

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Call an William H Welch (2)

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 1,280. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 976 corresponds to Litir 1,280. 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 a' bruidhinn mun t-soitheach-shaorsa, an William H Welch, a chaidh air na creagan faisg air beul Loch Iubh ann an stoirm. Ràinig triùir dhen chriutha An Uamhghaidh. Chaidh buidheann de chroitèaran às a' bhaile sin ann airson cobhair a dhèanamh air duine sam bith a ràinig an tìr beò.

Bha feadhainn fhathast air bòrd an t-soithich. Chunnaic na croitèaran feadhainn **air an sguabadh a-mach** don mhuir. Chunnaic iad feadhainn air an sguabadh gu Eilean Furadh Mòr. Cha mhaireadh iad fada an sin anns an stoirm.

Gu fortanach, thàinig cuid seachad air rubha agus a-steach a bhàgh ris an canar An Camas Dubh. Chaidh cuid de na croitèaran a-mach gu doimhneachd an guailnean sa mhuir airson feadhainn de na maraichean a tharraing a-steach. Nuair a ràinig na boireannaich an t-àite chuir iad teine thuige air a' chladach. Ciamar a rinn iad sin, agus a h-uile càil còmhdaichte le sneachd, chan eil fhios a'm.

Thàinig dithis mhaor-cladaich à Geàrrloch. Bha loidhnichean losgaidh aca agus dh'fheuch iad ri an cur a-null don t-soitheach. Ach bha a' ghaoth ro làidir agus an t-astar ro mhòr. Bha aon duine na laighe aig bonn bearraidh. Chunnaic na croitèaran gun robh e fhathast beò. Chaidh fear dhiubh air ais dhachaigh airson àradh fhaighinn. Agus 's iad dithis bhoireannach a shàbhail e.

Bha na daoine a thàinig air tìr ann am fìor dhroch staid. Bha iad rùisgte oir chaill iad an aodach anns na stuaghan. Thòisich duine no dithis a bha comasach air coiseachd leis a' ghaoith. Ge-tà, chan eil baile sam bith an taobh sin. Bha iad gun teagamh a' coiseachd a dh'ionnsaigh am bàis.

Gu fortanach dhaibh, bha an dithis a bha a' ruith an taigh-sholais aig an Rubha Rèidh air cluinntinn mun tubaist. Choisich iad gu luath don Chamas Dhubh agus lorg iad feadhainn air an rathad. Thug iad na maraichean don chamas far an robh an teine. Shàbhail sin am beatha.

Bha na croitèaran a rinn cobhair air na seòladairean Ameireaganach nan gaisgich an latha sin. Thug iad plaideachan far an leapannan fhèin airson na seòladairean a chumail blàth air a' chladach. Ach bha feadhainn de na maraichean a thàinig beò tron tubaist air an cur ceàrr nuair a chuala iad na croitèaran a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig ri chèile. Dh'èigh fear aca, 'A bheil mi anns an Ruis?!'

Chuala buidheann ann an Glaschu a bha a' toirt taic do mharaichean Ameireaganach mun tubaist. Chaidh tè-stiùiridh na buidhne air an trèana le còig

màileidean làn aodaich. Ràinig i Inbhir Nis agus ghabh i trèana eile a dh' Ach na Sìne. Chaidh i air làraidh a Gheàrrloch an uair sin oir bha **na beò** a-nise anns an ospadal an sin.

A-mach à còrr is seachdadh duine air bòrd, cha do mhair beò ach dusan. 'S e gnothach air leth bàsmhor a bh' ann. Tha pìosan dhen long – an William H Welch – na laighe fhathast air grund na mara ann an Caolas an Fhuraidh faisg air Eilean Furadh Mòr. Anns a' bhliadhna dà mhìle (2000) chaidh carragh-cuimhne a thogail airson nan daoine a chaill am beatha air cladach Caolas an Fhuraidh far an do rinn croitearan na h-Uamhghaidh an obair ionmholta air an latha uabhasach sin.

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Faclan na Litreach: Loch Iubh: *Loch Ewe*; rubha: *point, cape*; maraichean: *mariners, seafarers*; loidhnichean losgaidh: *firing lines*; àradh: *ladder*; taigh-solais: *lighthouse*; An Ruis: *Russia*; Ach na Sìne: *Achnasheen*; ionmholta: *laudable*.

Abairtean na Litreach: mun t-soitheach-shaorsa: *about the liberty ship*; ràinig triùir dhen chriutha An Uamhghaidh: *three of the crew reached Cove*; airson cobhair a dhèanamh air duine sam bith a ràinig an tìr beò: *to assist any person that reached the land alive*; cha mhaireadh iad fada an sin anns an stoirm: *they wouldn't last long there in the storm*; a-mach gu doimhneachd an guailnean: *out to the depth of their shoulders*; chuir iad teine thuige air a' chladach: *they kindled a fire on the shore*; a h-uile càil còmhdhaichte le sneachd: *everything covered with snow*; thàinig dithis mhaor-cladaich à Geàrrloch: *two coastguards came from Gairloch*; bha aon duine na laighe aig bonn bearraidh: *one man was lying at the base of a cliff*; bha iad rùisgte oir chaill iad an aodach anns na stuaghan: *they were naked because they [had] lost their clothes in the waves*; thòisich duine no dithis a bha comasach air coiseachd leis a' ghaoith: *one or two people who were capable started to walk with the wind*; a' coiseachd a dh'ionnsaigh am bàis: *walking to their deaths*; bha na croitearan a rinn cobhair air na seòladairean Ameireaganach nan gaisgich: *the crofters who aided the American sailors were heroes*; bha feadhainn a thàinig beò tron tubaist air an cur ceàrr: *some who survived the accident were put wrong*; nuair a chuala iad na croitearan a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig ri chèile: *when they heard the crofters speaking Gaelic to each other*; le còig màileidean làn aodaich: *with five cases full of clothing*; cha do mhair beò ach dusan: *only a dozen remained alive*; chaidh carragh-cuimhne a thogail airson nan daoine a chaill am beatha: *a memorial was built for the people who lost their lives*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha **na beò** a-nise anns an ospadal: *the living* were now in [the] hospital. You will be familiar with *beò* as an adjective meaning 'living, alive'. But it can also exist as a noun with several meanings, including 'living person' or 'living people'. Idiomatically, both *am beò* and *na beò* can mean 'the living' (as opposed to *na mairbh* 'the dead'). Note the presence of the article.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: feadhainn **air an sguabadh a-mach** don mhuir: *some [of them] swept out to sea*.

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