

**An Litir Bheag**  
**le Ruairidh MacIlleathain**

*An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 272 (which corresponds to Litir 576). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.macleon@bbc.co.uk).*

*I was speaking last week about Seachd Cadalaichean an t-Saoghail. They are The Seven Sleepers of the Earth – creatures that were spending the winter at home, hibernating. They weren't leaving for a foreign land in the winter.*

*I haven't located a list of the Seven Sleepers in Scottish Gaelic. But I have in Manx Gaelic. And there are more than seven of them! Well, people agreed there were seven. But they didn't agree what they were!*

*Here are the Seven Sleepers in Manx tradition. I am calling them by Scottish names: an ialtag, a' chuthag, an clacharan, an gobhlan-gaoithe, an t-seilcheag, an dallag, an dealan-dè, an seillean and an dearc-luachrach. Do you know those creatures?: ialtag (or bat), a' chuthag (or cuckoo), an clacharan (or stonechat), an gobhlan-gaoithe (or swallow), an t-seilcheag (or snail), an dallag (or dormouse), an dealan-dè (or butterfly), an seillean (or bee) agus an dearc-luachrach (or lizard).*

*I'm afraid that the old people were wrong about the cuckoo, stonechat and swallow. They leave*

Bha mi a' bruidhinn an t-seachdain sa chaidh mu *Sheachd Cadalaichean an t-Saoghail*. 'S iad sin *The Seven Sleepers of the Earth* – creutairean a bha a' cur seachad a' gheamhraidh aig an taigh, nan cadal. Cha robh iad a' falbh a dhùthaich chèn anns a' gheamhradh.

Cha d' fhuair mi liosta de na Seachd Cadalaichean ann an Gàidhlig na h-Alba. Ach fhuair ann an Gàidhlig Eilean Mhanainn. Agus tha barrachd na seachd ann! Uill, bha daoine ag aontachadh gun robh seachd ann. Ach cha robh iad ag aontachadh dè bha anna!

Seo na Seachd Cadalaichean ann am beul-aithris Mhanainneach. 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. A bheil sibh eòlach air na creutairean sin?: 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).

Tha eagal orm gun robh na seann daoine ceàrr mun chuthaig, clacharan is gobhlan-gaoithe. Bidh iadsan a' falbh

*for the southern hemisphere in the winter. They don't stay at home. But they don't hibernate either. They are in another land. And the butterfly has an unusual life cycle, doesn't it? They don't hibernate.*

*Before I leave the number seven, have you ever heard the phrase Sìde nan Seachd Sian? The weather of the seven elements. Sìde nan Seachd Sian. It means weather that is phenomenally bad.*

*But what are the seven elements? Well, according to Dwelly, here they are: fire, air, earth, water, ice, wind and lightning. Fire, air, earth, water, ice, wind and lightning. And here's a question for you. What is The Night of the Seven Suppers? The Night of the Seven Suppers. I'll tell you next week.*

don leth-chruinne mu dheas anns a' gheamhradh. Cha bhi iad aig an taigh. Ach cha bhi iad nan cadal nas motha. Bidh iad ann an dùthaich eile. Agus tha cearcall-beatha annasach aig an dealan-dè, nach eil? Cha bhi iad sin a' dol a chadal.

Mus fhàg mi an àireamh seachd, an cuala sibh riamh an abairt *Sìde nan Seachd Sian? The weather of the seven elements.* Sìde nan Seachd Sian. Tha e a' ciallachadh aimsir no sìde a tha uabhasach fhèin dona.

Ach dè tha anns na seachd siantan? Uill, a rèir Dwelly, seo iad: teine, èadhar, talamh, uisge, deigh, gaoth agus dealanaich. Teine, èadhar, talamh, uisge, deigh, gaoth agus dealanaich. Agus seo ceist dhuibh Dè th' ann an *Oidhche nan Seachd Suipearan? Oidhche nan Seachd Suipearan.* Innsidh mi dhuibh an ath-sheachdain.