returned with five hundred pounds in gold coins. 'Now,' said the shipping man, 'Peter will return home with me.'

Peter reached Greenock and he took a vessel to Mull. He walked to Fionnphort in the Ross of Mull. He crossed to Iona. A year had gone past, and nobody expected him to return.

The people of Iona knew him as 'Peter of the Gold'. He would take out a gold coin to show to children. He would tell them that that was the reward he got from the longest fishing day he ever had.

Dh'iarr am fear leis an robh an long air an sgiobair thighinn a-steach. Fhuair an sgiobair a throd. 'Thalla thus,' thuirtear fear an luingeis ris, 'agus faigh còig ceud punnd Sasannach. Thoir an t-airgead don duine seo. No cuiridh thu seachad an còrr dhed bheatha sa phrìosan!'

Thill an sgiobair le còig ceud punnd ann am buinn òir. 'A-nise,' arsa fear an luingeis, 'tillidh Pàraig dhachaigh còmhla riumsa.'

Ràinig Pàraig Grianraig agus ghabh e soitheach gu ruige Muile. Choisich e gu Fionnphort air an Ros Mhuileach. Chaidh e a-null a dh'Eilean Ì. Bha bliadhna air a dhol seachad agus cha robh dùil aig duine gun tilleadh e.

Bha muinntir Ì eòlach air mar 'Phàraig an Òir'. Bhiodh e a' toirt a-mach bonn òir airson a shealltainn do chloinn. Bhiodh e ag innse dhaibh gum b' e sin an duais a fhuair e bhon latha-iasgaich a b' fhaide a bha aige riamh.