

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 967 (which corresponds to Litir 1,271). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Last week we were in Rannoch in Perthshire. I took a trip on the loch in a rubber dinghy. To begin with, I was intending to go to a crannog in the middle of the loch. I started on the way but the wind rose.

There were white horses on the loch. I mean by that that there were large waves with white caps on them. Perhaps that was appropriate because the crannog is called Eilean nam Faoileag.

However, I was by myself. It was rough. There was no other boat afloat on the loch. If my dinghy were overturned by a large wave, I would be in difficulty. And the water was cold. I decided not to continue to the island.

In English, some people called the island Tower Island because there is a tower on it. It was constructed early in the 19th century by the landlord. It was a likeness of a prison that one of the Robertsons built on the island a long time before. According to oral tradition, that rascal left his wife in the prison.

I noticed on my way to the island that the water was shallow in places. There were sandbanks.

An t-seachdain sa chaidh bha sinn ann an sgìre Raineach ann an Siorrachd Pheairt. Ghabh mi cuairt anns an loch ann an geòla rubair. An toiseach bha mi am beachd a dhò a-null gu crannag ann am meadhan an locha. Thòisich mi air an t-slighe ach dh'èirich a' ghaath.

Bha an fhaoileag air an loch. Tha mi a' ciallachadh le sin gun robh stuaghan mòra ann, agus cirean geala orra. Math dh'fhaodte gun robh sin iomchaidh oir 's e an t-ainm air a' chrannaig – Eilean nam Faoileag.

Ge-tà, bha mi leam fhìn. Bha e garbh. Cha robh bàta eile air bhog anns an loch. Nam biodh a' gheòla agam air a cur bun-os-cionn le stuagh mòr, bhithinn ann an staing. Agus bha an t-uisge fuar. Cho-dhùin mi gun a bhith a' leantainn orm chun an eilein.

Ann am Beurla, canaidh feadhainn Tower Island ris an eilean oir tha tùr ann. Chaidh a thogail tràth anns an naoidheamh linn deug leis an uachdaran. Bha e na mhac-samhail air prìosan a thog fear de Chlann Dhonnchaidh anns an eilean ùine mhòr roimhe. A rèir beul-aithris dh'fhàg an trustar sin a bhean anns a' phrìosan.

Mhothaich mi air mo shlighe a dh'ionnsaigh an eilein gun robh an t-uisge eu-domhainn ann an àiteachan. Tha oitirean

Perhaps that caused the waves to be so large.

The shallowness gave people the opportunity to build a crannog there. That gave them sanctuary when they were in danger. A sort of causeway was built under the water to the crannog from the southern shore. There are about five hundred metres between that shore and the island. The causeway would be twisting this way and that. It would be difficult for a person who did not know the route to find his way to the island. According to oral tradition some of the MacGregors were using Eilean nam Faoileag as a refuge.

There is an account of a man who spent a night there. He didn't enjoy it. Perhaps it was the sound of the wind that he heard. But he reckoned the island was full of ghosts!

ann. Math dh'fhaodte gur e sin a dh'adhbharaich gun robh na stuaghan cho mòr.

Thug an eu-doimhne cothrom do dhaoine crannag a thogail ann. Thug sin tèarmann dhaibh nuair a bha iad ann an cunnart. Bha nàdar de chabhsair air a thogail fon uisge don chrannaig bhon chladach a deas. Tha mu chòig ceud meatair eadar an cladach sin agus an t-eilean. Bhiodh an cabhsair a' lùbadh a-null 's a-nall. Bhiodh e doirbh do dhuine nach robh eòlach air a shlighe a lorg don eilean. A rèir beul-aithris bha cuid de Chloinn 'ic Ghriogair a' cleachdadh Eilean nam Faoileag mar thèarmann.

Tha cunntas ann mu fhear a chuir seachad oidhche ann. Cha do chòrd e ris. Math dh'fhaodte gur e fuaim na gaoithe a chuala e. Ach bha e dhen bheachd gu bheil an t-eilean làn thaibhsean!