

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at 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, Roddy can be contacted at rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 322. Note that Roddy also broadcasts a simplified version – An Litir Bheag – on Monday evenings at 7.00 pm. This is also available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 18 corresponds to Litir 322.*

Chan fhaigh duine againn cadal math ma tha fuaim ann nach còrd rinn. Ach chan eil sin fìor mu dheidhinn a h-uile fuaim. Ma tha thu a’ campachadh, cluinnidh tu a h-uile càil a tha a’ dol. Ma tha caoraich a’ mèilich no ma tha coileach a’ gairm, no ma tha do chompanach a’ dèanamh srann, chan fhaigh thu cadal math. Ach ma tha thu ri taobh uisge a tha a’ gluasad, chan ann mar sin a tha e. Gheibh thu cadal fìor mhath mar as trice.

Tha e gu h-àraidh furasta cadal fhaighinn ri taobh allt no eas. No an cois na mara. Eadhon ma tha an t-uisge ann, tha e furasta gu leòr cadal fhaighinn. Fhad ’s nach eil uisge ag ao-dion a-steach don teanta co-dhiù!

’S e ceòl cadail a tha sinn ag ràdh ri a leithid de dh’fhuaim. Ceòl cadail. Seo agaibh abairt à Beàrnaraigh Na Hearadh: *’S math an ceòl cadail e, uisge bragadaich air àirigh.* ’S math an ceòl cadail e, uisge bragadaich air àirigh. Tha sin brèagha, nach eil?

Ann an dòigh tha an abairt seo car annasach. Anns a’ chuid as mò de bhothain-àirigh bhiodh am mullach air a dhèanamh de sgràthan agus fraoch no cuilcean. Agus cha chluinneadh tu mòran am broinn bothan mar sin. Cha dèanadh na boinnean uisge fuaim mòr sam bith air a’ mhullach. Cha bhiodh uisge a’ bragadaich idir air bothan-àirigh àbhaisteach. Ach buinidh an abairt seo do mhuinntir Bheàrnaraigh. Feumaidh gu robh rudeigin eadar-dhealaichte mu na bothain-àirigh acasan.

Agus bha. Bha an t-eilean ro bheag airson àirighean a bhith ann. Ach bha àirighean aig na h-eileanaich air eileanan eile ann an Caolas Na Hearadh eadar Na Hearadh is Uibhist – eileanan a bha gun sluagh. Leis gun deach iad a-null ann an eathraichean bha an-còmhnaidh rudeigin aca bhon eathar a dhèanadh mullach dhaibh. Bhiodh seòl aca no cainb-theàrra bhon eathar, agus bhiodh e furasta sin a chur an sàs mar mhullach, thairis air ballachan no tobhtaichean. Agus bidh fios agaibh cho fuaimneach ’s a tha mullach mar sin nuair a tha an t-uisge ann.

Chanadh muinntir Bheàrnaraigh gun cumadh an seòl no cainb-theàrra an t-uisge a-mach ach gun leigeadh e an ceòl a-steach. An ceòl-cadail.

Bhiodh suiridhe gu leòr a’ dol aig an àirigh san t-seann aimsir. Ach cha bhiodh cùisean cho furasta do chupallan òga nuair a bha iad air ais aig baile. Cha robh càraichean aca agus bhiodh iad a’ coinneachadh taobh a-muigh nan taighean – ri taobh nan tobhtaichean no air an t-sitig. Le “air an t-sitig” tha mi a’ ciallachadh “taobh a-muigh an taighe”.

Mar a thuigeas sibh, dh'fhaodadh an luchd-suiridhe fàs gu math fuar is fliuch. Gu tric thigeadh an cnatan, no fuachd, orra. Agus tha abairt ann a tha muinntir Bheàrnaraigh a' cleachdadh airson tarraing à cupallan òga ma tha an cnatan orra no ma tha iad a' casadaich: *Cnatan thobhtaichean is fuachd shitigean.*

Tha mi an dòchas nach fhaigh sibh fhèin cnatan thobhtaichean agus nach fhada gus am faigh sibh ceòl cadail air an oidhche.

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Faclan na seachdaine: aithnichte: *known, recognised*; cadal: *sleep*; Beàrnaraigh Na Hearadh: *Berneray Harris (or Uist)*; bothan-àirigh: *shieling bothy*; Caolas Na Hearadh: *The Sound of Harris*; tobhtaichean: *walls of ruin*; suiridhe: *courting*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: ma tha fuaim ann nach còrd rinn: *if there is a noise which we don't enjoy*; ma tha caoraich a' mèilich no ma tha coileach a' gairm: *if a sheep is bleating or a cockerel is crowing*; ma tha do chompanach a' dèanamh srann: *if your companion is snoring*; chan ann mar sin a tha e: *it is not like that*; ri taobh allt no eas: *beside a burn or waterfall*; an cois na mara: *next to the sea*; fhad 's nach eil uisge ag ao-dion: *as long as water isn't leaking*; 's math an ceòl cadail e, uisge [a'] bragadaich air àirigh: *good sleep-music is the rain pattering on the shieling*; air a dhèanamh de sgràthan agus fraoch no cuilcean: *made of sods and heather or rushes*; am broinn: *inside*; buinidh an abairt seo do: *this phrase belongs to*; gun sluagh: *without a population*; leis gun deach iad a-null ann an eathraichean: *because they went over in boats*; bha an-còmhnaidh rudeigin aca: *they always had something*; bhiodh seòl aca no cainb-theàrra bhon eathar: *they would have a sail or a tarpaulin from the boat*; gun leigeadh e an ceòl a-steach: *that it would let the music in*; do chupallan òga nuair a bha iad aig baile: *for young couples when they were at home*; bhiodh iad a' coinneachadh taobh a-muigh nan taighean: *they would meet outside the houses*; gu tric thigeadh an cnatan orra: *often they would get a cold*; airson tarraing à X: *to tease X*; cnatan thobhtaichean is fuachd shitigean: *a [common] cold from ruined walls and middens*.

Puing-chànain na seachdaine: Ma tha thu a' campachadh, cluinnidh tu a h-uile càil: *if you are camping, you hear everything. Do you notice an apparent change of tense here in the Gaelic? The first part is present tense with the verbal noun, but I didn't then say "tha thu a' cluinntinn a h-uile càil" – because this would be only properly be used for something actually happening at the moment (although it would be understood). I used the future tense (cluinnidh) which also stands for habitual acts in the present and is commonly used in this type of construction. But I might have used the relative future in the first part ie ma bhios tu a' campachadh... or nuair a champaicheas tu...*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: air an t-sitig: *sitig means a dunghill or midden. Thus don t-sitig or chun na sitig or air an t-sitig can have connotations of being discarded or thrown out. But because the sitig was traditionally sited fairly close to the house, for ease of access, the idiom can also simply mean "out of doors/outside the house" which is its meaning in this instance.*

* *Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig*