

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 934 (which corresponds to Litir 1,238). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Do you know the 'Tobar an Dualchais' website? It's full of amazing stuff. From time to time, I'll be drawing something from the well for you – to encourage you to go on the site.

Today, I want to tell you a short story. It was recorded on Mull. Before I start, I want to speak about the Gaelic for 'shark'. There are two words in general – siorc and cearban. Cearban usually stands for the basking shark. That leaves siorc. But what does the Mull bodach say in this story? Well, he says 'siarc'. Because of that, I'm going to say 'siarc' myself. In addition, the reciter says madadh-alla for 'wolf', rather than madadh-allaidh. I'll say that as well.

The story is called 'The Sailor and the Lion'. The sailor was sailing in a warship. He was growing fed up with not getting off her. The ship was at anchor in a bay. The sailor thought he would swim to shore.

He jumped out. He wasn't swimming for long when a shark came after him. The sailor was good at swimming. He was coming

A bheil sibh eòlach air làrach-lìn 'Tobar an Dualchais'? Tha i làn stuth iongantach. Bho àm gu àm, bidh mi a' tarraing rudeigin às an 'Tobar' dhuibh – mar bhrosnachadh dhuibh a dhol air an làraich.

An-diugh, tha mi airson sgeul goirid innse dhuibh. Chaidh a chlàradh ann am Muile. Mus tòisich mi, tha mi airson bruidhinn mun Ghàidhlig air *shark*. Tha dà fhacal ann sa choitcheannas – *siorc* agus *cearban*. Tha *cearban*, mar as trice, a' seasamh airson *basking shark*. Tha sin a' fàgail *siorc*. Ach dè tha am bodach Muileach ag ràdh anns an sgeul seo? Uill, tha esan ag ràdh '*siarc*'. Air sàillibh sin, tha mi fhìn a' dol a ràdh *siarc*. A bharrachd air sin, tha am fear-aithris ag ràdh *madadh-alla* airson '*wolf*', seach *madadh-allaidh*. Canaidh mi sin cuideachd.

'S e an t-ainm air an sgeul 'An Seòladair agus an Leòmhann'. Bha an seòladair a' seòladh ann an long-chogaidh. Bha e a' gabhail fadachd nach robh e a' faotainn aiste. Bha an long air acair ann am bàgh. Smaoinich an seòladair gun snàmhadh e gu tìr.

Leum e a-mach. Cha robh e fad' air an t-snàmh nuair a thàinig *siarc* as a dhèidh. Bha an seòladair math air snàmh.

close to land and a wolf was watching him.

The swimmer noticed it and he submerged. The wolf leapt in and the shark ate it. Thus, the sailor got to land.

He reached a place where there was a lion. The lion gave a howl. It [she, according to the storyteller] lifted her front paw. The sailor saw that her foot was swollen. There was a splinter of wood in it. The sailor removed the splinter.

Others from the ship followed him. They were going to punish him for fleeing from the ship. They went on land, and they caught the lion. They put it in a cage.

They caught the sailor too. They threw him into the cage. But the lion licked him! Because it recognised the man. The crew released the sailor. This story was told by Donald MacFarlane who was a shepherd on the Ross of Mull.

Bha e a' tighinn faisg air tìr agus bha madadh-alla ga choimhead.

Mhothaich an snàmh-dair dha agus chaidh e fodha. Leum am madadh-alla a-steach agus dh'ith an siarc e. Mar sin, fhuair an seòladair gu tìr.

Ràinig e àite far an robh leòmhann. Thug an leòmhann nuallan aiste. Thog i a cas toisich. Thug an seòladair an aire gun robh a cas air at. Bha stob de dh'fhiodh innte. Thug an seòladair an stob aiste.

Lean feadhainn eile bhon luing e. Bha iad a' dol ga pheanasachadh airson teicheadh bhon luing. Chaidh iad air tìr agus ghlac iad an leòmhann. Chuir iad ann an cèids' i.

Ghlac iad an seòladair cuideachd. Thilg iad don chèids' e. Ach dh'imlich an leòmhann e! Oir dh'aithnich i an duine. Leig an criutha an seòladair air falbh. Chaidh an sgeul seo innse le Dòmhnall MacPhàrlain a bha na chìobair anns an Ros Mhuileach.