

Ulster Scots

FIONA MCDONALD

Fae Cowies Craig

Stud thonner, oan tha leevin roak

O Cowie's Craig - grun alow banefire bleck -

Pit me in mine o Ninetie-Echt,

Tha nicht lift rid fur simmer sodjers' trysts.

Drumhirk an Gransha fairmers' sins,

Cottown chiels, Green Boys o Greba, Hairts o Doon

VOICE OVER

Fiona McDonald reads her poem Fae Cowies Craig . Her passion for Ulster- Scots began in her school days.

FIONA MCDONALD

It adds colour to whatever I'm trying to write it's a very expressive language and I just find it speaks volumes really more than I can maybe do in the English language .

Sauf yince mair, A staun lukkin oot

Ma gavel windae, owre oul reuch fiels o

Yella-floor't whuns, drochtit gress, an

Tummelt doon stane dykes, tae Cowie's Craig.

VOICE OVER

Ulster – Scots the language that came to Ulster with the Scottish settlers of the plantation in the early 17th century.

ANNE SMYTH

It was the ordinary folk, the guys who were

going out and tilling the land, and minding the livestock that held onto that Scots lowland tongue. It is the language of Burns, but we had folk writing in

that language before Burns was heard tell of. It's not in every case an imitation of Burns. So, it's lowland Scots. It's basically a variant of Northumbrian, if you go back far enough that is. And that's what was brought into Northern Ireland. I say Northern Ireland, it was the island of Ireland, but it was mainly the northeast corner, by the lowland Scots settlers.

VOICE OVER

The Rhyming Weavers is a term used to describe working class poets from the 18th and 19th Centuries, whose poems are rich with examples of Ulster-Scots

JOHN ERSKINE

This is a poem by Thomas Given who came at the end of this writing tradition of poetry. And it's called 'A Song For February'.

Day in an' day oot on his auld Farrant loom,

Time lengthens the wab o' the past,

Dame nature steps in like a lamp tae the room,

Hir e'e tae the simmer o life geein bloom.

So winter slips by, wi its mirth an its gloom,

As spring is appearin' at last

The Robin gets up an' he lauchs in his glee,

In view o' the prospect so braw,

Sets his heid tae the side, wi its feathers agee, As he spies a bit snaw drop at fit p' the tree,

An says tae himsel' a'll hae denties tae pee

By an' by when the splash is awa.

VOICE OVER

In the 1950's Robert Gregg pioneered the academic study of Ulster-Scots.

IVAN HERBISON

He was able to record, of course, from a generation of speakers no longer with us. We are talking about say the '40s and '50s, maybe early '60s. That generation, who were his informants, have passed away. But his work preserves the evidence for pronunciation. But perhaps the most important aspect of Bob Gregg's work is the mapping of the boundaries of the Ulster Scots speaking area.

ANNE SMYTH

It's the only attempt that has ever been made to map the Ulster -Scots speaking areas. He gathered together 125 informants, mostly of the older age group, who were natural Ulster -Scots speakers, and he mapped their location in what is fairly typical horse shoe shape around the north and east coasts of Northern Ireland. He sent out questionnaires to these folks and interviewed them. He used just one word items to map where the line could be drawn between the Ulster- Scots speaking areas and the adjoining Northern Hiberno-English speaking areas. These words were exclusively Ulster - Scots.

A lot of what he got was funny material, old saws and yarns from the country. The thing about Bob Gregg was that nobody ever thought he was laughing at them, he was laughing with them, and that is the difference. With so many academics, they're up there in the ivory tower somewhere, and they're looking at this language as if they were turning over a stone and seeing what crawled out.

But that was never the way with Bob Gregg, he still identified with the vernacular speech that he was studying, which is the difference.

VOICE OVER

In 2000 Ulster-Scots was officially recognised as a language under the European Charter for Regional and Minority languages.

Like many minority languages it faces an uncertain future in the longer term.

Actuality of school

TEACHER LOUISE MORROW

Ok guys we're going to start off with a wee bit of Hickory Dickory Dock. So, what are the key words you have to watch out for?

Yin

Good boy Cameron What are the other ones?

Doon

And what else?

Spoot oot

And Moose

VOICE OVER

Louise Morrow is a music and drama teacher and works across Northern Ireland, teaching children about the language and culture of Ulster-Scots.

PUPILS RECITING INCY WINCY SPIDER

Incy Wincy spider climbed up the water spout
Doon came the rain and washed poor incy oot
Oot came the sunshine and dried up all the rain
And Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spoot again

LOUISE MORROW

This is Landhead Primary School, and there set here in the heart of North Antrim. This is a fairly new project in the school where we are trying to develop Ulster-Scots.

The grandparents in the home would speak in Ulster- Scots and the children would speak that way, they're not getting Ulster-Scots in other places and it's really important that we do preserve the language of Ulster – Scots