

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 1,093 (which corresponds to Litir 1,397). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

There are English to Gaelic translation facilities on the internet. But we must be careful if we are making use of them.

The other day, I came across a phrase. I wasn't understanding it initially. The phrase was Brot Cuilinn. That's right – Brot Cuilinn – C.U.I.L.I.N.N. It's a Scottish food.

I'm going to tell you how you make Brot Cuilinn. Cook smoked haddock in water. In another pan, cook chopped onions in butter. Cook potatoes cut into cubes in the second pan and put everything together. Just before you put the soup in a bowl, add milk or cream to it. And mix everything together.

The most important thing in Brot Cuilinn is the smoked haddock. It's a fish soup. But what does 'cuilinn' mean?

In English, we call this soup 'Cullen Skink'. Skink is an old Scots word that means 'soup'. And Cullen is a wee town on the coast of Moray. It was a fishing port in the old days.

It's thought that the town's name came from Gaelic. That's

Tha goireasan eadar-theangachaidh – Beurla gu Gàidhlig – air an eadar-lìon. Ach feumaidh sinn a bhith faiceallach ma tha sinn gan cur gu feum.

An latha eile, thàinig mi tarsainn air abairt. Cha robh mi ga thuigsinn anns a' chiad dol a-mach. B' e an abairt *Brot Cuilinn*. Seadh – Brot Cuilinn – C.U.I.L.I.N.N. 'S e biadh Albannach a tha ann.

Tha mi a' dol a dh'innse dhuibh mar a nì sibh Brot Cuilinn. Bruichibh adag smocte ann an uisge. Ann am pana eile, bruichibh uinneanan sgudaichte ann an ìm. Bruichibh buntàta ciùbaichte anns an dàrna pana agus cuiribh a h-uile rud còmhlà. Dìreach mus cuir sibh am brot ann am bobhla, cuiribh bainne no uachdar ris. Agus measgaichibh a h-uile rud còmhlà.

'S e an rud as cudromaiche ann am Brot Cuilinn – an adag smocte no *smoked haddock*. 'S e brot èisg a tha ann. Ach dè tha 'cuilinn' a' ciallachadh?

Ann am Beurla, canaidh sinn '*Cullen Skink*' ris a' bhrot seo. 'S e *skink* seann fhacal Albais a tha a' ciallachadh 'brot'. Agus 's e *Cullen* baile beag air costa Mhoireibh. 'S e port iasgaich a bha ann o shean.

Thathar a' smaoinichadh gur ann bhon Ghàidhlig a thàinig ainm a' bhaile.

not a surprise. There are many place-names in Moray that originated in Gaelic.

Cullen was at one time called ‘Invercullen’ in English. Scholars reckon that Invercullen represented Inbhir Cuilinn ‘the mouth of the holly stream’.

Now you’ll understand why it’s ‘Brot Cuilinn’ that you get on the internet when you pose the question ‘what’s the Gaelic for Cullen skink?’ Brot Cuilinn means ‘Cullen Soup’. I wonder if Brot Inbhir Cuilinn would be better as a name?

Local people are proud of their famous soup. There are eight restaurants in the town where Cullen Skink is on the menu! And every year there is a big competition there which is attended by people from around the world. This is the Cullen Skink World Championships – or as might call them in Gaelic, perhaps – Farpais-Chruinne Brot Cuilinn.

Chan eil sin na iongnadh. Tha ainmean-àite gu leòr ann am Moireibh a thàinig bhon Ghàidhlig.

’S e *Invercullen* a bha air Cullen uaireigin ann am Beurla. Tha sgoilearan a’ dèanamh dheth gun robh Invercullen a’ riochdachadh Inbhir Cuilinn ‘*the mouth of the holly stream*’.

Tuigidh sibh a-nise carson as e Brot Cuilinn a gheibh sibh air an eadar-lìon nuair a chuireas sibh a’ cheist ‘*what’s the Gaelic for Cullen skink?*’ Tha Brot Cuilinn a’ ciallachadh ‘*Cullen Soup*’. Saoil am biodh *Brot Inbhir Cuilinn* na b’ fheàrr mar ainm?

Tha muinntir an àite moiteil as a’ bhrot ainmeil aca. Tha ochd taighean-bìdh sa bhaile far a bheil Brot Cuilinn air a’ chlàr! Agus a h-uile bliadhna, bidh farpais mhòr ann, agus daoine ga frithealadh bho air feadh an t-saoghail. Is i sin *The Cullen Skink World Championships* – no mar a chanamaid, math dh’fhaodte, ann an Gàidhlig – Farpais-Chruinne Brot Cuilinn.