

## **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 547 (which corresponds to Litir 851). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*Here is the old story called 'The Captain of the Black Ship'. The crew of the Black Ship were at the herring fishing. Mist enveloped them. They continued until they saw land. And where were they, but in Turkey.*

*They found a harbour with a beach. On the beach was a body. The body looked like it was a man who belonged to the west [ern countries]. He was drowned.*

*They put the body into a herring box, with a new shirt on it. They dug a hole and they buried the body in it.*

*Then the captain and crew went to a restaurant. A waitress came with a plate containing one herring. She put the plate in the middle of the table. The Scots all took a piece of the fish.*

*When the waitress returned, she saw that the herring was eaten. She screamed. The publican came. He was horrified that the foreigners had eaten the herring. There was a sign on the table in Turkish, saying that nobody could eat the herring. But the Scots did not understand Turkish. The herring was only there to decorate the table. Herring were*

*Seo agaibh seann sgeulachd air a bheil 'Sgiobair an t-Soithich Dhuibh'. Bha criutha an t-Soithich Dhuibh ri iasgach an sgadain. Thàinig an ceò a-nuas orra. Chùm iad orra gus am fac' iad tìr. Agus dè bha ann ach an Tuirc.*

*Lorg iad port le tràigh. Air an tràigh bha corp. Bha coltas air a' chorp gur e fear a bha ann a bhuineadh do na dùthchannan siarach. Bha e air a bhàthadh.*

*Chuir iad an corp a-steach do bhogsa sgadain, le lèine ùr air. Chladhaich iad toll, agus thiodhlaic iad an corp ann.*

*An uair sin, chaidh an sgiobair agus an criutha gu taigh-bìdh. Thàinig tè-fhrithéalaidh le truinnsear air an robh aon sgadan. Chuir i an truinnsear ann am meadhan a' bhùird. Ghabh na h-Albannaich uile pìos dhen iasg.*

*Nuair a thill an tè-fhrithéalaidh, chunnaic i gun robh an sgadan air ithe. Leig i sgreuch a-mach. Thàinig an t-òstair. Bha e air uabhasachadh gun robh na coigrich air an sgadan ithe. Bha sanas air a' bhòrd ann an Tuircis ag ràdh nach fhaodadh duine an sgadan ithe. Ach cha robh Tuircis aig na h-Albannaich. Bha an sgadan ann dìreach airson am bòrd a sgeadachadh. Bha*

*scarce in Turkey and, because of that, very expensive. The publican said that every member of the crew would be executed by hanging for eating the herring.*

*Well, herring were plentiful and cheap in Scotland, and the Black Ship's complement couldn't believe the situation. Their captain tried to reason with the publican. 'We have plenty of herring on board the vessel,' he said. 'If you allow one man to leave, he'll return with a basket of them.'*

*The publican allowed one of the crew to return to the vessel. He returned with a basket of herring. The publican was pleased and he released the crew.*

*They remained in the town for a while. The skipper and the publican were selling the herring. They made a fortune.*

*One day, everybody on the street was carrying a load of kindling and wood and fuel. 'What's going on?' asked the skipper. And we'll hear the publican's response next week.*

sgadain gann san Tuirc agus, mar sin, uabhasach daor. Thuir an t-òstair gum biodh a h-uile fear dhen chriutha air a chrochadh gu bàs airson an sgadan ithe.

Uill, bha sgadain pailt agus saor ann an Alba, agus cha b' urrainn do mhuinntir an t-Soithich Dhuibh an gnothach a chreidsinn. Dh'fheuch an caiptean aca ri reusanachadh leis an òstair. 'Tha sgadain gu leòr againn air bòrd an t-soithich,' thuirt e. 'Ma leigeas sibh le aon duine falbh, tillidh e le basgaid dhiubh.'

Leig an t-òstair le fear dhen chriutha tilleadh don t-soitheach. Thill e le basgaid de sgadain. Bha an t-òstair toilichte agus leig e an criutha mu sgaoil.

Dh'fhuirich iad sa bhaile airson greis. Bha an sgiobair agus an t-òstair a' reic an sgadain. Rinn iad fortan.

Latha a bha seo, bha eallach air gach duine air an t-sràid de bhiorain is fiodh is connadh. 'Dè tha a' dol?' dh'fhaighnich an sgiobair. Agus cluinnidh sibh freagairt an òstair an-ath-sheachdain.