

# 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 576. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 272 corresponds to Litir 576.*

Bha mi a’ bruidhinn an t-seachdain sa chaidh mu *Sheachd Cadalaichean an t-Saoghail* no *The Seven Sleepers of the Earth* – creutairean a bhathar a’ smaoinichadh a chuireadh seachd an gheamhradh ann an Alba, seach a bhith a’ falbh a dhùthaich chèin. Tha fhios gun robh Gàidheil na h-Alba eòlach orra ach cha d’ fhuair mi liosta dhiubh ann an Gàidhlig. Ge-tà, fhuair ann an cànan a tha gu math dlùth ris an tè againn fhèin – *Gaelg* no Gàidhlig Eilean Mhanainn. Ach, mar a chì sibh, tha barrachd na seachd ann oir, ged a bha daoine ag aontachadh nach robh ann ach seachd, cha robh iad ag aontachadh dè bh’ annta!

Seo na Seachd Cadalaichean ann am beul-aithris Mhanainneach (ged a tha mi a’ cur ainmean Albannach orra): an ialtag, a’ chuthag, an clacharan, an gobhlan-gaoithe, an t-seilcheag, an dallag, an dealan-dè, an seillean agus an dearc-luachrach. Tha mi an dòchas gun do thuig sibh na h-ainmean sin uile: an ialtag (no *bat*), a’ chuthag (no *cuckoo*), an clacharan (no *stonechat*), an gobhlan-gaoithe (no *swallow*), an t-seilcheag (no *snail*), an dallag (no *dormouse*), an dealan-dè (no *butterfly*), an seillean (no *bee*) agus an dearc-luachrach (no *lizard*).

’S e sin liosta gu math inntinneach, nach e – ged a tha eagal orm gun robh na seann daoine ceàrr mun chuthaig, clacharan is gobhlan-gaoithe. Bidh iadsan a’ falbh air sgèith don leth-chruinne mu dheas anns a’ gheamhradh. Thèid iad à fianais ach cha tèid iad a chadal. Agus tha cearcall-beatha aig an dealan-dè a tha a’ fàgail nach bi a leithid a’ nochdadh anns a’ gheamhradh.

Ann an cànanan Eòrpach eile, thathar a’ dèanamh ceangal eadar an àireamh seachd agus cadal. Mar eisimpleir ann an Suaineis tha *sjusovare* (“seachd-cadalaiche”) a’ ciallachadh cuideigin a tha a’ faighinn cadal trom airson ùine ro mhòr. Tha faclan coltach ri sin ann an Gearmailtis is Ungairis cuideachd. Thathar a’ smaoinichadh gun tàinig sin bhon traidisean Chrìosdail co-cheangailte ri Seachd Cadalaichean Ephesus a dh’ ainmich mi an t-seachdain sa chaidh.

Mus fhàg mi an àireamh seachd, an cuala sibh riamh an abairt *Sìde nan Seachd Sian*? Tha sin a’ ciallachadh sìde no aimsir a tha fìor dhona. Nise, tha am facal *sian* a’ ciallachadh “stoirm”. Ach chan eil mi an dùil gu bheil an abairt seo a’ ciallachadh *the weather of the seven storms*. Tha *sian* cuideachd a’ ciallachadh *element*. Tha mi an dùil gu bheil *Sìde nan Seachd Sian* a’ ciallachadh *the weather of the seven elements* – a h-uile seòrsa aimsir a dh’ fhaodadh a bhith ann, còmhla.

Ach dè tha anns na seachd siantan no dè bh’ annta anns an t-seann aimsir? Uill, a rèir Dwelly, seo iad: teine, èadhar, talamh, uisge, deigh, gaoth agus dealanaich. Teine, èadhar, talamh, uisge, deigh, gaoth agus dealanaich. Na seachd siantan, co-dhiù ann am beachd nan seann Ghàidheal.

Agus a rèir choltais chanadh neach ri neach eile, nam biodh e a' dèanamh mallachd air: “**Deireadh nan Seachd Sian Ort!**” Tha mi an dùil gum biodh sin a' ciallachadh gun tigeadh beatha an duine eile gu crìch ann an dòigh uabhasach.

Bheir sinn sùil a bharrachd air an àireamh seachd an ath-sheachdain ach tha mi airson tòimhseachan a thoirt dhuibh an-dràsta. Dè th' ann an *Oidhche nan Seachd Suipearan*. Oidhche nan Seachd Suipearan. Innsidh mi dhuibh anns an ath Litir.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** ialtag: *bat*; cuthag: *cuckoo*; clacharan: *stonechat*, gobhlan-gaoithe: *swallow*; seilcheag: *snail*; dallag: *dormouse*; dealan-dè: *butterfly*; seillean: *bee*; dearc-luachrach: *lizard*; cearcall-beatha: *life cycle*; stoirm: *storm*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** creutairean a bhathar a' smaoinichadh a chuireadh seachad an geamhradh: *creatures that it was thought would spend the winter*; seach a bhith a' falbh a dhùthaich chèin: *rather than be leaving for a foreign land*; cha robh iad ag aontachadh dè bh' annta: *they weren't agreeing what they were*; bidh iadsan a' falbh air sgèith don leth-chruinne mu dheas: *they fly away to the southern hemisphere*; thèid iad à fianais ach cha tèid iad a chadal: *they disappear but they don't hibernate*; a tha a' fàgail nach bi a leithid a' nochdadh anns a' gheamhradh: *which means that such things don't appear in the winter*; Gearmailtis is Ungairis: *German and Hungarian [languages]*; teine, èadhar, talamh, uisge, deigh, gaoth agus dealanaich: *fire, air, earth, water, ice, wind and lightning*; co-dhiù ann am beachd nan seann Ghàidheal: *at least in the view of the old Gaels*; a rèir choltais: *apparently*; chanadh neach ri neach eile: *one person would say to another*; nam biodh e a' dèanamh mallachd air: *if he were cursing him*; gun tigeadh beatha an duine eile gu crìch ann an dòigh uabhasach: *that the other's life would come to an end in a terrible way*; tha mi airson tòimhseachan a thoirt dhuibh an-dràsta: *I want to give you a puzzle*; Oidhche nan Seachd Suipearan: *the night of the seven suppers*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** *Perhaps not all cadalagan or cadalain are cadalaichean ie hibernators. In Archibald Cregeen's Manx Dictionary "Fockleyr ny Gaelgey" a cadlag is given as "a sleeper, a sluggard, such as sleep a long time, as the bat, butterfly etc". However, Dwelly gives cadalag as a Gaelic equivalent of "slug" ie a little slumbering one – not meaning that it hibernates, but that it has a "sluggardly" demeanour. The English dialect on Man has borrowed cadlag from Gaelg and it can mean a small lazy fish; this must be the same as our cadalan-tràghad (Dwelly p 145) "a semi-dormant fish found on the shore. When any person was extremely slow at work, he was compared to the cadalan-tràghad." Do any of you know the English (or Latin) for cadalan-tràghad?*

**Gnathasan-cainnt na Litreach:** **Sìde nan Seachd Sian:** *terrible weather [lit. the weather of the seven elements]*; **Deireadh nan Seachd Sian Ort!**: *an imprecation which is really untranslatable but which wishes no favours on the object!*

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