

## 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 459 (which corresponds to Litir 763). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*William MacTaggart, the famous painter, was often returning to Kintyre. Sometimes he was going out in a boat, fishing. One time, in August 1889, he was in danger of losing his life.*

*William and his wife Marsaili were in a boat in Campbeltown Loch. Along with them were their two sons and a friend, Thomas Young. It was a beautiful day.*

*A steamer came out of Campbeltown. It was called the Meteor. She belonged to Leith. MacTaggart's boat was anchored near the mouth of the loch. There was a fishing boat quite close to her. But there was plenty of room for the Meteor.*

*The Meteor was heading for them. She didn't alter her course. William and Thomas stood up. They waved. They shouted. They saw two men on board the Meteor.*

*But the steamer continued on her course. The Meteor hit the boat hard, splitting it in two. Everybody on the boat fell into the sea.*

*Then the crew of the Meteor saw that something was wrong. They*

Bha Uilleam Mac an t-Sagairt, am peantair ainmeil, a' tilleadh a Cheann Tìre gu tric. Uaireannan bha e a' falbh a-mach ann an eathar, ag iasgach. Aon turas, anns an Lùnastal ochd ceud deug, ochdad 's a naoi (1889), bha e ann an cunnart a bheatha a chall.

Bha Uilleam agus a bhean Marsaili ann an eathar ann an Loch Chille Chiarain. Cuide riutha, bha an dithis mhac agus caraid, Tòmas Young. 'S e latha brèagha a bha ann.

Thàinig bàta-smùide a-mach à cala Cheann Loch Chille Chiarain. 'S e am Meteor an t-ainm a bha oirre. Bhuineadh i do Lìte. Bha eathar Mhic an t-Sagairt air acair faisg air beul an locha. Bha bàt'-iasgaich meadhanach faisg oirre. Ach bha rùm gu leòr aig a' Mheteor.

Bha am Meteor a' dèanamh orra. Cha do dh'atharraich i a cùrsa. Sheas Uilleam agus Tòmas an-àirde. Smèid iad. Dh'èigh iad. Chunnaic iad dithis fhear air bòrd a' Mheteor.

Ach fhathast lean am bàta-smùide air a cùrsa. Bhuail am Meteor gu cruaidh anns an eathar, ga sgàineadh ann an dà leth. Thuit a h-uile duine air an eathar don mhuir.

An uair sin chunnaic sgioba a' Mheteor gun robh rudeigin ceàrr. Stad

*stopped the boat. They saw the five people in the water. They lowered a dinghy over the side. They quickly picked everybody up. Fortunately nobody was hurt. They were wet and cold, but matters weren't worse than that.*

*'Why did you do that?' MacTaggart asked the skipper, Archibald Grassam. Grassam admitted that he had not had anybody on lookout.*

*The matter came to court in September. The fishermen had seen everything. They gave evidence that the Meteor's crew had handled the vessel in a dangerous manner. Archibald Grassam got three months in prison. His mate got two months. And, fortunately, William MacTaggart was alive for more than twenty additional years. He did work that left him among the most famous of all Highland painters.*

iad am bàta. Chunnaic iad an còignear anns an uisge. Chuir iad geòla thar a' chliathaich. Thog iad a h-uile duine gu sgiobalta. Gu fortanach cha robh duine air a ghoirteachadh. Bha iad fliuch is fuar, ach cha robh cùisean na bu mhiosa na sin.

'Carson a rinn thu sin?' dh'fhaighnich Mac an t-Sagairt dhen sgiobair, Gilleasbaig Grassam. Dh'aidich Grassam nach robh neach-faire air a bhith aige.

Thàinig a' chùis gu cùirt as t-Sultain. Bha na h-iasgairean air a h-uile càil fhaicinn. Thug iad fianais seachad gun robh sgioba a' *Meteor* air an soitheach a làimhseachadh ann an dòigh chunnartach. Fhuair Gilleasbaig Grassam trì mìosan anns a' phrìosan. Fhuair a mheit dà mhìos. Agus, gu fortanach, bha Uilleam Mac an t-Sagairt beò airson còrr is fichead bliadhna eile. Rinn e obair a tha ga fhàgail am measg nam peantairean Gàidhealach a b' ainmeile a bha ann riamh.