

## 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 267 (which corresponds to Litir 571). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*Sandy MacDonald was a gamekeeper. That was in the Cairngorms early in the twentieth century. Sandy found something on the hill. That was after the First [World] War. He was thinking that it was a bomb. But it wasn't. It was a flare. How did it get there? Well, it came from an aircraft in the war – a German aircraft. It wasn't a plane, however, but a Zeppelin. The flare came from Zeppelin L20 in May 1916. But why was that aircraft above the Cairngorms?*

*Well, that wasn't her first time above Britain. Four months earlier, she dropped bombs on Burton-on-Trent in England. At the start of May she was back above Britain. This time she was making for Scotland. She was going to destroy the railway bridge across the Firth of Forth.*

*But there was bad weather. She missed the Firth of Forth. She went past Edinburgh. She continued north. And she reached the Cairngorms. People in the wee village of Inverey heard her in the middle of the night. There was a light on in one of the houses. The people of the place were*

Bha Sandaidh Dòmhnallach na gheamair. Bha sin anns a' Mhonadh Ruadh tràth san fhicheadamh linn. Lorg Sandaidh rudeigin anns a' mhonadh. Bha sin às dèidh a' Chiad Chogaidh. Bha e a' smaoineachadh gur e a boma a bha ann. Ach chan e. 'S e lasair-bhoillsg no flare a bha ann. Ciamar a fhuair i ann? Uill, thàinig i bho itealan anns a' chogadh – itealan Gearmailteach. Chan e plèana a bha ann, ge-tà, ach Zeppelin. Thàinig an lasair-bhoillsg bho Zeppelin L20 anns a' Chèitean naoi ceud deug is sia-deug (1916). Ach carson a bha am bàt'-adhair sin os cionn a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh?

Uill, cha b' e sin a' chiad turas aice os cionn Bhreatainn. Ceithir mìosan roimhe, leig i bomaichean air Burton-on-Trent ann an Sasainn. Aig toiseach a' Chèitein bha i air ais os cionn Bhreatainn. An turas seo bha i a' dèanamh air Alba. Bha i a' dol a sgrios na drochaid-rèile thar Linne Foirthe.

Ach bha droch shìde ann. Chaill i Linne Foirthe. Chaidh i seachad air Dùn Èideann. Lean i oirre gu tuath. Agus ràinig i am Monadh Ruadh. Chuala daoine ann am baile beag Inbhir Eìdh i ann am meadhan na h-oidhche. Bha solas air ann am fear de na taighean. Bha

*scared that the Zepp-elin was going to drop a bomb on the village. But they were aiming for a bigger target than Inverey!*

*The airship continued on. She went over Ben MacDui, over the Monadh Liath and over the Moray Firth. She was now short of fuel. The captain was wanting to go back to Germany. But he didn't have enough fuel. He went to Norway. But there was an accident in Norway. The Zeppelin was destroyed. The crew were sent to prison as prisoners-of-war. Zeppelin L20 wasn't going to annoy the people of the Cairngorms – or anybody else – again.*

an t-eagal air muinntir an àite gun robh an Zeppelin a' dol a leigeil boma air a' bhaile. Ach bha iad ag amas air targaid na bu mhotha na Inbhir Eidh!

Lean am bàt'-adhair oirre. Chaidh i thairis air Beinn MacDuibh, thairis air a' Mhonadh Liath agus thairis air Linne Mhoireibh. Bha i a-nise gann de chonnadh. Bha an caiptean ag iarraidh a dhol air ais don Ghearmailt. Ach cha robh connadh gu leòr aige. Chaidh e a Nirribhidh. Ach bha tubaist ann an Nirribhidh. Chaidh an Zeppelin a sgrios. Bha an criutha air an cuir don phrìosan mar phrìosanaich-chogaidh. Cha robh Zeppelin L20 a' dol a chur dragh air muinntir a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh – no duine sam bith eile – tuilleadh.