

YESTERDAY'S NEWS.1

A MYSTERIOUS CRUISE CURIOUS TOUR OF FIVE FOREIGNERS

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A Glasgow correspondent sends a queer story of a cruise made by five foreigners in a mysterious motor-boat in the treacherous waters of the Island of Tiree (Western Highlands), where only few weeks ago a number of English tourists had an alarming experience through their vessel striking a submerged rock. The *Daily Chronicle* prints the narrative as received :-

'About three weeks ago the strange craft with the foreigners on board arrived late one evening in Scarinish Harbour, Tiree. The boat had neither name nor number, and only one member of the crew could make himself known in English. He informed the islanders that he and his companions wanted to inspect the scene of all the shipwrecks around the coast, and were in search of a pilot. In response to this request, one of the mostt experienced seamen on the island volunteered take the visitors on a tour of inspection, in consideration for which services he was offered substantial remuneration.

At the local grocery store the foreigners purchased a supply of provisions, and the pilot and his companions went on the boat and slept overnight. Of the subsequent movement of the foreigners, the pilot islander has given the following interesting account:

"I accepted the offer to guide them round the coast without hesitation, because it did not occur to me that the men might be spies. It was on the third and last day I piloted that the real mission of the men began to dawn upon me. There were the facts that the boat had no name nor number, and that the only person board who could speak English was a foreigner. I took four of them to be Germans, and the fifth Norwegian. On the morning after the arrival the strange boat, we went to the Sound of Coll, the channel which separates Coll from Tiree. Here a number of years ago [in 1895] the SS *Nessmore*, a cattle boat from the States, went down, and the foreigners made a close examination of the rock upon which the struck. I discovered here for the first time that one of the men was a professional diver, but he made no descent at Coll. We could see from the motor-boat the boilers and engines and other portions of the *Nessmore* piled up in confusion at the bottom. A thorough examination of the wreck was made, and its position noted on the chart.

We then returned to Scarinish for the night, the foreigners, as on the previous evening, sleeping on board. I went ashore and passed the night at the house of my sister. The boat was anchored in a creek known as Ghracemuil [possibly Greasamul, Caolas]. On following morning, we set out for Cornaig, on the northern side the island, and examined the spot where the *Rhidda* with a cargo of pulp was wrecked [in 1902], and afterwards proceeded along the coast where the *Caimmuir* with a general cargo foundered [in 1886]. The diver made a descent at the former spot, and reported that he had seen portions of the wreck.

We next proceeded direct to Skerryvore Lighthouse, twelve miles to the south-west of Tiree. We landed safely at the rock, went ashore, and inspected the lighthouse from base to summit. The keepers were both courteous and hospitable to the foreigners. From the Skerryvore we were directed by the keepers to the point at the Mackenzie rocks, where the *Labrador* was wrecked [in 1899]. We anchored some distance from the rock until it came above water, and then went quite close to it. The diver went down, remaining underneath for long time. He reported that had seen huge masses of wreckage, pile above pile, on a sharp point of the rock. We then got back to Scarinish. I got some letters from the lighthouse keepers to post at Scarinish, but I was too late to catch the Tiree mail. The foreigners said as they were going direct to Tobermory they would post them there, and I gave them the letters. Whoever they were, the men kept to their bargain, and paid me handsomely. It is quite possible that there may be an inquiry as to the movements of these men, and I am quite ready to furnish all the information that I possess concerning them."

The correspondent adds that the news of the incident in Glasgow has given rise to much curious speculation, particularly as many alarming stories have reached Glasgow from time to time of the number of Germans who are now found "on holiday" since the operations on the new torpedo range on Loch Long were entered upon. These stories tell of the foreigners' fondness for climbing "The Cobbler" hill from which a splendid view of the torpedo centre is obtained. Another craze is for photographing "the scenery of the loch." It is also urged that these visitors find the dead of winter quite suitable for their holidays, and Arrochar is about the least inviting resort in all Scotland at that season of the year.