

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

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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 rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 532. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 228 corresponds to Litir 532.

Mar as trice, ann an Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh, bidh mi a-mach air cuspairean Gàidhealach. Ach, an t-seachdain seo, tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu rudeigin a thachair taobh a-muigh na Gàidhealtachd, ged a thuigeas **a h-uile mac màthar** air a’ Ghàidhealtachd carson a thug e buaidh mhòr orm.

Tha ceathrad bliadhna air a dhol seachad bhon a chaidh bàta-teasairginn Longhope fodha le call **a h-ochdnar** criutha. ’S e Longhope baile beag ann an Arcaibh. Tha e air Eilean Hothaigh no, ma tha sibh airson a bhith mionaideach, air *South Walls* a tha co-cheangailte ri Hothaigh le tairbeart. Am-bliadhna bha muinntir an àite a’ comharrachadh is a’ cuimhneachadh na tubaist-mhara a thachair air an t-seachdamh latha deug dhen Mhàrt, naoi ceud deug, seasgad ’s a naoi (1969).

Bha sian eagallach ann – aig ìre 9. Bha stuaghan brùideil anns a’ Chaol Arcach. Agus bha long mhòr, a bh’ air a clàradh ann an Liberia, ann an staing gu sear air Dùn Gasbaith. Chaidh bàta-teasairginn Longhope a ghairm a-mach. Chaidh an long – an Irene – air na creagan, ach rinn na maoir-chladaich cobhair air a’ chriutha. Ge-tà, cha do thill am bàta-teasairginn. Thathar a’ smaoinneachadh gun do bhuail stuagh mòr innte agus gun do chuir i car. Rinneadh seachdnar bhoireannach nam banntaichean.

Bidh mi fhìn a’ falbh gu muir aig amannan ann an gheat agus tha mi gu math mothachail do dh’obair ghaisgeil an RNLI ann a bhith a’ dèanamh cobhair air maraichean. Nam òige bha mi a’ fuireach ann am Broughty Ferry, faisg air Dun Dè, nuair a chaidh am bàta-teasairginn fodha le call ochdnar. Bha sin o chionn leth-cheud bliadhna.

Bha sinn air tìr ann an Longhope am-bliadhna nuair a thòisich boireannach – tè às an àite – air bruidhinn ris a’ bhean agam. Leis gun robh sinn far gheat, agus gun charbad, thabhainn i lioft timcheall South Walls dhuinn gus am faiceamaid an t-àite. Bha sin gu math fialaidh. Chaidh sinn gu slaodach anns a’ chàr aice, agus i a’ comharrachadh nan seann togalaichean eachdraidheil.

An ceann beagan mhionaidean, bha sinn a’ dràibheadh seachad air a’ chladh. “Sin an carragh-cuimhne don fheadhainn a chailleadh,” thuirt i na Beurla bhinn Arcach. Choimhead mi a-null gu carragh-cuimhne mòr. Gun a bhith a’ smaoinneachadh cus air a h-aois – bha i sna seasgadan – thuirt mi, “Bidh na lotan ann fhathast, tha mi cinnteach, agus daoine fhathast a’ faireachdainn a’ chall.”

Stad i an càr ann am meadhan an rathaid. “Chaill mi an duine agam, m’ athair-chèile is mo bhràthair-chèile,” thuirt i. Bha mulad na guth. Bha an ceathrad bliadhna air giorrachadh na h-inntinn gu ùine ghoirid. Bha na deòir a’ sruthadh sìos a gruaidhean. Bha

na lotan ann fhathast agus bithidh gu sìorraidh. Mas e ùine a nì slànachadh, 's dòcha gun toir e barrachd na saoghal aon duine airson slànachadh ceart.

Dè chanainn rithe? Cha b' e beul brèagha a bh' agam ach beul dha-rìribh. Thuir an dithis againn gun robh sinn fìor dhuilich mu a call agus gun robh sinn, mar dhaoine a thèid gu muir, cho taingeil airson nan daoine a tha ag obair air na bàtaichean-teasairginn.

Mo bheannachd air a' bhoireannach choibhneil sin, agus air a leithid anns gach àite. Goirid às dèidh na tubaist o chionn ceathrad bliadhna, bha càirdean òga aig feadhainn a chaill am beatha a' cur an ainmean air adhart airson a bhith sa chriutha ùr. Agus tha sin air leantainn chun an latha an-diugh. Clach air càrn an fheadhainn a chailleadh. Agus mo bheannachd air criutha gach bàta-teasairginn 's a th' ann. 'S e gaisgich a th' annta uile.

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Faclan na Litreach: Arcaibh: *Orkney*; Hothaigh: *Hoy*; tairbeart: *isthmus*; gaisgeil: *heroic*; maraichean: *mariners*; fialaidh: *generous*; cladh: *cemetery*; lotan: *wounds*; deòir: *tears*; gruaidhean: *cheeks*; gu sìorraidh: *for ever*.

Abairtean na Litreach: am-bliadhna bha muinntir an àite a' comharrachadh is a' cuimhneachadh na tubaist-mhara: *this year the local people were marking and remembering the maritime accident*; sian eagallach aig ìre 9: *a terrible storm of Force 9*; stuaghan brùideil anns a' Chaol Arcach: *horrific waves in the Pentland Firth*; ann an staing gu sear air Dùn Gasbaith: *in trouble east of Duncansby Head*; chaidh bàta-teasairginn Longhope a ghairm a-mach: *the Longhope lifeboat was called out*; rinn na maoir-chladaich cobhair air: *X the coastguards assisted/rescued*; gun do bhuail stuagh mòr innte agus gun do chuir i car: *that a big wave hit her and that she capsized*; rinneadh seachdnar bhoireannach nam bantraichean: *seven women were made widows*; leis gun robh sinn far gheat: *because we were off a yacht*; thabhainn i lioft timcheall X dhuinn: *she offered us a lift around X*; gus am faiceamaid: *so that we'd see*; an carragh-cuimhne don fheadhainn a chailleadh: *the memorial to those who were lost*; na Beurla bhinn Arcach: *in her melodious Orcadian dialect*; bha mulad na guth: *there was a terrible sadness in her voice*; gun toir e barrachd na saoghal aon duine airson slànachadh ceart: *that it will take more than one human lifetime for proper healing*; cha b' e beul brèagha a bh' agam ach beul dha-rìribh: *they weren't just words – I really meant it*; clach air càrn an fheadhainn a chailleadh: *a stone on the cairn of those who were lost (a traditional Gaelic way of praising the deceased)*; 's e gaisgich a th' annta uile: *they're all heroes*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: le call a h-ochdnar criutha: *with the loss of her eight crewmen. We generally use the numerical nouns (dithis, trìuir, ceathrar etc) when dealing with numbers of people. I might have said le call ochdnar criutha (with the loss of eight crew) or just le call ochdnar (with the loss of eight persons) as I did later in the Litir with regard to the Broughty Ferry lifeboat. But I wanted to say “of her” crewmen – boats being conceptually feminine (at least when at sea) – that's the reason for the presence of the feminine possessive adjective (a) and the h- prefixed to ochdnar.*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: ged a thuigeas a h-uile mac màthar: *although every person [lit. every son of a mother] understands.*

Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoineachadh le MG ALBA