

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Fionn agus an Ath-chadal

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,423. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,119 corresponds to Litir 1,423. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Ciamar a chanas sinn ann an Gàidhlig, 'I went back to sleep, I slept in'? Faodaidh sinn seo a ràdh: 'Rinn mi an ath-chadal.' Agus ciamar a chanas sinn 'reddening of the sky'? Uill, tha an abairt seo againn – rudhadh shuas. Reddening up high. Rudhadh shuas.

Tha an dà abairt a' tighinn còmhla ann an seanfhacal Gàidhlig a tha a' gabhail a-steach an t-sàr-ghaisgich, Fionn MacCumhail:

*Rudhadh shuas an àm laighe,
Dh'èireadh Fionn moch sa mhadainn,
Rudhadh shuas sa mhoch-mhadainn,
Dhèanadh Fionn an ath-chadal.*

Tha seo car coltach ri seanfhacal Beurla, ged nach eil sgeul air Fionn anns a' Bheurla.

Rudhadh shuas an àm laighe: [With a] reddening of the sky at bedtime, Dh'èireadh Fionn moch sa mhadainn: Fionn would rise early in the morning. Rudhadh shuas sa mhoch-mhadainn: [With a] reddening of the sky in the early morning. Dhèanadh Fionn an ath-chadal: Fionn would have a long lie.

*Rudhadh shuas an àm laighe
Dh'èireadh Fionn moch sa mhadainn
Rudhadh shuas sa mhoch-mhadainn
Dhèanadh Fionn an ath-chadal.*

Carson a dh'èireadh Fionn tràth – no moch – sa mhadainn nam biodh rudhadh san adhar an oidhche roimhe? Uill, bhiodh fios aige **gur e deagh latha a bhiodh roimhe**. Bhiodh an rudhadh shuas am feasgar roimhe ag innse sin dha.

Agus carson a dhèanadh Fionn an ath-chadal nam biodh rudhadh san adhar anns a' mhoch-mhadainn? Uill, thuigeadh e gun robh droch shìde a' tighinn – math dh'fhaodte stoirm.

Agus dè an seanfhacal Beurla a th' ann, a tha a-mach air an dearbh rud? Tha – *red sky at night, shepherd's delight; red sky in the morning, sailor's warning*.

Bha na seann daoine fìor mhath air tomhas a dhèanamh air an t-sìde a bhiodh romhpa le bhith a' coimhead air nàdar, gu sònraichte air na sgòthan agus air coltas an adhair. Bhiodh iad cuideachd a' **dèanamh fàisneachd** air an aimsir a rèir mar a

bhiodh cuid de dh'èoin gan giùlan fhèin. Dh'inns mi dhuibh mu fheadhainn dhiubh ann an Litir 1188.

Ach – eun nach do dh'ainmich mi anns an Litir sin – 's e sin a' chearc-bheinne ris an canar 'an tàrmachan'. Tha sgeul inntinneach mun tàrmachan aig Alasdair MacIlleMhìcheil ann an *Carmina Gadelica*. B' e a' bhliadhna ochd ceud deug, seachdad 's a seachd (1877). Dhìrich Alasdair agus companach gu mullach beinne anns Na Hearadh. Nuair a bha iad shuas air a' chreachann far an robh na tarmachain a' còmhnaidh, chuala iad monbar nan eun.

An uair sin, chunnaic iad na h-eòin. Thòisich na tàrmachain air gluasad, an uair sin air ruith, an uair sin chaidh iad air sgèith. Bha companach Alasdair, a bha eòlach air an àite agus air na h-eòin, deimhinne – bha fìor dhroch shìde air an rathad. Bhiodh aig an dithis aca ri teàrnadh gu bonn na beinne gun dàil.

Ghabh Alasdair iongnadh. Bha an t-adhar soilleir, cha robh sgòth ann agus bha i ciùin. Ach dh'fhalbh iad. Taobh a-staigh uair a thìde, dh'fhalbh a' ghrian. Dh'fhàs na speuran dorch. Taobh a-staigh uair a thìde eile, bha cur is cathadh ann.

Bha a chompanach air a ràdh ris gur e fèin-ghiùlan nan tàrmachan a dh'inns dha gum biodh gailleann-sneachda ann. Saoil an robh seanfhacal aige airson sin?

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Gu litreachail: *literally*; tàrmachan: *ptarmigan*; Alasdair MacIlleMhìcheil: *Alexander Carmichael*; Na Hearadh: *Harris*; ciùin: *calm* fèin-ghiùlan: *behaviour*; gailleann-sneachda: *snowstorm*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Tha an dà abairt a' tighinn còmhla ann an seanfhacal Gàidhlig: *both phrases come together in a Gaelic proverb*; a tha a' gabhail a-steach an t-sàr-ghaisgich, Fionn MacCumhail: *that brings in the great hero, Fionn MacCumhail*; rudhadh shuas an àm laighe: *[with a] reddening of the sky at bedtime*; dh'èireadh Fionn moch sa mhadainn: *Fionn would rise early in the morning*; rudhadh shuas sa mhoch-mhadainn: *[with a] reddening of the sky in the early morning*; dhèanadh Fionn an ath-chadal: *Fionn would have a long lie*; bhiodh an rudhadh shuas am feasgar roimhe ag innse sin dha: *the reddening of the sky the previous evening would tell him that*; gun robh droch shìde a' tighinn – math dh'fhaodte stoirm: *that bad weather was coming – perhaps a storm*; a-mach air an dearbh rud: *concerning the same thing*; bha na seann daoine fìor mhath air tomhas a dhèanamh air an t-sìde a bhiodh romhpa: *the old people were really good at estimating the weather to come*; le bhith a' coimhead air nàdar: *by looking at nature*; a rèir mar a bhiodh cuid de dh'èoin gan giùlan fhèin: *according to how some birds would behave*; nuair a bha iad shuas air a' chreachann: *when they were up on the vegetationless wind-blasted mountaintop*; far an robh na tarmachain a' còmhnaidh: *where the ptarmigan were living*; chuala iad monbar nan eun: *they heard the murmuring of the birds*; chaidh iad air sgèith: *they took to the wing*; dh'fhàs na speuran dorch: *the sky grew dark*; taobh a-staigh uair a thìde eile, bha cur is cathadh ann: *within another hour, there was a snowstorm*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bhiodh fios aige **gur e deagh latha a bhiodh roimhe**: *he would know that it would be a good day in front of him* i.e. *that he would have a good day*. Roimhe is the prepositional pronoun formed by a combination of ro 'before' and e 'him'; such prepositional pronouns can be used in expressions of this nature e.g. Bha latha fada romhpa 'they had a long day ahead of them.'

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: a’ dèanamh fàisneachd air an aimsir: *predicting the weather*.

Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoineachadh le MG ALBA