

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 408 (which corresponds to Litir 712). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

In August 1853, the Annie Jane sailed from Liverpool. She was going to Quebec. There were four hundred people on board. William Mason was the captain.

The Annie Jane was carrying a load of iron – eight hundred tonnes of it. There were three hundred tonnes also of other goods. And she was full of people.

She went north, past the north of Ireland. She went into the Atlantic. The wind picked up. The ship began to roll. The weather got worse. The topmasts broke. But the crew repaired the vessel. They continued on their way to Canada.

The passengers were afraid. They asked the captain to take the vessel back to Liverpool. He agreed. After eight days at sea, they were back in Liverpool.

Some of the passengers refused to go on the Annie Jane anymore. They were of the opinion that she was not a seaworthy vessel. But other people went on board in their place. After a week, the ship was back at sea.

The same thing happened again. The ship began to roll badly.

Annas an Lùnastal ochd ceud deug, caogad 's a trì (1853), sheòl an Annie Jane à Liverpool. Bha i a' dol a Quebec. Bha ceithir cheud duine air bòrd. B' e Uilleam Mason an sgiobair.

Bha an Annie Jane a' giùlain luchd de dh'iarainn – ochd ceud tonna dheth. Bha trì cheud tonna ann cuideachd de bhathar eile. Agus bha i làn daoine.

Chaidh i gu tuath, seachad air ceann a tuath na h-Èireann. Chaidh i don Chuan Siar. Dh'èirich a' ghaath. Thòisich an long air luasgadh. Dh'fhàs an t-sìde na bu mhiosa. Bhris na crainn-mhullaich. Ach rinn an sgioba obair-càraidh air an t-soitheach. Lean iad orra air an slighe a Chanada.

Bha eagal mòr air an luchd-siubhail. Dh'iarr iad air an sgiobair an soitheach a thoirt air ais a Liverpool. Dh'aontaich e. Às dèidh ochd latha aig muir, bha iad air ais ann an Liverpool.

Dhiùlt cuid dhen luchd-siubhail a dhol air an Annie Jane tuilleadh. Bha iad dhen bheachd nach e soitheach comasach a bha innte. Ach chaidh daoine eile air bòrd nan àite. Às dèidh seachdain, bha an long air ais aig muir.

Thachair an aon rud a-rithist. Thòisich an long air luasgadh gu dona.

Some of the passengers spoke to the first mate. He told them that they wouldn't reach Quebec. They gave the captain a petition. They were wanting to return to Liverpool. This time, the captain ripped the petition in pieces. He took out a pistol. He said he would use the gun if there were a mutiny.

A bad storm arose. Masts were broken. Some of the sails were ripped.

When the Annie Jane was two hundred miles out from St Kilda, the wind abated. Captain Mason made the decision to go to Ireland. But, when they were close to Berneray, south of Barra, the wind rose again.

Mason turned the ship around. He was going to put the Annie Jane aground in a sandy bay – am Bàgh Siar – on Vatersay. He was hoping that people would get ashore in Vatersay. But, as we'll see next week, matters weren't as successful as he was hoping.

Bhruidhinn cuid dhen luchd-siubhail ris a' chiad mheit. Dh'inns esan dhaibh nach ruigeadh iad Quebec. Chuir iad athchuinge chun an sgiobair. Bha iad ag iarraidh tilleadh a Liverpool. An turas seo, reub an sgiobair an athchuinge ann am pìosan. Thug e gunna-làimhe a-mach. Thuirt e gun cleachdadh e an gunna nam biodh ar-a-mach ann.

Dh'èirich gailleann. Chaidh crainn a bhriseadh. Chaidh cuid de na siùil a reubadh.

Nuair a bha an *Annie Jane* dà cheud mìle a-mach bho Hiort, shocraich a' ghaoth. Rinn an Caipitean Mason an co-dhùnadh a dhol a dh'Èirinn. Ach, nuair a bha iad faisg air Beàrnaraigh, deas air Barraigh, dh'èirich a' ghaoth a-rithist.

Thionndaidh Mason an long. Bha e a' dol a chur an *Annie Jane* air tìr ann am bàgh ghainmhich – am Bàgh Siar – ann am Bhatarsaigh. Bha e an dòchas gum faigheadh daoine gu tìr ann am Bhatarsaigh. Ach, mar a chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain, cha robh cùisean cho soirbheachail 's a bha e an dùil.