

## 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 203 (which corresponds to Litir 507). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*There is a place close to Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh which is called Croft-an-Rìgh. Not Croit an Rìgh, but Croft-an-Rìgh. But, certainly, it's a Gaelic name. How did it get a name like that?*

*There are certainly Gaelic names in Edinburgh. They are not plentiful, but they're there. But they're very old. And when the King of Scotland built a palace in Holyrood Gaelic was no longer extant in Lothian.*

*I went down the road, looking for the croft. Well, there was no croft. There was no sign of cattle and sheep. There was no sign of a barn or a byre. And there was no sign of a crofter wearing wellies. But there was an old house. And there was a notice on the house - Croft-an-Rìgh.*

*I went to the book by Stuart Harris – The Place Names of Edinburgh. Harris says that it is not a Gaelic name. We must remember that the Gaelic word croit came from the English croft. And in olden times, it was called Croftangry. That is an English*

Tha àite faisg air Lùchairt an Ròid, no Holyrood Palace, ann an Dùn Èideann air a bheil an t-ainm Croft-an-Rìgh. Chan e Croit an Rìgh, ach Croft-an-Rìgh. Ach, gun teagamh, 's e ainm Gàidhlig a tha ann. Ciamar a fhuair e ainm mar sin?

Tha ainmean Gàidhlig ann an Dùn Èideann, ceart gu leòr. Chan eil iad pailt, ach tha iad ann. Ach tha iad gu math sean. Agus nuair a thog Rìgh na h-Alba lùchairt ann an Sgìre an Ròid cha robh a' Ghàidhlig beò ann an Lodainn.

Chaidh mi sìos an rathad, a' coimhead airson na croite. Uill, cha robh croit ann. Cha robh sgeul air crodh is caoraich. Cha robh sgeul air sabhal no bàthach. Agus cha robh sgeul air croitear le bòtannan air. Ach bha seann taigh ann. Agus bha sanas air an taigh – Croft-an-Rìgh.

Chaidh mi don leabhar le Stiùbhart Harris – The Place Names of Edinburgh. Tha Harris ag ràdh nach e ainm Gàidhlig a tha ann. Feumaidh sinn cuimhneachadh gun tàinig am facal Gàidhlig *croit* bhon Bheurla *croft*. Agus o shean, 's e an t-ainm a bha air an àite seo *Croftangry*. 'S e

*name. It came from croft angr. Croft angr means grazing ground with a fence, which is within the township. It's not outside the township, as is the common grazing. It's within the township.*

*How did it get a Gaelic name? Well, Harris says, in the nineteenth century, that the name changed. It changed from Croftangry to Croftanry to Croft an Rhi with r-h-i. Finally the r-h-i changed to r-i-g-h. Croft-an-Righ. Somebody made a link between the name and the king because it was close to the palace.*

Harris doesn't say who gave the name a Gaelic appearance. But he says it is "Croft an Rye" that many say. Local people, who don't speak Gaelic, perhaps don't understand what Croft-an-Righ means.

Anyway, that's Croft-an-Righ. And that's what's on the official signs. We complain that old Gaelic names become anglicized. Well, here's an example of an old English name that became Gaelicized.

ainm Beurla a tha ann. Thàinig e bho *croft angr*. Tha *croft angr* a' ciallachadh pàirc ionaltraidh le feansa, a tha taobh a-staigh fearann a' bhaile. Chan eil e taobh a-muigh a' bhaile, mar a tha an cùl-cinn no *common grazing*. Tha e taobh a-staigh a' bhaile.

Ciamar a fhuair e ainm Gàidhlig? Uill, tha Harris ag ràdh, anns an naoidheamh linn deug, gun do dh'atharraich an t-ainm. Dh'atharraich e bho *Croftangry* gu *Croftanry* gu *Croft an Rhi* le r-h-i. Mu dheireadh dh'atharraich an r-h-i gu r-i-g-h. Croft-an-Righ. Rinn cuideigin ceangal eadar an t-ainm agus an rìgh oir bha e faisg air an lùchairt.

Chan eil Harris ag ràdh cò chuir dreach Gàidhlig air an ainm. Ach tha e ag ràdh gur e "Croft an Rye" a chanas mòran. Chan eil muinntir an àite, aig nach eil Gàidhlig, 's dòcha a' tuigsinn dè tha Croft-an-Righ a' ciallachadh.

Co-dhiù no co-dheth, sin Croft-an-Righ. Agus 's e sin a tha air na soidhnichean oifigeil. Bidh sinn a' gearain gun deach dreach Beurla a chur air seann ainmean Gàidhlig. Uill, seo eisimpleir de dhreach Gàidhlig a' dol air seann ainm Beurla.