

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Càr Albannach anns an Antartaig

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.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 1,023. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 719 corresponds to Litir 1,023.

Bha mi a’ bruidhinn mu dheidhinn nan carbadan Argyll, a bh’ air an togail ann an Alba o chionn còrr is ceud bliadhna. Cha b’ e sin an aon chompanaidh Albannach a bha a’ togail chàraichean mun àm sin. Mar eisimpleir, bha an Arrol-Johnston ann. Bha sin air a thogail le Seòras MacIain ann an Glaschu. Ann an ochd ceud deug, naochad ’s a sia (1896), chaidh càin a chur air Seòras airson a bhith a’ dràibheadh carbad ann am meadhan Ghlaschu. Bha e an aghaidh an lagh an uair sin!

Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu aon charbad a thog Arrol-Johnston. B’ e sin am fear a thug Ernest Shackleton leis don Antartaig ann an naoi ceud deug ’s a seachd (1907) air ‘Triall an Nimrod’. B’ e an Nimrod an soitheach-mara aca. ’S e mo thuigse gum b’ e càr Albannach a’ chiad chàr riamh a chuir a chuibhlichean air sneachd na h-Antartaig. Ma tha sibh airson dealbhan fhaicinn dheth, gheibh sibh sin air an eadar-lìon.

Chan e càr àbhaisteach a bh’ ann. Bha einnsean ceithir-siolandair aige, a bha a’ dèanamh suas ri còig *horsepower* deug. Ach, eucoltach ris a’ chuid as motha de charbadan, bha an t-einnsean air fhionnarachadh le èadhar, seach uisge. **Bha e air a bhith do-dhèanta** rèididheatar làn uisge a chumail bho bhith a’ reothadh ann am fuachd na h-Antartaig.

Chaidh seacaid a thogail timcheall a’ chàrbradair. Chaidh na gasaichean traoghaidh à aon siolandair a chur tron t-seacaid airson an càrbradair a bhlàthachadh. Chaidh na gasaichean bho na siolandairean eile a chur tro chiùineadair-fuaim a bha cuideachd na theasadair-coise don dràibhear.

Thug an sgioba aig Shackleton ola shònraichte leotha nach biodh a’ reothadh. Thug iad tòrr phàirtean spèir aca, agus grunn seòrsaichean chuibhlichean.

Ach saoil an robh an carbad soirbheachail? Airson an fhìrinn innse, cha robh. **Anns a’ chiad dol a-mach**, bha e ro throm. Thug iad a h-uile rud dheth ach a-mhàin a *chassis* agus aon suidheachan airson an dràibheir. Bha iad ag iarraidh a chur gu feum dìreach airson slaodan a bha làn bathair a tharraing air an deigh. Ach, eadhon airson sin, cho luath ’s a bha sneachd bog ann, bhiodh na cuibhlichean a’ dol an sàs ann.

Bha pàirtean dhen charbad a’ reothadh agus bha na daoine a’ cur seachad mòran ùine ag obair air. A bharrachd air sin, agus a dh’aindeoin fuachd na h-àrainneachd, bhiodh einnsean a’ chàir uaireannan a’ fàs ro theth!

Ach dh’ionnsaich daoine gu leòr bhon Arrol-Johnston sin. Thuig iad gum biodh tragaichean, seach cuibhlichean, riatanach air carbadan dhen t-seòrsa sin anns an

Antartaig. Agus bha tragaichean air na carbadan a thug Raibeart F Scott leis air a thriall Antartaigeach ann an naoi ceud deug 's a deich (1910).

Cha robh Shackleton soirbheachail ann a bhith a' ruigsinn a' Phòla a Deas. Ach chuir e buidheann gu mullach Beinn Erebus – a' chiad fheadhainn a bha riamh an sin. Agus chaidh feadhainn na b' fhaide deas na buidheann sam bith romhpa – taobh a-staigh ceud mìle bhon Phòla.

Ràinig buidheann eile aige am Pòla Magnaiteach a Deas cuideachd. Mar sin, bha an triall soirbheachail ann an iomadach dòigh. Nuair a dh'fhalbh an Nimrod airson tilleadh gu Sealainn Nuadh aig deireadh gnothaich, bha an Arrol-Johnston air bòrd. Dè thachair dha? Gu mì-fhortanach, chan eil càil a dh'fhios a'm.

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Faclan na Litreach: Seòras MacIain: *George Johnston*; Triall an Nimrod: *The Nimrod Expedition*; einnsean ceithir-siolandair: *4 cylinder engine*; ola shònraichte: *special oil*; Am Pòla a Deas: *The South Pole*; Am Pòla Magnaiteach a Deas: *The South Magnetic Pole*; Sealainn Nuadh: *New Zealand*.

Abairtean na Litreach: cha b' e sin an aon chompanaidh Albannach a bha a' togail chàraichean mun àm sin: *that wasn't the only Scottish company that was building cars around that time*; chaidh càin a chur air X: *X was fined*; airson a bhith a' dràibheadh carbad ann am meadhan Ghlaschu: *for driving a vehicle in the middle of Glasgow*; 's e mo thuigse gum b' e càr Albannach a' chiad chàr riamh a chuir a chuibhlichean air sneachd na h-Antartaig: *it's my understanding that a Scottish car was the first ever car that put its wheels on the snow of the Antarctic*; gheibh sibh sin air an eadar-lìon: *you'll get that on the internet*; eucoltach ris a' chuid as motha de charbadan: *unlike most vehicles*; bha an t-einnsean air fhionnarachadh le èadhar: *the engine was cooled with air*; chaidh na gasaichean traoghaidh à aon siolandair a chur tron t-seacaid airson an càbradair a bhlàthachadh: *the exhaust gases from one cylinder were put through the jacket in order to warm the carburettor*; tro chiùineadair-fuaim a bha cuideachd na theasadair-coise don dràibhear: *through a silencer that was also foot-warmer for the driver*; thug iad tòrr phàirtean spèir aca, agus grunn seòrsaichean chuibhlichean: *they took many spare parts with them, and a few types of wheel[s]*; bha iad ag iarraidh a chur gu feum dìreach airson slaodan a bha làn bathair a tharraing air an deigh: *they wanted to use it just to pull sledges that were full of goods on the ice*; bhiodh na cuibhlichean a' dol an sàs ann: *the wheels would get stuck in it*; a dh'aindeoin fuachd na h-àrainneachd, bhiodh einnsean a' chàir uaireannan a' fàs ro theth: *despite the cold of the environment, the car's engine would sometimes get too hot*; gum biodh tragaichean, seach cuibhlichean, riatanach: *that tracks, rather than wheels, would be necessary*; dè thachair dha?: *what happened to it?*

Puing-chànain na Litreach Anns a' chiad dol a-mach, bha e ro throm: *to begin with, it was too heavy. This is one way of expressing 'initially, to begin with'.* Another one is aig toiseach gnothaich.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Bha e air a bhith do-dhèanta rèididheatar làn uisge a chumail bho bhith a' reothadh: *it would have been impossible to keep a radiator full of water from freezing.*

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