

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 176 (which corresponds to Litir 480). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was in Wales. I was on a train going to Aberystwyth. I saw a hawk in the air. It was big. It had a forked tail. I was looking at a red kite.

That gave me pleasure. Why? Well, now there are many red kites in Scotland. But, twenty years ago, there were none. Wales was the one place in Britain where it was.

The red kite was at one time plentiful in Britain. William Shakespeare wrote that they were plentiful in London when he was alive. They were living ["coming alive"] on the rubbish on the streets. And they were plentiful out in the country as well.

But today there isn't rubbish on the streets of the cities. Well, there's not as much as there used to be! Gamekeepers killed many red kites. They were thinking they were killing the grouse. However, conservationists say that they don't damage grouse.

Eventually mid-Wales was the one place where the red kite was.

Bha mi anns a' Chuimrigh. Bha mi air tràna a' dol gu Aberystwyth. Chunnaic mi clamhan anns an adhar. Bha e mòr. Bha earball gobhlach air. Bha mi a' coimhead air clamhan gobhlach – no red kite.

Thug sin toileachas dhomh. Carson? Uill, tha a-nise clamhain ghobhlach gu leòr ann an Alba. Ach, o chionn fichead bliadhna, cha robh gin ann. B' e a' Chuimrigh an t-aon àite ann am Breatainn far an robh e.

Bha an clamhan gobhlach uaireigin pailt ann am Breatainn. Sgrìobh Uilleam Shakespeare gun robh iad pailt ann an Lunnainn nuair a bha esan beò. Bha iad a' tighinn beò air an sgudal air na sràidean. Agus bha iad pailt a-muigh air an dùthaich cuideachd.

Ach an-diugh chan eil sgudal air sràidean nam bailtean mòra. Uill, chan eil uiread 's a b' àbhaist! Mharbh geamairean tòrr chlamhan gobhlach. Bha iad a' smaoinichadh gun robh iad a' sgrios nan cearcan-fraoich. Ge-tà, tha luchd-glèidhteachais ag ràdh nach dèan iad cron air cearcan-fraoich.

Mu dheireadh, b' e meadhan na Cuimrigh an aon sgìre far an robh

But I hadn't understood [didn't understand] how scarce they were in Wales as well. Close to Aberystwyth there is the small town of Tregaron. There is a museum there to the red kite. At the start of the twentieth century, there were only three pairs left.

Conservationists were concerned. They imported eggs from Spain. They put the eggs in nests of buzzards [That's the buzzard]. Many chicks were born. Unfortunately, however, the Spanish red kite leaves the area where the nest is. Most of the birds went away!

But the conversationists continued. In the sixties, the number[s] of red kites increased to twenty pairs. Now their number is very healthy. It's healthy in Scotland also. Birds were brought into Scotland from Germany and [from] Sweden.

This bird is beautiful. It gave me great pleasure to see the red kite in Wales. And I get great pleasure when I see a red kite in Scotland as well.

an clamhan gobhlach. Ach cha do thuig mi cho gann 's a bha iad sa Chuimrigh cuideachd. Faisg air Aberystwyth tha baile beag Tregaron. Tha taigh-tasgaidh ann don chlamhan ghobhlach. Aig toiseach an fhicheadamh linn, cha robh ach trì paidhrichean ann.

Bha dragh air luchd-glèidhteachais. Thug iad uighean a-steach bhon Spàinn. Chuir iad na h-uighean ann an neadan chlamhan. Sin am *buzzard*. Rugadh gu leòr de dh'iseanan. Gu mì-fhortanach, ge-tà, bidh an clamhan gobhlach Spàinn-each a' falbh bhon àite anns a bheil an nead. Chaidh a' chuid a bu mhotha de na h-eòin air falbh!

Ach lean an luchd-glèidhteachais orra. Anns na seasgadan, dh'èirich àireamh nan clamhan gobhlach gu fichead paidhir. A-nise tha an àireamh dhiubh gu math fallain. Tha i fallain ann an Alba cuideachd. Chaidh eòin a thoirt a-steach a dh'Alba bhon Ghearmailt agus bhon t-Suain.

Tha an t-eun seo brèagha. Thug e toileachas mòr dhomh an clamhan gobhlach fhaicinn anns a' Chuimrigh. Agus tha mi a' faighinn toileachas mòr nuair a chì mi clamhan gobhlach ann an Alba cuideachd.