

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 773 (which corresponds to Litir 1,077). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

When I was young, I was on a hillwalk in Applecross with my father and mother, when we found something amazing. We were on the track to Airigh Drishaig, a good distance from the vehicular road.

We found a dead eagle lying on the ground, near the path. A golden eagle that was big and beautiful. What caused its death? Well, it had flown into power lines. Applecross got electricity a few years before that, in 1955.

When I returned to school, I had to get up in front of the class. That was to tell them what I did in my summer holidays. The other pupils were transfixed by my account of the eagle.

A short time ago, I was visiting a man in Applecross. He moved to the area about thirty years ago. I told him about the eagle I found long ago. He jumped to his feet. 'That's amazing,' he said. 'Come next door.'

We went into another room. My friend put the light on. In a corner there was a glass case with a large golden eagle in it. It was preserved by

Nuair a bha mi òg, bha mi air chuairt sa mhonadh air a' Chomraich, còmhla ri m' athair 's mo mhàthair, nuair a lorg sinn rud iongantach. Bha sinn air an t-slighe chun na h-Airigh Dhrisich, pìos mòr air falbh bho rathad nan carbadan.

Lorg sinn iolair mharbh na laighe air an talamh, faisg air a' cheum. Iolair-bhuidhe a bha mòr is brèagha. Dè thug bàs dhi? Uill, bha i air itealaich a-steach gu uèirichean-dealain. Fhuair a' Chomraich cumhachd an dealain beagan bhliadhnaichean roimhe sin, ann an naoi ceud deug, caogad 's a còig (1955).

Nuair a thill mi gu sgoil, bha agam ri èirigh air beulaibh a' chlas. Bha sin airson innse dhaibh dè rinn mi sna saor-làithean samhraidh agam. Bha na sgoilearan eile beò-ghlacte leis mo chunntas mun iolair.

O chionn ghoirid, bha mi a' cèilidh air fear air a' Chomraich. Ghluais esan don sgìre mu thrithhead bliadhna air ais. Dh'inns mi dha mun iolair a lorg mi o chionn fhada. Leum e gu a chasan. 'Tha sin iongantach,' thuirt e. 'Thig an ath-dhoras.'

Chaidh sinn gu seòmair eile. Chuir mo charaid an solas air. Ann an oisean, bha cèis ghlainne le iolair-bhuidhe mhòr innte. Chaidh a gleidheadh le *taxidermist* ann an

a taxidermist in England, and he certainly did a good job.

‘Do you know where I got the eagle?’ my friend asked.

‘No,’ I replied.

‘On the hill en route to Airigh Drishaig,’ he said. ‘Many years after you found one there, I got this one, in almost the same place.’

‘What caused its death?’ I asked.

‘Don’t you know?’ said my friend. ‘It flew into the power lines. It was going at speed. The taxidermist told me it broke its neck.’

‘Well,’ I said, ‘that’s amazing. Two eagles killed in the same way in the same place, where the power lines come close to the walkers’ path.’

When people say there is no way to create and distribute electricity without [doing] damage, I reckon they’re right.

Sasainn, agus abair gun do rinn e seoba math.

‘A bheil fios agad far an d’ fhuair mi an iolaire?’ dh’fhaighnich mo charaid.

‘Chan eil,’ fhreagair mise.

‘Anns a’ mhonadh air an t-slighe don Àirigh Dhrisich,’ thuirt e. ‘Mòran bhliadhnaichean as dèidh gun do lorg thu fhèin tè ann, fhuair mi an tè seo, cha mhòr anns an aon àite.’

‘Dè thug bàs dhi?’ dh’fhaighnich mi.

‘Nach eil fhios agad?’ thuirt mo charaid. ‘Dh’itealaich i a-steach gu na uèirichean-dealain. Bha i a’ dol aig astar. Dh’innis an *taxidermist* dhomh gun do bhris i a h-amhaich.’

‘Uill,’ arsa mise, ‘tha sin iongantach. Dà iolaire air am marbhadh anns an aon dòigh anns an aon àite, far a bheil na uèirichean-dealain faisg air a’ cheum choiseachd.’

Nuair a chanas daoine nach eil dòigh ann airson dealain a chruthachadh is a libhrigeadh gun chron, saoilidh mi gu bheil iad ceart.