

## 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 431 (which corresponds to Litir 735). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk).

*I was in Flodigarry on the Isle of Skye recently. It's on the east side of the Trotternish Peninsula, in the north of the island.*

*I was down on the shore. We were looking for fossils along with Dugald Ross. He is an expert on fossils. He [has] discovered some that are very important.*

*My son, Calum, was along with me. He said he was wanting to go out to the island opposite us. On the maps it's called Eilean Flodigarry. But those who belong to the place, who speak Gaelic, they call it Eilean a' Chinn Mhòir. There is a high steep crag on the east side of the island. That's the Ceann Mòr. On the west side, opposite Flodigarry itself, the shore of the island is not too steep at all.*

*Calum didn't have a boat. He was going to swim over. He had a wetsuit. He likes to swim out of doors – in lochs, rivers or the sea.*

*I agreed to wait on the shore for him. I kept an eye on him with binoculars. He started swimming and was managing fine. I saw a cormorant, seal and black-backed*

Bha mi ann am Flòdaigearraidh anns an Eilean Sgitheanach o chionn ghoirid. Tha e anns an Taobh Sear, ann an ceann a tuath an eilein.

Bha mi shìos air a' chladach. Bha sinn a' coimhead airson fosailean còmhla ri Dùghall Ros. Tha esan na eòlaiche air fosailean. Lorg e feadhainn a tha fìor chudromach.

Bha an gille agam, Calum, cuide rium. Thuirt e gun robh e ag iarraidh falbh a-mach don eilean mu ar coinneimh. Air na mapaichean, 's e Eilean Flodigarry a th' air mar ainm. Ach an fheadhainn a bhuineas don àite aig a bheil Gàidhlig, canaidh iadsan Eilean a' Chinn Mhòir ris. Tha creag àrd chas aig ceann an ear an eilein. 'S e sin an Ceann Mòr. Air an taobh an iar, mu choinneimh Fhlòdaigearraidh fhèin, chan eil cladach an eilein ro chas idir.

Cha robh bàta aig Calum. Bha e a' dol a shnàmh a-null. Bha deise-fhliuch aige. 'S toigh leis a bhith a' snàmh a-muigh – ann an lochan, aibhnichean no muir.

Dh'aontaich mise fuireach air a' chladach air a shon. Chùm mi sùil air le prosbaig. Dh'fhalbh e a shnàmh agus bha e a' dèanamh na cùise glè mhath. Chunnaic mi sgarbh, ròn agus farspag a'

*gull going close to him. They were checking him out. I was hoping there were no killer whales around. The previous day, we saw a whale out from Staffin. It was a minke, I'd say, rather than a killer whale.*

*Up to halfway, Calum was doing well. Then he started to go obliquely with the current. Instead of reaching the island opposite me, he went about three hundred yards to the south. But he completed it, and he returned safely.*

*When he was back with me on dry land, I congratulated him. I asked him if he knew about the man who would regularly swim that channel in olden times. He didn't know. So I told him the story about Ailean and Màiri. I'll tell yourselves it next week.*

dol faisg air. Bha iad a' toirt sùil air. Bha mi an dòchas nach robh madaidhean-cuain ann. An latha roimhe, chunnaic sinn muc-mhara a-mach bho Stafainn. 'S e miongaidh a bha ann, chanainn, seach madadh-cuain.

Gu letheach-slighe, bha Calum a' dèanamh gu math. An uair sin thòisich e air a dhol air fiaradh leis an t-sruth. An àite an t-eilean a ruigsinn mu mo choinneimh, chaidh e gu deas mu thrì cheud slat. Ach rinn e a' chùis, agus thill e gu sàbhailte.

Nuair a bha e air ais cuide rium air talamh tioram, chuir mi meal a naidheachd air. Dh'fhaighnich mi an robh fios aige mun fhear a bhiodh a' snàmh a' chaolais sin gu tric anns an t-seann aimsir. Cha robh fios aige. Mar sin, dh'inns mi dha an stòiridh mu Ailean agus Màiri. Innsidh mi dhuibh fhèin e an-ath-sheachdain.