

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 956 (which corresponds to Litir 1,260). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Last week, I made mention of the old mariner, the late George MacLeod – George son of Calum son of George from Great Bernera. George was a fisherman. He was very familiar with the sea. His legacy lives on in the book Muir is Tìr.

He has a series of proverbs about boats, weather, the tide and so on. One of his proverbs particularly concerns me this year. Am fear a ghleidheas long, gheibh e là gu seòladh. The man who keeps his ship, or boat, he'll get one day to sail her. Am fear a ghleidheas long, gheibh e là gu seòladh. Why does that proverb concern me?

Well, I have a yacht. It is small, old and not too fancy. But I really enjoy going in her. This year, however, I had too much happening. The yacht has been on land all year.

But, despite that, I didn't want to sell it. Not at all! As the proverb says – the man who keeps his boat, he'll get one day to sail her. I expect to sail in her next year.

There is another proverb a bit like that. Am fear nach glèidh airm ann an sìth, cha bhi iad aige an àm a' chogaidh. He who does not retain his

An t-seachdain sa chaidh, thug mi iomradh air an t-seann mharaiche, Seòras MacLeòid nach maireann – Seòras Chalum Sheòrais à Beàrnaraigh Leòdhais. Bha Seòras na iasgair. Bha e gu math eòlach air a' mhuir. Tha a dhìleab beò fhathast anns an leabhar Muir is Tìr.

Tha sreath sheanfhaclan aige mu eathraichean, aimsir, an tìde-mhara is mar sin air adhart. Tha fear de na seanfhaclan aige a' buntainn riumsa gu mòr am-bliadhna. Am fear a ghleidheas long, gheibh e là gu seòladh. The man who keeps his ship, or boat, he'll get one day to sail her. Am fear a ghleidheas long, gheibh e là gu seòladh. Carson a tha an seanfhacal sin a' buntainn riumsa?

Uill, tha gheat agam. Tha i beag, sean is gun a bhith spaideil. Ach tha e a' còrdadh riumsa gu mòr a bhith a' falbh innte. Am-bliadhna, ge-tà, bha cus rudan a' dol agam. Tha a' gheat air a bhith air tìr fad na bliadhna.

Ach, a dh'aindeoin sin, cha robh mi airson a reic. Cha robh idir! Mar a chanas an seanfhacal – am fear a ghleidheas long, gheibh e là gu seòladh. Tha dùil agam seòladh innte an-ath-bhliadhna.

Tha seanfhacal eile car coltach ri sin. Am fear nach glèidh airm ann an sìth, cha bhi iad aige an àm a' chogaidh. He who does not retain his arms during peace will

arms during peace will not have them in time of war. Am fear nach glèidh airm ann an sìth, cha bhi iad aige an àm a' chogaidh. We should consider, before we get rid of something, if we shall need it again.

In Muir is Tìr, there is an illustration of the parts of a fishing hook. For 'the point of the hook' in Gaelic we say gob an dubhain. Seòras Chaluim Sheòrais gives us a proverb containing 'gob an dubhain'. Is corrach gob an dubhain. Literally it means 'the point of the hook is precarious, insecure'. George translates it as 'the fishing life is dangerous'. He is speaking the truth. Is corrach gob an dubhain.

not have them in time of war. Am fear nach glèidh airm ann an sìth, cha bhi iad aige an àm a' chogaidh. Bu chòir dhuinn beachdachadh, mus fhaigh sinn cuidhteas rudeigin, am bi feum againn air a-rithist.

Ann am Muir is Tìr, tha dealbh de na pàirtean de dhubhan iasgaich. Airson 'the point of the hook', ann an Gàidhlig canaidh sinn gob an dubhain. Tha Seòras Chaluim Sheòrais a' toirt dhuinn seanfhacal le 'gob an dubhain' ann. Is corrach gob an dubhain. Gu litreachail, tha e a' ciallachadh 'the point of the hook is precarious, insecure'. Tha Seòras ga eadar-theangachadh mar 'the fishing life is dangerous'. Tha an fhìrinn aige. Is corrach gob an dubhain.