

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 608 (which corresponds to Litir 912). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you that I was in Wales in the autumn. I was learning a little Welsh. I was in a language centre called Nant Gwrtheyrn. It's on the Llŷn Peninsula in the north-west of Wales. It's out of sight behind hills, above a shingle beach.

Nant Gwrtheyrn has an old history, at least according to oral tradition. Nant means a 'stream' or 'ravine'. Gwrtheyrn was an old British king. He lived in Kent in the fifth century. He was timid. He used Saxon soldiers to control his enemies.

Hengist was one of those Saxons. He was brutal. He defeated Gwrtheyrn's enemies. Gwrtheyrn gave him the Isle of Thanet as a reward. Although Thanet is today connected to the Kent mainland, it was a proper island at that time.

The Saxons brought their families with them. They took over land on the mainland. Gwrtheyrn knew he [had] made a mistake. To protect his kingdom, he made a marriage proposal to a daughter of Hengist. Hengist agreed to the union. A great feast was held. The Britons and the Saxons were sitting

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh gun robh mi sa Chuimrigh as t-fhoghar. Bha mi ag ionnsachadh beagan Cuimris. Bha mi ann an ionad-cànain air a bheil Nant Gwrtheyrn. Tha e air Rubha Llŷn ann an ceann an iar-thuath na Cuimrigh. Tha e a-mach à sealladh air cùl chnoc, os cionn mol.

Tha seann eachdraidh aig Nant Gwrtheyrn, co-dhiù a rèir beul-aithris. Tha *nant* a' ciallachadh 'allt' no 'mòr-chlais'. B' e Gwrtheyrn seann rìgh Breatannach. Bha e beò ann an Ceant anns a' chòigeamh linn. Bha e meata. Chleachd e saighdearan Sagsannach airson smachd a chumail air a nàimhdean.

B' e Hengist fear de na Sagsannaich sin. Bha e brùideil. Rinn e a' chùis air nàimhdean Ghwrtheyrn. Thug Gwrtheyrn Eilean Thanet dha mar dhuais. Ged a tha Thanet ceangailte ri tìr-mòr Cheant an-diugh, 's e eilean ceart a bha ann aig an àm sin.

Thug na Sagsannaich an teaghlaichean leotha. Ghabh iad fearann thairis air tìr-mòr. Bha fios aig Gwrtheyrn gun do rinn e mearachd. Airson a rìoghachd a dhìon, rinn e tairgse-phòsaidh do nighean Hengist. Dh'aontaich Hengist ris an aonadh. Chaidh cuirm mhòr a chumail. Bha na Breatannaich agus na Sagsannaich nan suidhe còmhla.

together.

Suddenly the Saxons rose. They drew their daggers. They started to murder the Britons. Gwrtheyrn and his druids fled for their lives. They spent years wandering. They were looking for a place that was safe for them. They found the place which is today called Nant Gwrtheyrn.

Although the land was steep, it was fertile. The sea was full of fish. For a century there was a population there. They still adhered to the old religion. One day, three monks appeared. They asked the people to build a Christian church. The people refused.

The monks cursed them. And, next day, the men of the village went to sea to fish. A storm arose. The men were drowned. Without the men, the women had to leave Nant Gwrtheyrn. The village was then empty for a long time. And I'll tell you more about its history in the next Litir.

Gu h-obann, dh'èirich na Sagsannaich. Tharraing iad am biodagan. Thòisich iad air na Breatannaich a mhurt. Theich Gwrtheyrn agus a dhraoidhean lem beatha. Chuir iad seachad bliadhnaichean air allaban. Bha iad a' coimhead airson àite a bha sàbhailte dhaibh. Lorg iad an t-àite air a bheil Nant Gwrtheyrn an-diugh.

Ged a bha am fearann cas, bha e torrach. Bha a' mhuir làn èisg. Airson ceud bliadhna, bha sluagh ann. Bha an seann chreideamh aca fhathast. Latha a bha seo, nochd triùir mhanach. Dh'iarr iad air na daoine eaglais Chrìosdail a thogail. Ach dhiùlt na daoine.

Rinn na manaich mallachd orra. Agus, an ath mhadainn, chaidh fir a' bhaile gu muir a dh'iasgach. Dh'èirich stoirm. Chaidh na fir a bhàthadh. Às aonais nam fear, bha aig na boireannaich ri Nant Gwrtheyrn fhàgail. Bha am baile an uair sin falamh airson ùine mhòr. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh tuilleadh mu eachdraidh anns an ath Litir.