

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Call an William H Welch (1)

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,279. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 975 corresponds to Litir 1,279. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh naidheachdan à Loch Iubh co-cheangailte ris an Dàrna Cogadh. Thàinig a' chuid a bu mhotha dhen fhiosrachadh bhon leabhar *'Loch Ewe During World War II'* le Steve Chadwick. Mholainn an leabhar do dhuine sam bith aig a bheil ùidh ann an eachdraidh a' chogaidh no ann an eachdraidh **Rois an Iar**.

Airson crìoch a chur air an t-sreath seo, bu mhath leam innse dhuibh mun t-soitheach an William H Welch a chaidh fodha faisg air beul Loch Iubh ann an naoi ceud deug, ceathrad 's a ceithir (1944). **Tha eagal orm** gur e sgeul duilich a th' ann.

Bha an William H Welch na shoitheach-saorsa no *liberty ship* a bh' air a thogail anns na Stàitean Aonaichte. Bha na longan sin a' giùlain bathar tarsainn a' Chuain Siar mar phàirt dhen iomairt-chogaidh.

B' e meadhan a' gheamhraidh a bh' ann agus bha an William H Welch a' fàgail Lunnainn agus a' dol gu ruige New York. Cha robh bathar sam bith na broinn. Bha i falamh, gun bhalaist. Bha sin a' fàgail nach robh i furasta làimhseachadh ann an droch shìde. Agus air an t-siathamh latha fichead dhen Ghearran bha gèile is gailleann ann.

An dèidh dhi Lunnainn fhàgail bha an long gu bhith a' cruinneachadh le feadhainn eile ann an Loch Iubh. Bhiodh iad an uair sin a' dol tarsainn a' Chuain Siar a New York mar chonbhoidh. Ge-tà, nuair a ràinig an William H Welch beul Loch Iubh, chaill i an t-àite aice airson tionndadh a-steach don loch. Chaidh a sguabadh a dh'ionnsaigh chreagan faisg air Eilean Furadh Mòr. Chaidh i an sàs air sgeir faisg air an eilean.

Dh'òrdaich an caiptean lasairean boillsgeach a chur an-àirde. Gu fortanach, a dh'aindeoin 's gun robh an soitheach air a chuairteachadh le marcach-sìne, agus gun robh sneachd trom ga chur, chunnaic feadhainn air tìr-mòr na lasairean.

Thàinig soitheach-slaodaidh a-mach, feuch cobhair a dhèanamh air an William H Welch. Dh'fheuch iad trì tursan ri loidhne a chur a-null. Ach bha a' ghaoth ro làidir. Bha an soitheach Ameireaganach a-nise ag aoidion agus chaidh a h-uile duine suas air an drochaid. Bha na tuinn a' briseadh oirre agus ag èirigh gu caogad troigh. Aig sia uairean sa mhadainn bhris an long ann an dà leth.

Dh'fheuch an criutha ri cumail air bòrd cho math 's a b' urrainn dhaibh. Ach mu aon uair deug sa mhadainn chaidh a h-uile duine a bha fhathast air bòrd a sguabadh don mhuir. Cha do mhair a' chuid a bu mhotha dhiubh fada.

Ach fhuair triùir gu tìr. Ràinig iad baile beag ris an canar An Uamhghaidh faisg air beul Loch Iubh. Bha sin ann am meadhan na maidne. Bha cur-is-cathadh ann. Aig fear de na taighean, bha dithis chaileagan a-muigh a' togail fhàdan on chruaich-mhònaich. Ghabh iad iongnadh nuair a chunnaic iad triùir mharaichean a' tighinn gan ionnsaigh.

Chaidh ochdnar fhear às a' bhaile a-mach, feuch cobhair a dhèanamh air duine sam bith eile a bha beò air a' chladach. Às an dèidh, chaidh dithis bhoireannach le plaideachan agus flasgaichean teatha. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh dè chunnaic iad anns an ath Litir.

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Faclan na Litreach: gèile is gailleann: *gale and storm* ('terrible weather'); lasairean boillsgeach: *flares*; soitheach-slaodaidh: *tug(boat)*; ag aoidion: *leaking*; an drochaid: *the bridge*; An Uamhghaidh: *Cove*; cur-is-cathadh: *blizzarding*; triùir mharaichean: *three mariners*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Mholainn an leabhar do dhuine sam bith: *I'd recommend the book to anybody*; airson crìoch a chur air an t-sreath seo: *to complete this series*; a chaidh fodha faisg air beul Loch Iubh: *that sank near the mouth of Loch Ewe*; bha na longan sin a' giùlain bathar tarsainn a' Chuain Siar: *those ships were carrying goods across the Atlantic*; mar phàirt dhen iomairt-chogaidh: *as part of the war effort*; cha robh bathar sam bith na broinn: *there was no cargo inside her*; falamh, gun bhalaist: *empty and without ballast*; a' cruinneachadh le feadhainn eile: *gathering with others*; tarsainn a' Chuain Siar mar chonbhoidh: *across the Atlantic as a convoy*; chaill i an t-àite aice airson tionndadh a-steach don loch: *she missed her place for turning into the loch*; chaidh a sguabadh a dh'ionnsaigh chreagan: *she was swept towards rocks*; chaidh i an sàs air: *she got stuck on*; air a chuirteachadh le marcach-sìne: *surrounded by spindrift*; agus gun robh sneachd trom ga chur: *and that it was snowing heavily*; chunnaic feadhainn air tìr-mòr na lasairean: *some people on the mainland saw the flares*; bha na tuinn a' briseadh oirre agus ag èirigh gu caogad troigh: *the waves were breaking on her and reaching a height of fifty feet*; dh'fheuch an criutha ri cumail air bòrd cho math 's a b' urrainn dhaibh: *the crew tried to remain on board as well as they could*; a' togail fhàdan on chruaich-mhònaich: *taking peats from the peatstack*; feuch cobhair a dhèanamh air: *to try to help*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: ann an eachdraidh **Rois an Iar**: *in the history of Wester Ross. There are two ways of saying 'Wester Ross' in the nominative case – Ros an Iar and Taobh Siar Rois. The former is more common in Ross-shire. As you can see from the second example the genitive form of Ros is Rois. Taobh Siar Rois means literally 'the western side of Ross'. In the first example Ros an Iar becomes Rois an Iar. Similarly, 'the people of Easter Ross' would be muinntir Rois an Ear.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Tha eagal orm gur e sgeul duilich a th' ann: *I'm afraid that it's a sorry story.*

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