

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 669 (which corresponds to Litir 973). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

In the third century AD, there was an economic downturn in Gaul. In Armorica, in the north-west of the continent, the population declined. After a while, new people moved in. They were grasping the opportunity [to get] the land that was free. They were from Britain. And that's the reason we call that country Brittany. You yourself know where 'Great Britain' is!

Some scholars reckon that the old Celtic language was still extant in Armorica when the new people came in. They were also Celts. From the two languages the Breton language came into being. Some people still speak it in Brittany.

It's not clear why people moved from Britain to Armorica. There was a report in the twelfth century that they went there to begin with at the end of the fourth century.

More Britons moved to Brittany in the fifth and sixth centuries. They were coming under the influence of the Angles and Saxons. Around the year 800 AD Old Breton was the language of the people between Brest and Rennes.

Brittany came under the

Anns an treas linn an dèidh Chrìosda, bha crìonadh eacanomaigeach anns a' Ghail. Ann an Armorica, anns an iar-thuath dhen mhòr-thìr, chrìonaich an sluagh. An ceann greis, ghluais feadhainn ùra a-steach. Bha iad a' gabhail a' chothruim air an fhearann a bha saor. 'S ann à Breatainn a bha iad. Agus 's e sin as coireach gun can sinn A' Bhreatainn Bheag ris an dùthaich sin. Tha fios agaibh fhèin far a bheil A' Bhreatainn Mhòr!

Tha cuid de sgoilearan dhen bheachd gun robh an seann chànan Ceilteach fhathast beò ann an Armorica nuair a thàinig na daoine ùra a-steach. 'S e Ceiltich a bha anntasan cuideachd. Às an dà chànan, dh'èirich a' Bhreatannais. Tha feadhainn ga bruidhinn fhathast anns a' Bhreatainn Bhig.

Chan eil e soilleir carson a ghluais daoine à Breatainn a dh'Armorica. Bha aithris anns an dàrna linn deug gun deach iad ann an toiseach aig deireadh a' cheathramh linn.

Ghluais barrachd Bhreatannach don Bhreatainn Bhig anns a' chòigeamh agus siathamh linn. Bha iad a' tighinn fo bhuidhe nan Anglach 's nan Sagsannach. Timcheall na bliadhna ochd ceud (800 AD) b' e Seann Bhreatannais cànan nan daoine eadar Brest is Rennes.

influence of France in the tenth century. It was now a dukedom rather than a kingdom. The dukedom was brought into France officially in the sixteenth century.

Through time Brittany lost its independence and parliament. It came under the cultural influence of France. After the French Revolution, the language suffered prejudice. But the people of Brittany have a strong identity to this day.

Over the channel in Britain, the rule of Rome came to end in 410 AD. Shortly after that, Germanic tribes started to go there. In the year 600, there were only four areas in Britain where the culture and language of the Britons was strong. They were Strathclyde, Rheged, where Cumbria is today, Wales and Cornwall. We'll look at the Britons and their descendants next week.

Thàinig A' Bhreatainn Bheag fo bhuidh na Frainge anns an deiceamh linn. Bha i a-nise na diùcachd, seach na rìoghachd. Thugadh an diùcachd a-steach don Fhraing gu h-oifigeil anns an t-siathamh linn deug.

Tro thìde chaill A' Bhreatainn Bheag a h-eaglais neo-eisimeileach agus a pàrlamaid. Thàinig i fo bhuidh chultarail na Frainge. An dèidh Ar-a-mach na Frainge, dh'fhuiling a cànan claon-bhàidh. Ach tha fèin-aithne làidir aig muinntir na Breatainne Bige chun an latha an-diugh.

Thar a' chaolais ann am Breatainn, thàinig riaghladh na Ròimhe gu crìch ann an ceithir ceud 's a deich (410 AD). Goirid an dèidh sin, thòisich treubhan Gearmailteach air a dhol ann. Anns a' bhliadhna sia ceud (600), bha dìreach ceithir sgìrean ann am Breatainn far an robh cultar is cànan nam Breatannach làidir. B' iad sin Srath Chluaidh, Rheged, far a bheil Cumbria an-diugh, A' Chuimrigh agus A' Chòrn. Bheir sinn sùil air na Breatannaich agus an sliochd an-ath-sheachdain.