

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodgy.macleam@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodgy.macleam@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 445. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 141 corresponds to Litir 445.*

Anns an Fhaoilleach ochd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a trì (1843), chaidh an soitheach an Linnet air na creagan faisg air Cadabol. Tha Cadabol làimh ri Baile a' Chnuic ann am Machair Rois. Tha diofar aithrisean ann mu dheidhinn na thachair dhi ach tha na leanas faisg air an fhìrinn, chanainn.

'S e bàta-seòlaidh a bh' innte, le dà chrann. Bha leth-cheud 's a trì (53) troigh de dh'fhad innte agus cuideam de sheasgadh (60) tonna. Bhiodh i a' dol eadar ceann an ear-thuath Shasainn agus puirt an ear-thuath na Gàidhealtachd. Uaireannan bhiodh i a' toirt gual air an t-slighe a-mach, agus a' tilleadh a Shasainn le coirce no eòrna.

Co-dhiù, chaidh i air na creagan. Bha i an ìre mhath air chall. Ach cha robh an t-slighe briste. Cheannaich trìuir de mhuintir an àite an t-slighe. B' iad dithis iasgairan agus tuathanach. Bha iad a' dol ga càradh. Anns a' chiad dol a-mach, chuir iad romhpa, le taic bho fheadhainn eile sa choimhearsnachd, an soitheach a thoirt gu bàgh Bhaile an Todhair.

Chuir iad an Linnet air bhog, le bhith a' cleachdadh bharraillean falamh ceangailte rithe. Thòisich iad air a tarraing a-null le eathraichean is geòlaichean. Ach dh'fhàs am feasgar na bu mhiosa. Bha i gu math stoirmeil. Cha robh acair ceangailte ris an Linnet tuilleadh. Thòisich i air falbh leis an t-sruth is leis a' ghaoith. Leis nach robh acair aice tuilleadh, cha b' urrainn do na daoine stad a chur oirre.

Bha e a' fàs dorch. Rinn feadhainn ann an geòla air a' chladach ann an cabhaig airson acair fhaighinn. Ach cha robh iad luath gu leòr. Dh'fhalbh an Linnet, le seachdnar air bòrd, a-steach don dorchadas. Chan e mhàin nach robh acair aca, ach cha robh stiùir air an t-soitheach nas motha.

'S ann beagan làithean às dèidh sin a chaidh an long-bhriseadh a lorg. Tha aon aithris ann gun robh i bun-os-cionn air Tràigh Bhòinndidh faisg air Banbh. Tha aithris eile ann gun deach aon chorp a lorg faisg air sin. Chaidh oidhirp a dhèanamh, **ceart gu leòr**, an soitheach a lorg fhad 's a bha i fhathast aig muir, ach cha robh e soirbheachail. Chailleadh an seachdnar a bh' air bòrd – ceathrar à Baile an Todhair agus trìuir à Baile a' Chnuic. Thug an call sin droch bhuaidh dha-rìribh air a' choimhearsnachd.

Sgrìobh fear Artar Ros marbhrann Gàidhlig anns an robh leth-cheud rann's a sia – a chaidh fhoillseachadh ann an Inbhir Nis. Tha e ag innse gu soilleir na thachair, ach chan urrainn dhomh ach criomag dheth a thoirt dhuibh an-dràsta:

*Tha 'n duine truagh gach uile là  
a' dol air thuras dh'ionnsaigh bhàis,  
's gun fhios an t-àm an tèid e 'n sàs –  
tha uair a bhàis am falach air*

Sin an dàrna rann. Seo a-nis an t-siathamh is an t-seachdamh rann:

*Ach dhiùlt i falbh dhaibh uair no dhà  
is iad ga feuchainn le luchd-ceàird;*

*ach nuair a thàinig oidhche a' bhàis,  
siud ghabh i an sàl is dh'imich i*

*Is ged bha àireamh mhòr air bòrd  
ga tarraing suas gu Bail' an Todhair,  
dh'fhalbh i **uath'** gun stiùir, gun seòl,  
is cha bu deòin leath' fuireach dhaibh*

'S dòcha gum feuch mi air cuspair nas aotruime anns an ath Litir! Ach fàgaibh mi sibh an t-seachdain seo le aon rann chumhachdach eile bhon "Linnet Mhòr":

*Och, a Bhàis, b' an-ìochdmhor cruaidh  
thu ann an siud 'm measg thonnaibh 'chuain  
dar chuir thu ort do chlogaid chruaidh  
is thilg gun truas do shaihead annt'.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**Faclan na Litreach:** Am Faoilleach: *January*; Cadabol: *Cadboll*; Baile a' Chnuic: *Hilton*; Machair Rois: *the flat country of Easter Ross*; crann: *mast*; long-bhriseadh: *wrecked ship*; marbhrann: *elegy*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** tha na leanas faisg air an fhìrinn, chanainn: *what follows is close to the truth, I'd say*; bha X troigh de dh'fhad innte agus cuideam de Y tonna: *she was X feet long and displaced Y tons*; a' tilleadh le coirce no eòrna: *returning with oats or barley*; an ìre mhath air chall: *close to being lost*; cha robh an t-slige briste: *the hull wasn't broken*; cheannaich trìuir de mhuintir an àite an t-slige: *three local people bought the hull*; a' dol ga càradh: *going to repair it*; chuir iad romhpa an soitheach a thoirt gu bàgh Bhaile an Todhair: *they decided to take the vessel to Balintore Bay*; air bhog: *afloat*; thòisich iad air a tarraing a-null le eathraichean is geòlaichean: *they started by pulling her over with boats and dinghies*; leis an t-sruth is leis a' ghaoith: *with the current and the wind*; a' dol air thuras dh'ionnsaigh bhàis: *going on a journey towards death*; Tràigh Bhòinndidh faisg air Banbh: *Boyndie Bay near Banff*; chailleadh an seachdnar: *the seven people were lost*; leth-cheud rann's a sia: *56 verses*; tha uair a bhàis am falach air: *the time of his death is hidden from him*; ghabh i an sàl is dh'imich i: *she took to the salt water and she left*; cha bu deòin leatha fuireach dhaibh: *she wasn't willing to wait for them*; a Bhàis, b' an-ìochdmhor cruaidh thu: *Death, you are unmerciful and hard*; am measg thonnaibh a' chuain: *amid the ocean waves (thonnaibh is an old dative plural of tonn)*. NB: The poem is given in modern orthography, following Seòsamh Watson's book "Saoghal Bana-mharaiche" (Clann Tuirc 2007)

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** dh'fhalbh i **uath'** gun stiùir, gun seòl: *she left [from them] without a rudder and without a sail. I imagine that many learners, unless they are familiar with Ross-shire Gaelic, would not recognise uath'. It is uatha, or alternatively bhuatha, ie the third person plural of the prepositional pronoun involving o/bho. It means "from them". In "standard" Gaelic, and in your text books, it is given as bhuapa/uapa but natives of Ross-shire, west and east, say "bhuatha/uatha". The emphatic form is bhuathasa (cf bhuapasan in "standard" Gaelic). Another Ross-shire usage (common to other mainland dialects) in the Litir is dar chuir thu ort do chlogaid chruaidh. Dar is a variant of nuair (ie when you put on your hard helmet).*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** Chaidh oidhirp a dhèanamh, **ceart gu leòr**, an soitheach a lorg: *an effort was made, **certainly**, to find the vessel.*

\* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig.