

## **An Litir Bheag**

**le Ruairidh MacIlleathain**

*An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 975 (which corresponds to Litir 1,279). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot).*

*I was relating anecdotes from Loch Ewe connected to the Second [World] War. Most of them came from the book 'Loch Ewe During World War II' by Steve Chadwick. I'd recommend the book to you.*

*I'm going to speak today about the vessel, The William H Welch. It sank near the mouth of Loch Ewe in 1944. It was a liberty ship from the United States. Those ships were carrying goods across the Atlantic as part of the war effort.*

*It was the middle of winter. The William H Welch was leaving London and going to New York. She was empty, without ballast. Thus, she was not easy to handle in bad weather. And the weather was extremely bad.*

*She was going to be meeting with other ships in Loch Ewe and leaving in a convoy. But when she reached the mouth of the loch, she was swept towards rocks. She got stuck on a skerry. She couldn't move. The sea was pounding her. It was dark and cold.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh naidheachdan à Loch Iubh co-cheangailte ris an Dàrna Cogadh. Thàinig a' chuid a bu mhotha dhuibh bhon leabhar 'Loch Ewe During World War II' le Steve Chadwick. Mholainn an leabhar dhuibh.

Tha mi a' dol a bhruidhinn an-diugh mun t-soitheach an William H Welch. Chaidh i fodha faisg air beul Loch Iubh ann an naoi ceud deug, ceathrad 's a ceithir (1944). Bha i na soitheach-saorsa no *liberty ship* às na Stàitean Aonaichte. Bha na longan sin a' giùlain bathar tarsainn a' Chuain Siar mar phàirt dhen iomairt-chogaidh.

'S e meadhan a' gheamhraidh a bha ann. Bha an William H Welch a' fàgail Lunnainn agus a' dol a New York. Bha i falamh, gun bhalaist. Mar sin, cha robh i furasta làimhseachadh ann an droch shìde. Agus bha gèile is gailleann ann.

Bha i gu bhith a' cruinneachadh le longan eile ann an Loch Iubh agus a' falbh ann an conbhoidh. Ach, nuair a ràinig i beul an locha, chaidh a sguabadh a dh'ionnsaigh chreagan. Chaidh i an sàs air sgeir. Cha robh comas aice gluasad. Bha an fhairge a' bualadh oirre gu cruaidh. Bha e dorch agus fuar.

*The captain ordered flares to be fired. Some people on the mainland saw the flares.*

*A tug came out to try to assist the William H Welch. They tried to send a line over. But the wind was too strong. The vessel was now letting in water. At six o' clock in the morning, she broke in two pieces.*

*Finally, the people who were still on board were swept into the sea. But three reached the land. They reached a village called Cove. That was in the middle of the morning. It was blizzarding. At one of the houses there were two girls outside. They were lifting peats from the peatstack. They saw the three mariners.*

*Eight men and two women from the village went out to assist anybody that was alive on the shore. I'll tell you how they got on in the next Litir.*

Dh'òrdaich an caiptean lasairean boillsgeach a chur an-àirde. Chunnaic feadhainn air tìr-mòr na lasairean.

Thàinig soitheach-slaodaidh a-mach, feuch cobhair a dhèanamh air a' William H Welch. Dh'fheuch iad ri loidhne a chur a-null. Ach bha a' ghaoth ro làidir. Bha an soitheach a-nise a' leigeil uisge a-steach. Aig sia uairean sa mhadainn bhris i ann an dà leth.

Mu dheireadh chaidh na daoine a bha fhathast air bòrd a sguabadh don mhuir. Ach fhuair triùir gu tìr. Ràinig iad baile beag ris an canar An Uamhghaidh. Bha sin ann am meadhan na maidne. Bha cur-is-cathadh ann. Aig fear de na taighean, bha dithis chaileagan a-muigh. Bha iad a' togail fhàdan on chruaich-mhònaich. Chunnaic iad an triùir mharaichean.

Chaidh ochdnar fhear agus dithis bhan às a' bhaile a-mach, feuch cobhair a dhèanamh air duine sam bith eile a bha beò air a' chladach. Innsidh mi dhuibh mar a chaidh dhaibh anns an ath Litir.