

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for 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, Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 567. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 263 corresponds to Litir 567.*

Dè tha anns a’ chumantas eadar Kebnekaise agus Beinn Nibheis? Uill, rud no dhà. ’S i Kebnekaise a’ bheinn as àirde anns an t-Suain. Ruigidh i dà mhìle, ceud is aon-deug (2,111) meatair de dh’àirde os cionn na mara. Agus bidh fios agaibh gur i Beinn Nibheis a’ bheinn as àirde ann an Alba, ged a tha i nas ìsle na Kebnekaise.

Tha an dà bheinn ann an sgìrean air leth brèagha, làn bheanntan. Aig àm na Càisge chaidh mi air sgithichean seachad air Kebnekaise. Bha ise, agus na beanntan **mun cuairt oirre**, làn sneachda. Tha i gu math fada tuath, anns an Artaig.

Tha rudeigin eile a tha inntinneach nuair a nithear coimeas eadar an dà àite. ’S e cànan na tìre anns gach cùis mion-chànan – a’ Ghàidhlig ann an Alba agus Sàmais anns an t-Suain.

Bha mi a’ sgitheadh airson sia latha air slighe ainmeil ris an canar *Kungsleden* – Slighe an Rìgh. ’S e ainm Suaineis a tha sin. Ach, air an tìr agus air a’ mhapa, tha a’ mhòr-chuid de na h-ainmean ann an Sàmais. Sgìth mi thairis air lochan reòite air a bheil Ábeskojávri agus Alisjávri. Thog mi facal no dhà dhen chànan; tha *jávri* a’ ciallachadh “loch”. Tha *vággi* a’ ciallachadh “gleann”; tha *čohkka* a’ ciallachadh “mullach beinne”; tha *jeaggi* a’ ciallachadh “boglach”. Ma tha Sàmais agaibh, an gabh sibh mo leisgeul ma fhuair mi ceàrr iad.

Ach cha b’ urrainn do na Suainich, ris an do thachair mi, dad innse dhomh mu na h-ainmean-àite. A bharrachd air sin, bha e coltach nach robh mòran ùidh aca. Cha b’ ionann e do Ghàidheal!

Tha aon rud inntinneach mu na mapaichean Suaineach a tha a’ dèiligeadh ri dùthaich nan Sàmi. Tha dà ainm air gach tè de na beanntan àrda ainmeil. Mar eisimpleir chithear *Kebnekaise* agus, fodha, *Giebmegáisi*. ’S e Kebnekaise an riochd Suaineis air an ainm – ged as e ainm Sàmais bho thùs – agus ’s e Giebmegáisi an riochd Sàmais. Tha e coltach ri *Ben Nevis* agus *Beinn Nibheis*. Tha an dà chuid a’ tighinn bhon Ghàidhlig ach ’s e dreach Beurla a th’ air fear dhiubh.

Gu o chionn beagan is trithead bliadhna, bha Sàmais anns an t-Suain air a sgrìobhadh a rèir nòsan Suaineis. A-nise tha dòigh sgrìobhaidh aca fhèin. Ach tha *Kungsleden* a’ dol tro thrì dhiofar sgìrean cànan, far a bheil an Sàmais eadar-dhealaichte. Agus tha dòighean eadar-dhealaichte aig gach cànan airson fuaimean a riochdachadh air pàipear.

Ach seo agaibh rud cudromach a tha a’ bualadh oirnn ann an Alba. Tha na Suainich a’ cur riochd Sàmais an latha an-diugh air na mapaichean a-nise, a bharrachd air

seann riochd stèidhichte air Suaineis, oir tha iad a' leantainn aonta a rinn na Dùthchannan Aonaichte. 'S e sin, far a bheil mion-chànan ann, gum bu chòir an litreachadh acasan a bhith air a riochdachadh air mapaichean na dùthcha.

Nise, coimheadaibh air mapa na h-Alba agus dèanaibh coimeas le mapaichean na Suain. Air mapaichean an t-Suirbhìdh Òrdanais far a bheil am mullach as àirde ann an Alba, chan eil ann ach "Ben Nevis". Tha an t-àm againn sin atharrachadh, agus "Beinn Nibheis" a bhith ann a bharrachd.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Sàmais: *the Sámi language (at one time called Lapp or Lappish, although this term is now considered derogatory by many);* An t-Suain: *Sweden;* Suaineis: *the Swedish language;* riochd: *form;* a bharrachd: *in addition.*

**Abairtean na Litreach:** dè tha anns a' chumantas eadar: *what is there in common between;* de dh'àirde os cionn na mara: *of height above the sea;* nas ìsle: *lower;* gu math fada tuath, anns an Artaig: *very far north, in the Arctic;* nuair a nithear coimeas: *when a comparison is made;* 's e cànan na tìre anns gach cùis mion-chànan: *the land language in each case is a minority language;* sgèith mi thairis air lochan reòite: *I skied over frozen lochs;* an gabh sibh mo leisgeul ma fhuair mi ceàrr iad: *will you excuse me if I got them incorrect;* cha b' ionann e do Ghàidheal: *it wasn't the same [story] for a Gael;* air a sgrìobhadh a rèir nòsan Suaineis: *written according to Swedish linguistic norms;* tro thrì dhiofar sgìrean cànan: *through three different language areas;* airson fuaimean a riochdachadh air pàipear: *for representing sounds on paper;* a tha a' bualadh oirnn: *which affects us;* aonta a rinn na Dùthchannan Aonaichte: *an agreement the United Nations made;* gum bu chòir an litreachadh acasan a bhith air a riochdachadh air mapaichean na dùthcha: *that their spelling should be represented on the country's maps;* tha an t-àm againn sin atharrachadh: *it's time we changed that.*

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** *There is a serious point to this week's Litir. The Sámi language, following modern spelling conventions, is now used for landscape features on Swedish maps of the country's north, even for famous mountain names which also carry a well-recognised and well-established Swedish form (based on original Sámi). The contrast with OS maps of Scotland where Ben Nevis is given, but not Beinn Nibheis, should cause us to ask why we should not see a similar development here. Gaelic has just as strong a link with the landscape of the Gàidhealtachd as does Sámi with Sápmi (the Sámi country) and it boasts more speakers than Sámi. Such has been done for some mountains in the Cairngorms but it should be rolled out across Gaelic Scotland. Among other mountains that could, and should, carry bilingual names are Ben Alder/Beinn Eallair, Ben Vorlich/Beinn Mhùrlaig, Ben Starav/Beinn Starbh, Mount Keen/Am Monadh Caoin and Quinag/A' Chuinneag.*

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach:** Bha ise, agus na beanntan **mun cuairt oirre**, làn sneachda: *she, and the mountains **around her**, were covered with snow (mountains are generally conceptually feminine, and the word beinn is feminine).*

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