

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 883 (which corresponds to Litir 1,187). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you about the Mackenzies of Coul, and about places in Queensland where there is 'Mackenzie' in the name. One of the most beautiful lakes in which I ever swam is Lake McKenzie in Queensland. It's on a big island called Fraser Island. I don't know who the McKenzie was that gave the loch its name.

I want to return to Coul and to Sir George Steuart Mackenzie. He was president of the Caledonian Horticultural Society. He was interested in apples.

Mackenzie created a new apple at Coul House in 1827. It is called 'Coul Blush'. People think that it is the most northerly apple that was [ever] created in Scotland.

In the 19th century, Scotland was famous for apples. The group 'Scottish Apple Producers' tells us that more than forty varieties were created here.

However, at the end of the 19th century, the railways and artificial refrigeration came. That allowed cheaper apples to come in.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Chlann 'ic Coinnich na Cùile, agus mu àiteachan ann an Tìr na Banrigh far a bheil Mackenzie anns an ainm. 'S e fear de na lochan a bu bhrèagha san robh riamh mi a' snàmh Lake McKenzie ann an Tìr na Banrigh. Tha e air eilean mòr ris an canar Fraser Island. Chan eil fhios a'm cò am MacCoinnich a thug ainm don loch.

Tha mi airson tilleadh don Chùil, agus don Ridire Seòras Stiùbhart MacCoinnich. Bha e na cheann-suidhe air Comann Tuathanais-ghàrraidh na h-Alba, the Caledonian Horticultural Society. Bha ùidh aige ann an ùbhlan.

Chruthaich MacCoinnich ubhal ùr aig Taigh na Cùile ann an ochd ceud deug, fichead 's a seachd (1827). 'S e an t-ainm a tha air 'Coul Blush'. Tha daoine a' smaoinichadh gur e an t-ubhal as fhaide tuath a chaidh a chruthachadh ann an Alba.

Anns an naoidheamh linn deug bha Alba ainmeil airson ùbhlan. Tha a' bhuidheann Scottish Apple Producers ag innse dhuinn gun deach còrr is ceathrad seòrsa a chruthachadh an seo.

Ge-tà, aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug, thàinig na rathaidean-iarainn agus fionnarachadh fuadain. Leig sin le ùbhlan na bu shaoire faighinn a-steach.

Farmers started to get rid of apple orchards.

How many Scottish varieties still exist? I don't know, but some are, such as Beauty of Moray, Galloway Pippin and James Grieve. I'd like to tell you about one called the Bloody Ploughman.

The inside is pink or red – like blood! The skin is dark red. It came into being on the Carse of Gowrie. But how did it get the name 'Bloody Ploughman'? Well, here is the story.

There was a ploughman. He was stealing apples from the Megginch Estate. A gamekeeper saw him and fired his gun at him. The ploughman fell dead.

His body was given to his wife. She found apples in his pockets. She threw them on a compost heap. A tree grew from it on which there were special apples. The new variety was name after the poor ploughman.

Thòisich tuathanaich air faighinn cuidhteas an ubhal-ghoirtean.

Cia mhead de na seann seòrsaichean Albannach a tha ann fhathast? Chan eil fhios a'm, ach tha feadhainn a' dol, leithid *Beauty of Moray*, *Galloway Pippin* agus *James Grieve*. Bu mhath leam innse dhuibh mu fhear air a bheil an Treabhaiche Fuilteach no *Bloody Ploughman*.

Tha an taobh a-staigh pinc no dearg – coltach ri fuil! Tha an craiceann dorchedhearg. Thàinig e gu bith air Cars Ghobharaidh. Ach ciamar a fhuair e an t-ainm an Treabhaiche Fuilteach? Uill, seo an sgeul.

Bha treabhaiche ann. Bha e a' goid ùbhlan bho Oighreachd Mhig-innis. Chunnaic geamair e agus loisg e a ghunna air. Thuit an treabhaiche marbh.

Chaidh a chorp a thoirt do a bhean. Lorg i ùbhlan na phòcaidean. Thilg i air flagais iad. Dh'fhàs craobh às air an robh ùbhlan sònraichte. Chaidh an seòrsa ùr ainmeachadh an dèidh an treabhaiche bhochd.