

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 172 (which corresponds to Litir 476). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was in a yacht in Stromness Harbour. That is in Orkney. We were awaiting weather that was suitable for sailing. For two days we were not sailing. The wind was [at] gale force. It was too rough to sail.

But eventually we sailed. It was still rough, however. The boat was pitching heavily. I was at the helm for a while. The engine was on. The order came from the skipper. Raise the jib! Stop the engine!

The seòl-cinn is the jib. That's a sail at the front of the yacht. The wind was very strong. We had no need of the mainsail. We were sailing fast enough with just the jib.

I was greatly enjoying it. The boat was going well. We were making for the mainland of Scotland.

I still have much to learn about sailing. But on that day, I learned an important thing. I didn't enjoy it at the time. But it was useful to me. For the first time ever I was seasick. I've been in boats all my life. I never had

Bha mi ann an gheat ann an cala Stromness. Tha sin ann an Arcaibh. Bha sinn a' feitheamh ri sìde a bha freagarrach airson seòladh. Airson dà latha cha robh sinn a' seòladh. Bha a' ghaoth aig ìre gèile. Bha i ro gharbh airson seòladh.

Ach mu dheireadh thall sheòl sinn. Bha i fhathast garbh, ge-tà. Bha am bàta a' tulgadh gu mòr. Bha mi aig an stiùir airson greis. Bha an einnsean air. Thàinig an t-òrdugh bhon sgiobair. *Togaibh an seòl-cinn! Cuiribh stad air an einnsean!*

'S e an seòl-cinn an jib. 'S e sin seòl aig toiseach a' gheat. Bha a' ghaoth làidir làidir. Cha robh feum againn air an t-seòl mhòr. Bha sinn a' seòladh luath gu leòr leis an t-seòl-chinn a-mhàin.

Bha e a' còrdadh rium gu mòr. Bha am bàta a' dol gu math. Bha sinn a' dèanamh air tìr-mòr na h-Alba.

Tha mòran agam ri ionnsachadh mu sheòladh fhathast. Ach air an latha sin, dh'ionnsaich mi rudeigin cudromach. Cha do chòrd e rium aig an àm. Ach bha e feumail dhomh. Airson a' chiad turas riamh, bha cur na mara orm. Tha mi air a

seasickness. Well, I hadn't until that day.

I can't say why I suffered it. The sea was rough. There was a big swell. There were bad squalls. We were pitching. But I had been on a sea like that before.

After two hours at sea, I wasn't feeling well. "Haul on the sheet!" came the order. "Ruairidh – haul on the sheet!"

"Excuse me," I replied. "I can't." And I put my head over the side of the boat. After that, I understood what seasickness is like. It's not at all good. From now on, I will forever be understanding and sympathetic towards people who are suffering from seasickness.

bhith ann am bàtaichean fad mo bheatha. Cha robh riamh cur na mara orm. Uill, cha robh chun an latha sin.

Chan urrainn dhomh a ràdh carson a thàinig e orm. Bha a' mhuir garbh. Bha suaile mhòr ann. Bha sguailean dona ann. Bha sinn a' tulgadh. Ach bha mi ann am muir mar sin roimhe.

Às dèidh dà uair a thìde aig muir, cha robh mi a' faireachdainn gu math. "Tarraing air an sgòd!" thàinig an t-òrdugh. "Ruairidh – tarraing air an sgòd!"

"Gabhaibh mo leisgeul," fhreagair mi. "Chan urrainn dhomh." Agus chuir mi mo cheann thar cliathaich a' bhàta. An dèidh sin, thuig mi mar a tha tinneas na mara. Chan eil e math idir. Bho seo a-mach bidh mi a-chaidh tuigseach is bàidheil ri daoine a tha a' fulang le tinneas na mara.