

# Culture an the Creenge

2004 is the year the Scottish Executive is ettlin tae push forrit wi its Scottish Culture drive an Jack McConnell is reportit as sayin, **“Scotland can build self-confidence and rid itself of its infamous ‘cringe’.”**

Up tae the noo, nane o the cultural proposals bein pit forrit haes said ocht about Scottish languages or ony ither kinna language for that maitter. Scottish culture is whit haes been raxed doon tae us frae wir forebeirs an that cannae be duin athoot language? In maist cases the language uised wad hiv been Scots or Gaelic.

Pittin forrit a Scottish Culture drive athoot ony reference tae thae languages is like ettlin tae big a dyke athoot ony stanes. Whit guid daes daein awa wi Gaelic signage in the new pairlament biggin dae for the self-confidence o the Gaels? An likeweys, whit effect will no haein Scots signage at aw in the new pairlament biggin hae on the self-confidence o the millions o Scots speakers?

The Scottish Creenge is the direct ootcome o the suppression o the twa Scottish languages in previous generations whaur the language that the bairns taen tae the scuil wis daured an makit a bauchle o. The Scots bairns spent the first five year o thair lives lairnin hou tae speak an describe thair thochts an the world about thaim juist tae gaun tae the scuil an get telt that thair language wisnae worth a docken an they warnae tae uise it but haed tae lairn tae speak ‘proper’ instead.

Years efter thon, whane’er they heard thon auld leid that they’d been learned tae be ashamed o, it gart thair flesh creep an the creenge wis weel an truly born.

There mony educatit folk the day that haes nocht but guid tae say about the Scots language but aye juist says it in English. The shame o bein heard speakin Scots in public is washit that deep intae thair harns that they cannae bring thirsels tae be heard uisin it.

Daes Jack McConnell really believe that giein thae fowk mair exposure tae opera, ballet, theatre, music an the airts will rid thaim o thair Scots creenge an gie thaim the confidence tae be heard uisin Scots in public?

Folk that uises Scots as thair first language disnae dree the creenge in the same way for they’re richt at hame an fully articulate speakin thair ain language but there times whan they feel obliged tae try an speak English.

It’s at thae times whan they’re thinkin in ae language an tryin tae speak in anither that they aye hiv tae be on the kee-vee for fear o pittin thair fit in it sae thair self-confidence taks a heider an the ‘inarticulate Scot’ is the ootcome.

The Scots Executive’s Scottish Culture drive cuid verra weel restore self-confidence an redd oot the creenge but juist if it embraces this language problem an daes somethin tae dae awa wi the stigma that’s still attached tae the Scots language in the heids o ower mony Scots folk.

The first step along thon gate wad be tae gie written forms o the Scots language a legitimate presence in the new pairlament biggin an in ither sib institutions.