

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 946 (which corresponds to Litir 1,250). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you about an experiment on Eilean nan Ròn in 1950. Some people were by themselves on the island for ten weeks. They were fully healthy. Some others came from the mainland to spread the common cold among them. According to reports in the media, none of the experimenters caught the cold.

A crofter on the mainland was full of the cold. He was sent to the island. He sat for a while along with four of the experimenters. Three [of them] caught the cold. What they learned from that, I'm not sure!

I want to finish our journey with a wee tale from Eilean nan Ròn. In olden times, there was a young girl called Betty. She was playing close to cliffs. She was with her brother, Donald. They saw a small boat coming towards the island.

They didn't recognise the boat. There were three people aboard. Two of them were wearing sailor's clothing. The other was wearing a soldier's uniform.

When they reached the island, one of the 'sailors' jumped out. He had a bag. He ran to the far end of the island. The children ran after him. But he was too fast for them. He went out of sight.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu dheuchainn ann an Eilean nan Ròn ann an naoi ceud deug is caogad (1950). Bha feadhainn leotha fhèin san eilean airson deich seachdainean. Bha iad slàn, fallain. Thàinig feadhainn eile à tìr-mòr airson an cnatan a sgaoileadh nam measg. A rèir aithrisean anns na meadhanan, cha do ghabh duine de luchd na deuchainn an cnatan.

Bha croitear air tìr-mòr a bha làn dhen chnatan. Chaidh a chur don eilean. Shuidh e greis còmhla ri ceathrar de luchd na deuchainn. Ghabh triùir an cnatan. Dè dh'ionnsaich iad bhuaithe sin, chan eil mi cinnteach!

Tha mi airson crìoch a chur air ar cuairt le sgeul beag à Eilean nan Ròn. O shean, bha nighean òg air an robh Beataidh. Bha i a' cluich faisg air bearraidhean. Bha i còmhla ri a bràthair, Dòmhnall. Chunnaic iad bàta beag a' tighinn a dh'ionnsaigh an eilein.

Cha do dh'aithnich iad am bàta. Bha triùir air bòrd. Bha aodach seòladair air dithis aca. Bha èideadh saighdeir air an fhear eile.

Nuair a ràinig iad an t-eilean, leum fear de na 'seòladairean' a-mach. Bha poca aige. Ruith e gu ceann thall an eilein. Ruith a' chlànn às a dhèidh. Ach bha esan ro luath dhaibh. Chaidh e à sealladh.

When the children reached him, he was on the way back. He didn't have the bag now.

'Where is the bag?' asked Betty.

'It's where the sun meets the sea,' replied the stranger.

'What's in it?' asked Donald.

'Gold!' said the other man. 'It's full of gold and you'll find it where the sun meets the sea.'

The man left. Shortly after, the boat left with the men on board. It went out of sight among the waves of the open sea.

The children didn't find the sailor's bag or his gold. It's not known what was meant by 'where the sun meets the sea.' And there is a question. Is the gold still on Eilean nan Ròn?!

Nuair a ràinig a' chlann e, bha e air an rathad air ais. Cha robh am poca aige anis.

'Càit a bheil am poca?' dh'fhaighnich Beataidh.

'Tha e far an coinnich a' ghrian ris a' mhuir,' fhreagair an coigreach.

'Dè tha na bhroinn?' dh'fhaighnich Dòmhnall.

'Òr!' thuirt am fear eile. 'Tha e làn òir, agus gheibh sibh e far an coinnich a' ghrian ris a' mhuir.'

Dh'fhalbh an duine. Goirid an dèidh sin, dh'fhalbh am bàta leis na fir air bòrd. Chaidh i à sealladh am measg stuaghan na fairge.

Cha d' fhuair a' chlann lorg air poca an t-seòladair no air an òr aige. Chan eil fios aig duine dè bhathar a' ciallachadh le 'far an coinnich a' ghrian ris a' mhuir.' Agus tha ceist ann. A bheil an t-òr fhathast ann an Eilean nan Ròn?!