

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 926 (which corresponds to Litir 1,230). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Craoibh is the Gaelic for Crieff. But how do we say 'in Crieff' and 'of Crieff'? Well, for 'in Crieff', we say 'ann an Craoibh' or just 'an Craoibh'. I know that because it appears in Gaelic poetry. It was written by a man who belonged to an area a long way from Crieff.

The poet was Rob Donn. He was from the Mackay Country in the north-west Highlands. How was Rob familiar with Crieff? Well, he was a drover. He would go with cattle to Crieff. There were cattle sales in Crieff every year.

Rob wrote 'n Craoibh' for 'in Crieff' and 'Chraoibh' for 'of Crieff'. When he was in Crieff, his thoughts would return to his own country. Here for you is a piece he wrote: 'I like the environment of the deer-forest, although I am in Crieff on a bare board, between the sheep thickets and the hillocky upland.'

'S toigh leam càradh na frìthe: I like the environment of the deer-forest. Ged a tha mi 'n Craoibh air bhòrd lom: although I am in Crieff on a bare board (that was his bed). Eadar badaidh nan caorach agus

'S e 'Craoibh' a' Ghàidhlig air Crieff. Ach ciamar a chanas sinn 'in Crieff' agus 'of Crieff'? Uill, airson 'in Crieff', canaidh sinn 'ann an Craoibh' no dìreach 'an Craoibh'. Tha fios agam air sin oir tha e a' nochdadh ann am bàrdachd Ghàidhlig. Bha i air a sgrìobhadh le fear a bhuineadh do sgìre fad air falbh bho Chraoibh.

B' e am bàrd Rob Donn. Bha e à Dùthaich MhicAoidh ann an ceann an iarthuath na Gàidhealtachd. Ciamar a bha Rob eòlach air Craoibh? Uill, 's e dròbhair a bha ann. Bhiodh e a' falbh le crodh gu ruige Craoibh. Bha fèill-reic a' chruidh ann an Craoibh a h-uile bliadhna.

Sgrìobh Rob 'n Craoibh' airson 'in Crieff' agus 'Chraoibh' airson 'of Crieff'. Nuair a bha e ann an Craoibh, bhiodh a smuaintean a' dol air ais don dùthaich aige fhèin. Seo agaibh earrann a sgrìobh e: 'S toigh leam càradh na frìthe, Ged a tha mi 'n Craoibh air bhòrd lom, Eadar badaidh nan caorach, Agus aonach nan tom ...

'S toigh leam càradh na frìthe: I like the environment of the deer-forest. Ged a tha mi 'n Craoibh air bhòrd lom: although I am in Crieff on a bare board (b' e sin a leabaidh). Eadar badaidh nan caorach agus aonach nan tom: between

aonach nan tom: *between the sheep thickets and the hillocky upland.*

Here is another piece on the same subject: I would love to be with you, in the wee glen of the calves, than to be counting the Sàilich in the parks of Crieff.

'S mòr a b' annsa bhith mar riut: *I would love to be with you. Ann an gleannan nan laogh: in the wee glen of the calves. Na bhith cunntadh nan Sàileach ann am pàirceachan Chraoibh: than to be counting the Sàilich in the parks of Crieff.*

As far as I know, 'Sàilich' means cattle that were raised in Dùthaich MhicAoidh. That was in the area called Ceann-sàile or in English, 'Kintail'. We call it the 'Kyle of Tongue' today. It's a long way, indeed, from Crieff.

the sheep thickets and the hillocky upland.

Seo agaibh earrann eile air an aon chuspair: 'S mòr a b' annsa bhith mar riut, Ann an gleannan nan laogh, Na bhith cunntadh nan Sàileach, Ann am pàirceachan Chraoibh.

'S mòr a b' annsa bhith mar riut: *I would love to be with you. Ann an gleannan nan laogh: in the wee glen of the calves. Na bhith cunntadh nan Sàileach ann am pàirceachan Chraoibh: than to be counting the Sàilich in the parks of Crieff.*

Fhad 's as aithne dhomh, tha 'Sàilich' a' ciallachadh crodh a bh' air an togail ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh. Bha sin ann an sgìre air robh *Ceann-sàile* no ann am Beurla, *Kintail*. Canaidh sinn 'Caolas Thunga' ris an-diugh. Tha e fada, gu dearbh, bho Chraoibh.