

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 278 (which corresponds to Litir 582). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

In the nineteenth century, there was a Procurator Fiscal in Stornoway called Thomas Drummond. He tried to change the name of the town. He wasn't pleased with Stornoway. He was saying that some were saying Stormaway. That wasn't attractive – or true!

But what name was he wanting? Well – Port Royal. Aye, Port Royal. Why? Well, in memory of the King – William IV. He went to Stornoway in 1793. That was long before he was the King. Drummond was of the opinion, however, that the populace would be happy to live in “Port Royal”.

He wrote a letter to the landlord, James Stewart-Mackenzie. He was also a member of parliament. He wrote: “..it is you ... that has best right to claim the change from His Majesty though I hope you will do me the justice in intimating to His Majesty ... that it was I, humble individual, that suggested it as a mark of my respect to his Majesty ...” Aye. I'll not say anything. Except – Drummond wasn't successful.

Perhaps he was envious of the Isle of Skye. They have a “Royal”

Annas an naoidheamh linn deug, bha Fear-casaid a' Chrùin ann an Steòrnabhagh air an robh Tòmas Druimeanach. Dh'fheuch e ri ainm a' bhaile atharrachadh. Cha robh e toilichte le Stornoway. Bha e ag ràdh gun robh cuid ag ràdh Stormaway. Cha robh sin tarraingeach – no firinneach!

Ach dè an t-ainm a bha e ag iarraidh? Uill – Port Royal. Seadh, Port Royal. Carson? Uill, ann an cuimhne an Rìgh – Uilleam IV. Chaidh esan a Steòrnabhagh ann an seachd ceud deug naochad 's a trì (1793). Bha sin fada mus robh e na Rìgh. Bha an Druimeanach dhen bheachd, ge-tà, gum biodh an sluagh toilichte a bhith a' fuireach ann am “Port Royal”.

Sgrìobh e litir don uachdaran Seumas Stiùbhart-MacCoinnich. Bha esan cuideachd na bhall-pàrlamaid, Sgrìobh e: “..it is you ... that has best right to claim the change from His Majesty though I hope you will do me the justice in intimating to His Majesty ... that it was I, humble individual, that suggested it as a mark of my respect to his Majesty ...” Seadh. Cha chan mi dad. Ach – nach robh an Druimeanach soirbheachail.

'S dòcha gun robh farmad aige air

town. Well, they've got Portree. King James V visited the town in 1540. However, is that what the name means? Some folk say that it was Port Ruigheadh in olden times. That means "slope harbour" rather than "king's harbour". But that's not as romantic as "King's Harbour"!

It's not only the name of Stornoway that was annoying Drummond. He was also thinking that Lewis should be governed from Lewis itself. That's not so radical. The local government was based in Dingwall at the time.

He was wanting to create a new county. It would be governed from Stornoway. The name of the county would be – Lewis-shire. Lewis-shire. Imagine! I'm not sure, however, if Drummond was of the opinion that Harris should be included in Lewis-shire. That might be [have been] too big a step!

an Eilean Sgitheanach. Tha baile "Rìoghail" acasan. Uill, tha Port Rìgh aca. Thadhail an Rìgh Seumas V air a' bhaile ann an còig ceud deug is dà fhichead (1540). Ge-tà, an e sin a bha an t-ainm a' ciallachadh? Tha cuid ag ràdh gur e Port Ruigheadh a bha ann bho shean. Tha sin a' ciallachadh "slope harbour" seach "king's harbour". Ach chan eil sin cho romansach ri Port Rìgh!

Chan e a-mhàin ainm Steòrnabhagh a bha a' cur dragh air an Druimeanach. Bha e cuideachd dhen bheachd gum bu chòir Leòdhas a bhith air a riaghladh à Leòdhas fhèin. Chan eil sin cho radaigeach. Bha an riaghaltas ionadail stèidhichte ann an Inbhir Pheofharain aig an àm.

Bha e ag iarraidh siorrachd ùr a chruthachadh. Bhiodh i air a riaghladh à Steòrnabhagh. 'S e an t-ainm a bhiodh air an t-siorrachd – *Lewis-shire*. Siorrachd Leòdhais. Smaoinich! Chan eil mi cinnteach, ge-tà, an robh an Druimeanach dhen bheachd Na Hearadh a chur an cois Lewis-shire. 'S docha gur e ceum ro mhòr a bhiodh ann a sin!