

Uig Primary School, Isle of Lewis, Scotland

Students aged between 8 and 12 years old worked with the poet Ian Stephen to develop their own love poetry based on the folk tale of the stranding on Boreray.

The story goes that a group of men, left to do some work on the island 5 miles from Hirta, St Kilda, are stranded when the village boat is wrecked. The islanders find ways of communicating from one island to the other, across the open sea.

The story was stopped at various points. Then Ian pretended to interview each pupil, for radio. Each was asked to assume the persona of a person thinking of a loved one, separated by sea. Each pupil stated their imagined name and age and their relationship to the stranded person; what was particular about him or her, what they missed most.

Then the pupils wrote about the person they were missing – real or imagined. The writing was to be kept brief, with every word counting, like the words in a text message you are paying for.

Once a story was written, the pupils were asked to look for any words which did not matter, and for any details which would make the person they were describing more unique.

What I miss about my brother

Keena

I miss how he would push me over when I got the peat
and how he would make a mess.
When he was stranded on Boreray
it was so quiet.
I also miss how he made a joke.

Boreray 1

Sophie

My father is stranded on Boreray and I really miss him.
He was really funny and I wish he was here.
I am 12 so having him stranded is hard for me.

I really miss my Dad because:

He was always making me laugh and I love his jokes
It is hard to move peat without him
He always runs the house
He could always do funny things with his black hair

I still think there is hope for him and the other men.

My Dad Gone

Finlay

My dad just got back from Boreray island.
It was madness in the house when he was gone.
My little sister, Lauren, was always crying out to mum and me,
“When is Dad coming back?”
It was crazy, I am telling you.

I missed lots of things from him –

He was not there to help me when I needed him

I could not do anything fun because my mum could not,
because she was always at work

Exciting stories he told me, gone until now.

My Father

Emily

My father is stuck on Boreray
and he has not been back for two months.
I miss him so much.
I miss his jokes and him laughing
it sounds so deep and funny
but if I could have his laugh
I would feel much better than now.

Bororaigh

Evylyn

I miss my brother's kindness and laughter
his company and the way
his jokes don't make sense.
We can't contact face to face
but when I heard he was coming home
I smiled with delight.

Boreray

Aiden

My grandson is stranded on Boreray.

Bill is 19 years old.
He's got dark brown hair
and a big smile.
He is missed by the whole family.
We miss his jokes and stories.
We miss his smile and tricks.
We are all hoping for the best.

My Brother

Hannah

I live on Hirta and my brother is stranded out at sea.
He was really nice to me and kind.
The thing I miss most about him is his laugh
because it was cheerful and made me smile.
I have sent signals but
he has not replied to me.
One day someone told me
that the stranded boat was coming to Hirta.
When the boat came I was thrilled.

My son and Husband

Mary

My husband and son are stranded on Boreray.
I am worried sick.
I can't sleep and I can't eat.
They have been gone for four weeks.
God is telling me they are still alive.
I look out to Boreray every day.
I cry every day on my bed.

2.

I am 12 years old and my
father is stranded.
I wish he was here because I
miss him so much.
Why can't he be with us
so he doesn't have to
trudge over the island of
Boreray.

I miss his laugh and his jokes

And the family miss him
so much.
I can't wait till he is off
the island of Boreray.

Boreray

Jessica

I am 13 and my name is Jessica.
My father Norman is sadly stranded on Boreray.
I miss his happiness and also his
bursting with laughter.
He has a jaggy beard.
He's tall with brown hair.
If he ever gets to read this I just
Want to tell him I love him.

Boreray

Jamie

My brother is stranded on Boreray.
I miss a lot about him.
His friendship.
His company.
How I feel warm next to him.
His talking.
How I can ask him anything.
I have never felt so lonely before

My mum and sister stranded

Cailean

When I was 12 I lost my Mum and sister for 22 years.
I felt very very sad because I didn't do anything with them.
25 years later, when I was 24, I met Peter
and he said, "What do you want?"
I said, "Have you seen my parents?"
"No and get a haircut."

For years no-one was bothered.
One day when I was fishing I saw my mum and sister
And ran and gave them a hug.