

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 675 (which corresponds to Litir 979). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

This week, I'm finishing the series of programmes about the Celts. I'll have a wee look at Ireland. After the Normans established themselves in England and Wales, some of them went to Ireland. They grabbed land. Among the families were some that are now very Irish – Burke, Fitzgerald, Butler, Walsh ...

As early as the fourteenth century, the English authorities were concerned that many people of Norman ancestry were behaving like Irish. They were even abandoning the English and French languages and speaking Irish!

In 1366, the Duke of Clarence called an Irish parliament in Kilkenny. He was working on behalf of the English king, Edward III. The parliament agreed the Statutes of Kilkenny. Under the statutes, marriage between Irish and English people was illegal. The English were not permitted to use an Irish given-name. The English had to learn the English language. And it was not permitted to allow Gaelic storytellers into English

An t-seachdain seo, tha mi a' cur crìoch air an t-sreath phrògraman air na Ceiltich. Bheir mi sùil bheag air Èirinn. An dèidh gun do stèidhich na Normanaich iad fhèin ann an Sasainn agus sa Chuimrigh, chaidh feadhainn dhiubh a dh'Èirinn. Ghabh iad grèim air fearann. Am measg nan teaghlaichean bha feadhainn a tha a-nise gu math Èireannach – Burke, FitzGerald, Butler, Walsh ...

Cho tràth ris a' cheathramh linn deug, bha dragh air na h-ùghdarrasan Sasannach gun robh mòran, aig an robh sinnsireachd Normanach, gan giùlan fhèin mar Èireannaich. Bha iad eadhon a' trèigsinn na Beurla 's na Fraingis agus a' bruidhinn Gaeilge!

Ann an trì cheud deug, seasgad 's a sia (1366), ghairm Diùc Chlarence pàrlamaid Èireannach ann an Cill Chainnigh. Bha e ag obair às leth rìgh Shasainn, Eideard III. Dh'aontaich a' phàrlamaid Reachdan Cill Chainnigh. Fo na reachdan, bha pòsadh eadar Èireannaich agus Sasannaich mì-laghail. Cha robh cead aig Sasannaich ainm-baistidh Èireannach a chleachdadh. Bha aig na Sasannaich ri Beurla ionnsachadh. Agus cha robh e ceadaichte seanchaidhean Gàidhealach a leigeil a-steach gu sgìrean Sasannach. Bha an t-eagal orra gun robh na seanchaidhean ri

areas. They feared that the storytellers were spying!

The Statutes didn't work. The 'Old English' grew more Gaelic. It's in the time of the Tudors and Stuarts that the division we see today arose in Ireland.

In 1607, the Flight of the Earls took place. The two most powerful Gaelic lords – the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell – fled. They were hoping to return to Ireland with the assistance of the Spanish. But they didn't return.

The Flight of the Earls was a terrible blow to the Gaels of Scotland as well. The relationship between the Gaels of the two countries was never again as it had been before.

It's interesting to contemplate – if southern Britain had remained Celtic, what would Britain and Ireland look like today? Would Ireland be a united country? Would Wales exist? Would the Cornish be speaking British? Would Gaelic be the primary language of Scotland? Ach ... well ... it is but a dream!

obair-brathaidh!

Cha do dh'obraich na Reachdan. Dh'fhàs na 'Seann Sasannaich' na bu Ghàidhealaiche. 'S ann ri linn nan Tudoran agus nan Stiùbhartach a dh'èirich an sgaradh a chù sinn an-diugh ann an Èirinn.

Ann an sia ceud deug 's a seachd (1607), thachair Imeachd nan Iarlan. Theich an dithis thighearnan Gàidhealach a bu chumhachdaiche – Iarlan Thìr Eòghainn agus Thìr Chonaill. Bha iad an dòchas tilleadh a dh'Èirinn le taic nan Spàinnteach. Ach cha do thill.

Bha Imeachd nan Iarlan na buille chruaidh do Ghàidheil na h-Alba cuideachd. Cha robh an càirdeas eadar Gàidheil an dà dhùthaich a-chaidh tilleadh mar a bha e roimhe.

Tha e inntinneach a bhith a' meòrachadh – nam biodh ceann a deas Bhreatainn air fuireach Ceilteach, dè an coltas a bhiodh air Breatainn is Èirinn an-diugh? Am biodh Èirinn na rìoghachd aonaichte? Am biodh a' Chuimrigh ann? Am biodh na Còrnaich a' bruidhinn Breatannais? Am biodh a' Ghàidhlig mar phrìomh chànan na h-Alba? Ach ... uill ... chan eil ann ach brùadar!