

## 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 169 (which corresponds to Litir 473). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I was in Orkney recently. The place-names in Orkney are interesting. Most of them are Scandinavian.*

*I spent two days in Stromness. The ferry goes into Stromness. It's a beautiful little town. And it's very historic. Many people from Stromness went to work for the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada.*

*I was waiting for good weather because I was leaving in a yacht. But the weather wasn't suitable.*

*Stromness means the "tidal current at the peninsula". Close to the town there is a peninsula. There is a strong current in the narrows. It's difficult to sail against it.*

*South of Stromness is the island of Hoy. Hoy means "high island". And it is high. I went past the island in the ferry. Hoy is different from the rest of Orkney. There is moorland. There is heather. The other islands are fertile and grassy and low.*

*I looked at a map of the*

Bha mi ann an Arcaibh o chionn ghoirid. Tha na h-ainmean-àite ann an Arcaibh inntinneach. Tha a' chuid as motha aca Lochlannach.

Chuir mi seachad dà latha ann an Stromness. Tha am bàt'-aiseig a' dol a-steach a Stromness. 'S e baile beag brèagha a tha ann. Agus tha e gu math eachdraidheil. Chaidh mòran à Stromness a dh'obair don Hudson's Bay Company ann an Canada.

Bha mi a' feitheamh ri deagh shìde oir bha mi a' falbh ann an gheat. Ach cha robh an t-sìde freagarrach.

Tha Stromness a' ciallachadh "sruth-mara aig an rubha". Faisg air a' bhaile, tha rubha ann. Tha sruth-mara làidir anns a' chaolas. Tha e doirbh seòladh na aghaidh.

Gu deas air Stromness tha eilean Hòdhaigh. Tha Hòdhaigh a' ciallachadh "eilean àrd". Agus tha e àrd. Chaidh mi seachad air an eilean anns a' bhàt'-aiseig. Tha Hòdhaigh eadar-dhealaichte bhon chòrr de dh'Arcaibh. Tha mòinteach ann. Tha fraoch ann. Tha na h-eileanan eile torrach, feurach, ìosal.

Choimhead mi air mapa dhen

*island. There were a couple of names that looked a bit Gaidhealach. There was one name spelt c-l-i-c-k-n-a-f-e-a. “Something of the fèith” perhaps – of the bog channel?*

*I went to the library in Kirkwall. Kirkwall is the capital of Orkney. “How do I say this place-name?” I asked the librarian. But she was Irish! She didn’t know.*

*Fortunately there was another woman working there. She was from Orkney. She told me that it is Click-na-FIA they say. I found out that fea comes from the Old Norse fjall, meaning “hill”. It’s common enough. And it’s not Gaidhealach at all.*

*But some people think that a few place-names in Orkney came from a Celtic language – Gaelic or Pictish. We’ll look at some next week.*

eilean. Bha ainm no dhà ann a bha a’ coimhead rudeigin Gàidhealach. Bha aon ainm ann air a litreachadh c-l-i-c-k-n-a-f-e-a. “Rudeigin na fèith” ’s dòcha – of the bog channel?

Chaidh mi don leabharlann ann an Kirkwall. ’S e Kirkwall prìomh bhaile Arcaibh. “Ciamar a chanas mi an t-ainm-àite seo?” dh’fhaighnich mi dhen leabharlannaiche. Ach bha ise Èireannach! Cha robh fios aice.

Gu fortanach bha boireannach eile ag obair ann. Bha ise à Arcaibh. Dh’innis i dhomh gur e *Click-na-FIA* a chanas iad. Fhuair mi a-mach gu bheil *fea* a’ tighinn bhon t-seann Lochlannais *fjall*, a’ ciallachadh “cnoc”. Tha e cumanta gu leòr. Agus chan eil e Gàidhealach idir.

Ach tha feadhainn dhen bheachd gun tàinig cuid bheag de dh’ainmean-àite ann an Arcaibh à cànan Ceilteach – Gàidhlig no Cruithnis. Bheir sinn sùil air feadhainn an ath-sheachdain.