

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 458 (which corresponds to Litir 762). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

I like the pictures by the artist, the late William MacTaggart. The first time I saw a picture of his, I was in a gallery in Edinburgh. This was a long time ago. But it captured my attention and my heart.

There were young children in the picture. They were running. They were in a field full of flowers on a beautiful summer's day. It reminded me of how it was for myself when I was young in Applecross on holiday.

Further on in the same gallery, another picture captured my attention. It was a seascape. There was a boat in it, and a shoreline and wind and sun. There was whiteness and grey-greenness and blueness. The colours were plied together with confidence and boldness. There was something about the painting style that put the Impressionists in my mind.

But it was Scotland, and a Scottish painter. Again I was back in my childhood in Applecross. I was preparing to go out to catch lythe with a handline. And who made the picture? The same man, William MacTaggart.

It was only afterwards that I

'S toigh leam na dealbhan aig an neach-ealain Uilleam Mac an t-Sagairt nach maireann. A' chiad turas a chunnaic mi dealbh aige, bha mi ann an gailearaidh ann an Dùn Èideann. Bha seo o chionn fhada. Ach ghlac e m' aire 's mo chridhe.

Bha clann òg anns an dealbh. Bha iad a' ruith. Bha iad ann an achadh làn fhùraichean air latha brèagha samhraidh. Chuir e nam chuimhne mar a bha e dhomh fhìn nuair a bha mi òg air a' Chomraich air làithean-saora.

Nas fhaide air adhart anns an aon gailearaidh, ghlac dealbh eile m' aire. 'S e sealladh mara a bha ann. Bha bàta ann, agus cladach is gaoth is grian. Bha gilead ann, agus glaisead is guirmead. Bha na dathan air am filleadh còmhla le misneachd is treunachd. Bha rudeigin ann mu stoidhle a' pheantaidh a bha a' cur nan *Impressionists* nam chuimhne.

Ach 's e Alba a bha ann, agus peantair Albannach. A-rithist bha mi air ais nam òige air a' Chomraich. Bha mi a' dèanamh deiseil gus falbh a-mach airson fliùghaichean a ghlacadh le dorgh. Agus cò rinn an dealbh? An dearbh dhuine, Uilleam Mac an t-Sagairt.

'S ann dìreach às dèidh làimh' a

found out that MacTaggart spoke Gaelic. He was raised in Kintyre, near Machrihanish. His parents were crofters. It's my understanding that both of them spoke Gaelic. When I found that out, I was feeling closer than ever to MacTaggart.

When he was a teenager, William left his home and he moved to Edinburgh. He received training there as an artist. He was painting children initially. But he progressed to doing landscapes and seascapes. He was going to the west and east sides of Scotland. He liked the coastal country of Angus and also Lothian where he made his home.

One time when he was in the west, MacTaggart was put in danger of his life. I'll tell you about it next week.

fhuair mi a-mach gun robh Gàidhlig aig Mac an t-Sagairt. Thogadh e ann an Ceann Tìre, faisg air Machair Shanais. Bha a phàrantan nan croitearan. 'S e mo thuigse gun robh Gàidhlig aig an dithis aca. Nuair a fhuair mi sin a-mach, bha mi a' faireachdainn na bu dlùithe buileach ri Mac an t-Sagairt.

Nuair a bha e na dheugaire, dh'fhàg Uilleam a dhachaigh agus ghluais e a Dhùn Èideann. Fhuair e trèanadh an sin mar neach-ealain. 'S e clann a bha e a' peantadh an toiseach. Ach ghluais e air adhart gu seallaidhean tìre agus seallaidhean mara. Bha e a' dol gu taobh siar agus taobh sear na h-Alba. Bha e measail air Machair Aonghais agus air Lodainn far an do rinn e a dhachaigh.

Aon turas nuair a bha e air an taobh an iar, bha Mac an t-Sagairt air a chur ann an cunnart a bheatha. Innsidh mi dhuibh mu dheidhinn an-ath-sheachdain.