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 1,057 *(which corresponds to* Litir 1,361). *Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.*

Do you know what a madadh-cuain *is? That's the Gaelic for 'killer whale' or 'orca'.*	A bheil fios agaibh dè th' ann am madadh-cuain? 'S e sin a' Ghàidhlig air '*killer whale*' no '*orca*'.
Orcas have been attacking yachts, near Spain and Portugal. They sank several yachts.	Tha madaidhean-cuain air a bhith a' toirt ionnsaigh air gheataichean, faisg air an Spàinn agus Portagail. Chuir iad grunnan gheataichean fodha.
But do orcas do the same thing in Scotland? A man reported recently that an orca attacked his yacht near Shetland. And I was reading an opinion of a man who knew the islands of the west very well. He suspected that orcas had sunk boats off the west of Scotland as well.	Ach am bi madaidhean-cuain a' dèanamh an aon rud ann an Alba? Dh'aithris fear o chionn ghoirid gun tug madadh-cuain ionnsaigh air a' gheat aige faisg air Sealtainn. Agus bha mi a' leughadh beachd aig fear le eòlas math air eileanan an taoibh siar. Bha esan an amharas gun robh madaidhean-cuain air bàtaichean a chur fodha far taobh an iar na h-Alba cuideachd.
*His account is in the book '*Stories from South Uist*' – stories and anecdotes by Aonghas Beag, Angus MacLellan from South Uist. It's John Lorne Campbell, the Laird of Canna, that collected them.*	Tha a chunntas anns an leabhar '*Stories from South Uist*' – sgeulachdan agus naidheachdan aig Aonghas Beag, Aonghas Mac Ill Ialain à Uibhist a Deas. 'S e Iain Latharna Caimbeul, Fear Chanaigh, a chruinnich iad.
In the book, Angus has an anecdote about a man called Donald MacLeod. Donald was living in Lochboisdale in South Uist. He was working on a fishing boat.	Anns an leabhar, tha naidheachd aig Aonghas mu fhear Dòmhnall MacLeòid. Bha Dòmhnall a' fuireach ann an Loch Baghasdal ann an Uibhist a Deas. Bha e ag obair air bàt'-iasgaich.
One day he was fishing for herring. A mermaid surfaced. Everyone on board threw her a herring. She didn't submerge. But when Donald threw his herring, she	Latha a bha seo, bha e ri iasgach sgadan. Thàinig maighdeann-mhara am bàrr. Thilg a h-uile duine air bòrd sgadan dhi. Cha deach i fodha. Ach, nuair a thilg Dòmhnall an sgadan aigesan, dh'fhalbh i fodha sa bhad.

immediately submerged. The skipper told him that Donald would die by drowning.	Thuirt an sgiobair ris gum faigheadh Dòmhnall bàs le bàthadh.
To be safe, Donald stayed on land [‘in harbour’]. But after a year a man came to him. He was wanting assistance to sail a boat from Lochboisdale to Lock Skipport in the north of the island. Donald agreed to assist him.	Airson a bhith sàbhailte, dh’fhuirich Dòmhnall aig port. Ach an dèidh bliadhna, thàinig fear thuige. Bha e ag iarraidh taic ann a bhith a’ seòladh bàta à Loch Baghasdal gu ruige Loch Sgioport ann an ceann a tuath an eilein. Dh’aontaich Dòmhnall a chuideachadh.
The man who owned Lochboisdale Hotel saw her. It was a good day. One of the staff at Ushinish Lighthouse saw her. But he left for ten minutes. When he returned, there was no sign of the boat.	Chunnaic am fear leis an robh Taigh-òsta Loch Baghasdail i. ’S e latha math a bha ann. Chunnaic fear dhen luchd-obrach aig Taigh-solais Uisinis i. Ach dh’fhalbh e airson deich mionaidean. Nuair a thill e, cha robh sgeul air a’ bhàta.
What happened to her? The publican said that perhaps a basking shark or whale came up under her and that she was capsized.	Dè thachair dhi? Thuirt fear an taigh-òsta gur dòcha gun tàinig cearban no muc-mhara suas fòidhpe agus gun deach a cur thairis.
The editor, the Laird of Canna, blamed an orca. He suspected that orcas had sunk several boats. He was writing more than sixty years ago.	Choirich an deasaiche, Fear Chanaigh, madadh-cuain. Bha e an amharas gun robh madaidhean-cuain air grunnan bhàtaichean a chur fodha. Bha e a’ sgrìobhadh o chionn còrr is seasgad bliadhna.