

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 1,040 (which corresponds to Litir 1,344). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you about Operation Tabarin and John Matheson. John belonged to a small crofting community called Bad Callda. That's near Shieldaig in Wester Ross. He was born in 1893.

He learned about boats when he was young. When he left school, he went to work as a fisherman and mariner. He was at sea in the First [World] War.

In the twenties, he was a mariner with the Hudson Bay Company in Canada. At the end of the twenties, he got work on board the Discovery. That famous ship was used by Scott and Shackleton in the Antarctic. The Discovery is now in Dundee, where she was built.

The Discovery carried researchers from Britain, Australia and New Zealand to the Antarctic. They were under the leadership of the Australian, Sir Douglas Mawson. There was another Gael on board – the First Officer, Kenneth MacKenzie, from Tiree. On the Discovery's second voyage, Kenneth was her skipper.

Over the two voyages, the Discovery travelled twenty thousand

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Operation Tabarin agus Iain MacMhathain. Bhuineadh Iain do bhaile beag croitearachd ris an canar Bad Callda. Tha sin faisg air Sìldeag ann an Ros an Iar. Rugadh e ann an ochd ceud deug, naochad 's a trì (1893).

Dh'ionnsaich e mu bhàtaichean nuair a bha e òg. Nuair a dh'fhàg e an sgoil, chaidh e a dh'obair mar iasgair agus maraiche. Bha e aig muir anns a' Chiad Chogadh.

Anns na ficheadan, bha e na mharaithe don Hudson Bay Company ann an Canada. Aig deireadh nam ficheadan fhuair e obair air bòrd an Discovery. Bha an long ainmeil sin air a cleachdadh le Scott agus Shackleton anns an Antartaig. Tha an Discovery a-nise air ais ann Dùn Dè, far an robh i air a togail.

Ghiùlain an Discovery luchd-rannsachaidh bho Bhreatainn, Astràilia agus Sealann Nuadh don Antartaig. Bha iad fo cheannas an Astràilianaich, Sir Dùghlas Mawson. Bha Gàidheal eile air bòrd – a' Chiad Oifigear, Coinneach MacCoinnich, à Tìriodh. Air an dàrna turas aig a' Discovery, bha Coinneach na sgiobair oirre.

Thairis air an dà thuras, shiubhail an Discovery fichead mìle mìle thar a'

<p><i>miles over the sea. The scientists on board did a lot of scientific work.</i></p> <p><i>John Matheson was skilful as a mariner, but he was particularly celebrated for repairing and making sails. He could do anything with canvas and a big needle. If you want to find out more about him, I would recommend to you the book ‘John Matheson – Antarctic Seafarer’ by Iain MacLennan.</i></p> <p><i>But I would like to finish the Litir by returning to Operation Tabarin. John and four others spent a long winter on Deception Island. After a year, they moved to Hope Bay on the Antarctic Peninsula. There, John made canvas shoes for their dogs. And he made a canvas boat to take with them on journeys across the sea-ice.</i></p> <p><i>Operation Tabarin came to an end in 1946. It was the basis for the British Antarctic Survey – an agency with five hundred people working for them today, and three research bases in the Antarctic.</i></p>	<p>chua. Rinn an luchd-saidheans air bòrd obair mhòr shaidheansail.</p> <p>Bha Iain MacMhathain sgileil mar mharaiche ach bha e gu sònraichte ainmeil airson siùil a chàradh agus a dhèanamh. Dhèanadh e rud sam bith le canabhas agus snàthad mhòr. Ma tha sibh airson tuilleadh fhaighinn a-mach mu dheidhinn, mholainn dhuibh an leabhar ‘<i>John Matheson – Antarctic Seafarer</i>’ le Iain MacIllInnein.</p> <p>Ach bu toigh leam an Litir a chrìochnachadh le bhith a’ tilleadh gu <i>Operation Tabarin</i>. Chuir Iain agus ceathrar eile seachad geamhradh fada air <i>Deception Island</i>. An dèidh bliadhna, ghluais iad gu <i>Hope Bay</i> air Leth-eilean na h-Antartaig. An sin, rinn Iain brògan canabhais airson nan con aca. Agus rinn e bàta de chanabhas airson toirt leotha air tursan thar na deighe-mara.</p> <p>Thàinig <i>Operation Tabarin</i> gu ceann ann an naoi ceud deug, ceathrad ’s a sia (1946). Bha e na bhunait don <i>British Antarctic Survey</i> – buidheann le còig ceud duine ag obair dhaibh an-diugh, agus trì ionadan-rannsachaidh aca anns an Antartaig.</p>
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