

## **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 670 (which corresponds to Litir 974). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

Yan, tyan, tethera, methera, pimp, sethera, lethera, hovera, dovera, dick. *That's counting to ten. But what language is it? Here it is again. I'll continue to fourteen this time.* Yan, tyan, tethera, methera, pimp, sethera, lethera, hovera, dovera, dick, yanadick, tyanadick, tetheradick, metheradick.

*It's a bit similar to Welsh, perhaps. Anyway, pimp also means 'five' in Welsh. And it's not unlike Gaelic – yan, a h-aon, yanadick, a h-aon-deug. Anyway, this is the way that farmers in Cumbria would traditionally be counting their sheep.*

*Some people say that the system is based on Old Brittonic – a Celtic language. The people spoke that language before the Angles came to dominate them.*

*It reminds us that England has a Celtic heritage. And that brings me to Rheged. Outside Cornwall, Wales and Strathclyde, Rheged was the last British kingdom in Britain. I mean by that Celtic British.*

Yan, tyan, tethera, methera, pimp, sethera, lethera, hovera, dovera, dick. Sin cunntadh gu deich. Ach dè an cànan a tha ann? Seo e a-rithist. Leanaidh mi gu ceithir-deug an turas seo. Yan, tyan, tethera, methera, pimp, sethera, lethera, hovera, dovera, dick, yanadick, tyanadick, tetheradick, metheradick.

Tha e car coltach ri Cuimris 's dòcha. Co-dhiù, tha *pimp* cuideachd a' ciallachadh 'còig' ann an Cuimris. Agus chan eil e eucoltach ris a' Ghàidhlig – *yan*, a h-aon, *yanadick*, a h-aon-deug. Co-dhiù, seo an dòigh anns am biodh tuathanaich ann am Cumbria gu traidiseanta a' cunntadh nan caorach aca.

Tha feadhainn ag ràdh gu bheil an siostam air a bhonntachadh air Seann Bhreatannais – cànan Ceilteach. Bha an cànan sin aig na daoine mus d' fhuair na h-Anglaich làmh-an-uachdair orra.

Tha e a' cur nar cuimhne gu bheil dualchas Ceilteach aig Sasainn. Agus tha sin gam thoirt gu Rheged. Taobh a-muigh na Cùirn, na Cuimrigh agus Shrath Chluaidh, b' e Rheged an rioghachd Bhreatannach mu dheireadh ann am Breatainn. Tha mi a' ciallachadh le sin Breatannach Ceilteach.

Bha Rheged timcheall far a bheil

*Rheged was around where Cumbria is today. Cumbria – the land of the Cumbric (Welsh). It’s thought that the kingdom got its name from the Celtic tribe – the Brigantes. Brigant changed to Breged, then Rheged. It came into being after the Romans left, around the year 450. Their first king was a certain Gwrast.*

*Gwrast was followed by his eldest son – Meirchion. After Meirchion’s death, in the year 535, the kingdom was divided into two halves – North Rheged and South Rheged. Carlisle was the capital of the northern kingdom.*

*Shortly after that, we hear about Rheged’s most famous king – a certain Urien. He was the king in the north. But he had enemies on all sides. The Bernicians – an Anglian people – were to the east, and he had Celtic enemies in Strathclyde also. I’ll have more for you on this subject next week.*

Cumbria an-diugh. Cumbria – dùthaich nan Cuimreach. Thathar a’ smaoinichadh gun d’ fhuair an rìoghachd a h-ainm bhon treubh Cheilteach – na *Brigantes*. Dh’atharraich Brigant gu Breged gu Rheged. Thàinig i gu bith às dèidh do na Ròmanaich falbh, timcheall na bliadhna ceithir cheud is caogad (450). B’ e a’ chiad rìgh aca fear Gwrast.

Bha Gwrast air a leantainn le a mhac a bu shine – Meirchion. An dèidh bàs Mheirchion, anns a’ bhliadhna còig ceud, trithead ’s a còig (535), chaidh an rìoghachd a dhèanamh na dhà leth – Rheged a’ Chinn a Tuath agus Rheged a’ Chinn a Deas. B’ e Cathair Luail prìomh bhaile na rìoghachd mu thuath.

Goirid an dèidh sin, tha sinn a’ cluinntinn mun rìgh a b’ ainmeile aig Rheged – fear Urien. Bha esan na rìgh anns a’ cheann a tuath. Ach bha nàimhdean aige air gach taobh. Bha na Berniciaich – sluagh Anglach – air an taobh sear, agus bha nàimhdean Ceilteach aige ann an Srath Chluaidh cuideachd. Bidh tuilleadh agam dhuibh air a’ chuspair seo an-ath-sheachdain.