

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Crith-thalmhainn Lisbon (1)

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.maclea@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 664. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 360 corresponds to Litir 664.

Bha mi a’ coimhead air seann phàipearan-naidheachd air an eadar-lìon an latha eile. Chunnaic mi seo bhon Derby Mercury anns an t-Samhain, seachd ceud deug, caogad ’s a còig (1755). ’S e aithris a bh’ ann à Amsterdam anns an Òlaind: *“Last Saturday about Eleven in the Forenoon, the Air being quite calm, the Water in our Canals was all of a sudden so violently agitated, that several Boats broke loose. [It] is supposed to have been occasioned by a Shock of an Earthquake; but no Person observed the Ground or any House to shake.”*

Bha an aithris inntinneach dhomh oir bha mi air a bhith aig òraid an oidhche roimhe mu chrithean-talmhainn ann an Inbhir Nis. B’ e a’ cheist mu dheireadh don òraidiche a thàinig bhon luchd-amhairc **aig deireadh gnothaich**: “An can sibh rudeigin mun bhuaidh a thug Crith-thalmhainn Mhòr Lisbon ann an seachd ceud deug, caogad ’s a còig (1755) air Loch Nis agus Inbhir Nis?” Thuirt an t-òraidiche nach tug a’ chrith sin buaidh aithriste air baile Inbhir Nis fhèin, ach gun robh aithris ann mu thuinn mhòra ann an Loch Nis. B’ e sin an aon chrith a thug buaidh air an uisge ann an canàlaichean na h-Òlaind. Thachair i air a’ chiad latha dhen t-Samhain.

Thug mi sùil tro na pàipearan-naidheachd air an làraich-lìn sin agus cha do lorg mi aithris sam bith mu dheidhinn Loch Nis. Ach lorg mi tè mu Loch Laomainn: *“From Edinburgh they write that they had Advice from the West, that Loch Lomond was agitated in a very surprising Manner on the first Instant.”*

Agus, ann an Èirinn, bha tsunami air cladaichean a’ chinn a deas. Bha aithris à Ceann Sáile air cladach Contae Chorcaigh gun do rinneadh sgrios air a’ chala. Chaidh bàtaichean a sguabadh timcheall. Chaidh feadhainn a chur fodha. Chaidh cuid eile a chur air tìr. Ach seo rud inntinneach anns an aithris anns an Derby Mercury: *“The sudden and surprizing Fluxes and Reflexes of the Sea continued from Three o’Clock in the Afternoon until Ten at Night, seldom more than a quarter of an hour between each Return, to the infinite Amazement and Terror of the Inhabitants, who feared Doomsday was at hand.... the Waters rose six or seven feet in a Minute, and as suddenly subsided.”*

Tha na h-aithrisean sin uile mun aon tachartas – Crith-thalmhainn Mhòr Lisbon. Thachair i air a’ chiad latha dhen t-Samhain, seachd ceud deug, caogad ’s a còig (1755) mu fhichead mionaid gu deich sa mhadainn. Rinn i sgrios air prìomh bhaile Phortagail, a bharrachd air mòran àiteachan eile anns an dùthaich sin. Chaidh na mìltean mòra – ’s dòcha na ficheadan mhiltean – a mharbhadh.

Nuair a thòisich a' chrith, sgàin an talamh ann an Lisbon ann an grunn àiteachan, a' fàgail chlaisean mòra agus togalaichean a' tuiteam às a chèile. Rinn an sluagh air a' chala far an robh iad a' smaoin eachadh gum biodh iad sàbhailte. Thràgh a' mhuir gu luath, a' fàgail tràigh mhòr mhòr ann air an tàinig seann longan-briste don fhollais. Mu cheathrad mionaid às dèidh don chrith a thòiseachadh, thill a' mhuir gu tìr mar tsunami. Rinn i sgrios do-chreidsinneach air a' bhaile, agus air an t-sluagh a bha an cois a' chala.

Agus tha e coltach gun do dh'adhbharaich i *seiche* ann an Loch Nis. Tillidh mi don fhacal sin – seiche –an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: òraidiche: *lecturer, speaker*; luchd-amhairc: *audience*; Loch Nis: *Loch Ness*.

Abairtean na Litreach: anns an t-Samhain: *in November*; bha an aithris inntinneach dhomh: *the report was interesting to me*; nach tug a' chrith sin buaidh aithriste air: *that that quake didn't have a reported effect on*; mu thuinn mhòra: *about large waves*; ann an canàlaichean na h-Òlaind: *in the canals of the Netherlands*; lorg mi tè mu Loch Laomainn: *I found one about Loch Lomond*; air cladaichean a' chinn a deas: *on the south coast*; à Ceann Sáile air cladach Contae Chorcaigh: *in Kinsale on the shore of County Cork*; chaidh bàtaichean a sguabadh timcheall: *boats were thrown around*; chaidh feadhainn a chur fodha: *some were sunk*; chaidh cuid eile a chur air tìr: *others were thrown onto land*; mu fhichead mionaid gu deich sa mhadainn: *about twenty to ten in the morning*; prìomh bhaile Phortagail: *the capital city of Portugal*; chaidh na mìltean mòra – 's dòcha na ficheadan mhiltean – a mharbhadh: *many thousands – perhaps scores of thousands – were killed*; sgàin an talamh: *the ground split*; a' fàgail chlaisean mòra agus togalaichean a' tuiteam às a chèile: *leaving large rents [in the ground] and buildings collapsing*; rinn an sluagh air a' chala: *the populace made for the harbour*; far an robh iad a' smaoin eachadh gum biodh iad sàbhailte: *where they were thinking they would be safe*; tràgh a' mhuir gu luath: *the sea ebbd quickly*; a' fàgail tràigh mhòr mhòr ann air an tàinig seann longan-briste don fhollais: *leaving a very large beach on which old shipwrecks became visible*; mu cheathrad mionaid às dèidh don chrith a thòiseachadh: *about forty minutes after the quake began*; rinn i sgrios do-chreidsinneach air a' bhaile: *it caused incredible damage to the city*; an cois a' chala: *adjacent to the harbour*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *I have chosen to use the international word tsunami which originates in the Japanese meaning "harbour wave", but Dwelly's dictionary supplies an interesting word – one, however, I've never heard in conversation. It's làgaraid, a feminine noun meaning "flood, tidal wave, especially in a narrow estuary or loch of the sea". Dwelly's source was Malcolm MacDonald, Stornoway. Do any of you know the word? If you can supply any more information on làgaraid, or any other word for a tidal wave, tsunami or similar phenomenon, I'd be very pleased to hear from you (rodgy.maclea@bbc.co.uk).*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: aig deireadh gnothaich: *at the end [of the occasion]*.

Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoin eachadh le MG ALBA