

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

'Sleamhainn'

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. This is Litir 891. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 587 corresponds to Litir 891.

Is sleamhainn a' chlach a tha an ursainn an taigh mhòir. An cuala sibh an seanfhacal sin riamh roimhe? Is sleamhainn a' chlach a tha an ursainn an taigh mhòir. Gu litreachail, tha e a' ciallachadh '*slippery is the stone that is next to the doorpost of the big house*'. Ach tha e co-ionann ris a' Bheurla – '*the powerful make fickle friends*'. Mar sin, thoiribh an aire ma tha caraidean cumhachdach agaibh – 's dòcha nach bi iad cho dìreach no cho dileas 's a bhiodh sibh an dùil. Is sleamhainn a' chlach a tha an ursainn an taigh mhòir.

Tha mi a' meòrachadh air an fhacal *sleamhainn* an t-seachdain seo. Ann am Beurla, bidh daoine ag ràdh '*as slippery as an eel*'. A bheil an aon samhla againn an Gàidhlig? Uill, tha. *Cho sleamhainn ri easgann. As slippery as an eel.* Cho sleamhainn ri easgann.

Rinn mi bith-eòlas aig an oilthigh. Tha deagh chuimhne agam air latha iongantach nuair a rinn sgioba againn tomhas air na bh' ann de dh'èisg ann an abhainn. Thug sinn leinn uidheamachd airson èisg **a chur o mhothachadh**. Bha e ag obair le dealain. Bha sinn a' cruthachadh raon dealain anns an uisge. Nuair a thigeadh na h-èisg a-steach don raon bhiodh iad gun mhothachadh airson mionaid no dhà. Bhiodh iad a' dol air fleòdradh air uachdar na h-aibhne. Agus bha sinn gan glacadh le tàbh – lion beag.

Airson adhbhar air choreigin cha robh na bric mhòra a' faighinn air ais don abhainn agus b' fheudar dhuinn an ithe! Ach bha na h-easgannan – uill, 's e stòiridh eile a bha sin.

Aig toiseach gnothaich, dh'fhaighnich an t-òraidiche a bha os cionn a' ghnothaich – cò bha deònach fad nan easgannan a thomhas le rùilear? Cha robh duine sam bith eile deònach oir bha gràin aca air easgannan agus **chaidh mo thaghadh-sa**. Chan ann tric nam bheatha a rinn mi obair cho mì-thlachdmhor!

'S e an duilgheadas a bu mhotha a bh' ann nach robh na h-easgannan a' fulang uiread 's a bha na h-èisg eile bho bhuidh an dealain. Bha iad gun mhothachadh airson dìreach deich no fichead diog. An uair sin bha iad ag iarraidh snàmh air falbh a-rithist. Agus b' e m' obair-sa am fad a thomhas le rùilear. Ach bha iad iongantach làidir – agus cho sleamhainn ... ri easgann! Cha b' fhada gus an robh mo làmhan làn rannain – no *fish slime*. Bha e sgriosail agus cha robh duine eile ag iarraidh thighinn faisg orm! Tha an samhla fìor. Agus chruthaichinn fhìn fear eile. Cho mì-thlachdmhor ri tomhas fad easgann!

Fhad 's a tha mi a-mach air samhlaidhean agus am facal 'sleamhainn', seo agaibh dà shamhla eile co-cheangailte ris an fhacal sin. *Cho sleamhainn ri botal*. Agus *cho sleamhainn ri glainneachan*.

Dè na rudan eile a tha sleamhainn? Deigh, gu cinnteach. Dh'fhaodamaid a ràdh – *cho sleamhainn ris an deigh*. Agus, leis gu bheil mi measail air a' chladach – *cho sleamhainn ris an fheamainn*.

Faisg air Ceann na Creige, ann am Bàideanach, tha beinn air a bheil, mar ainm, Càrn Leacan Sleamhainn. Ma tha sibh shuas air, air latha fliuch, bithibh faiceallach air na leacan. Oir tha dùil a'm gum bi iad sleamhainn.

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Faclan na Litreach: a' meòrachadh air: *contemplating*; bith-eòlas: *biology*; òraidiche: *lecturer*; mì-thlachdmhor: *unpleasant*; rannan: *fish slime*; deigh: *ice*; feamainn: *seaweed*; Ceann na Creige: *Kincraig*; Bàideanach: *Badenoch*; leacan: *slabs, ledges*.

Abairtean na Litreach: thoiribh an aire ma tha caraidean cumhachdach agaibh: *be careful if you have powerful friends*; 's dòcha nach bi iad cho dìreach no cho dìleas 's a bhiodh sibh an dùil: *perhaps they won't be as straightforward or as loyal as you would expect*; rinn sgioba againn tomhas air na bh' ann de dh'èisg ann an abhainn: *a team of us assessed the amount of fish in a river*; a' cruthachadh raon dealain: *creating an electric field*; bhiodh iad gun mhothachadh airson mionaid no dhà: *I they would be unconscious for a minute or two*; air fleòdradh air uachdar na h-aibhne: *floating on the surface of the river*; gan glacadh le tàbh: *catching them with a handnet*; cha robh na bric mhòra a' faighinn air ais don abhainn: *the big trout weren't finding their way back to the river*; b' fheudar dhuinn an ithe: *we had to eat them*; cò bha deònach fad nan easgannan a thomhas le rùilear: *who was willing to measure the length of the eels with a ruler*; bha gràin aca air: *they hated*; nach robh na h-easgannan a' fulang uiread 's a bha na h-èisg eile bho bhuaidh an dealain: *that the eels were not suffering as much as the other fish from the effect of the electricity*; deich no fichead diog: *ten or twenty seconds*; b' e m' obair-sa am fad a thomhas: *it was my job to measure their length*; cho sleamhainn ri botal: *as slippery as a bottle*; cho sleamhainn ri glainneachan: *as slippery as [drinking] glasses*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **chaidh mo thaghadh-sa: I was chosen.** *This is the traditional way of creating the emphatic form of this passive structure – by using the appropriate emphatic suffix. Chaidh do thaghadh-sa 'you were chosen'; chaidh ar taghadh-ne 'we were chosen'; chaidh an taghadh-san 'they were chosen'. But note that many people are today eschewing the emphatic suffix and employing the emphatic form of the personal pronoun eg chaidh mise a thaghadh, chaidh thusa a thaghadh.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Thug sinn leinn uidheamachd airson èisg a chur o mhothachadh: *we took with us equipment to stun fish.*

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