

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 674 (which corresponds to Litir 978). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

My series of programmes on the Celts is approaching the end. This week we'll look at the Isle of Man.

The Isle of Man is not part of the United Kingdom. They have their own parliament. They don't send representatives to the House of Commons in London. They are, however, connected to the British crown. The Queen of the United Kingdom is their queen.

Gaelic might have been spoken on the Isle of Man as early as the fifth century AD. But the English and the Scandinavians also got involved with the island. In 1266 it came to Scotland as part of the Treaty of Perth.

At the end of the fourteenth century, the Isle of Man came under the control of the English kings. And the connections between the Manx and the Gaels in Scotland and Ireland grew weaker.

The New testament appeared in Manx Gaelic in 1767. The complete Bible came out in 1775. That was a generation before the full Gaelic Bible appeared in Scotland.

Tha an sreath phrògraman agam air na Ceiltich a' teannadh ris an deireadh. An t-seachdain seo bheir sinn sùil air Eilean Mhanainn.

Chan eil Eilean Mhanainn mar phàirt dhen Rìoghachd Aonaichte. Tha pàrlamaid aca fhèin. Cha bhi iad a' cur riochdairean gu Taigh nan Cumantan ann an Lunnainn. Tha iad, ge-tà, co-cheangailte ri crùn Bhreatainn. 'S i Banrigh na Rìoghachd Aonaichte a' bhanrigh acasan.

'S dòcha gun robh Gàidhlig air a bruidhinn ann an Eilean Mhanainn cho tràth ris a' chòigeamh linn an dèidh Chrìosd. Ach bha na Sasannaich agus na Lochlannaich a' gabhail gnothach ris an eilean. Ann an dà cheud deug, seasgad 's a sia (1266), ghabh Alba grèim air fo Chùmhnant Pheairt.

Aig deireadh a' cheathramh linn deug, thàinig Eilean Mhanainn fo smachd nan rìghrean Sasannach. Agus dh'fhàs na ceanglaichean eadar na Manainnich agus na Gàidheil ann an Alba is Èirinn na bu laige.

Nochd an Tiomnadh Nuadh anns a' Ghàidhlig Mhanainnich ann an seachd ceud deug, seasgad 's a seachd (1767). Thàinig am Bìoball slàn a-mach ann an

But the writing system in Manx Gaelic is different from the system of the Scots and the Irish. It's easier for a Scottish Gael to understand the Manx language when it is spoken, rather than when it is written. For example, the Manx write 'is thu fhèin?' as AS OO HENE. On the other hand, perhaps their system is easier for English-speakers.

They call their lower house of parliament the House of Keys in English. I was told that the name is not connected to keys. It comes from Yn Kiare as Feed – meaning 'the twenty four'- because that's the number of members in the house.

Manx Gaelic is taught in some of the schools on the island. It came close to [its] death but it survives. Long may the three Gaelic languages live on!

seachd ceud deug, seachdad 's a còig (1775). Bha sin ginealach mus do nochd am Bìoball Gàidhlig slàn ann an Alba.

Ach tha an siostam sgrìobhaidh anns a' Ghàidhlig Mhanainnich eadar-dhealaichte bho shiostam nan Albannach 's nan Èireannach. Tha e nas fhasa do Ghàidheal Albannach an cànan Manainneach a thuigsinn nuair a tha i air a labhairt, seach nuair a tha i sgrìobhte. Mar eisimpleir, tha na Manainnich a' sgrìobhadh 'is thu fhèin?' mar AS OO HENE. Air an làimh eile, 's dòcha gu bheil an siostam aca nas fhasa do luchd na Beurla.

'S e *House of Keys* a chanas iad ann am Beurla ris an taigh ìosal sa phàrlamaid aca. Chaidh innse dhomh nach eil an t-ainm co-cheangailte ri iuchraichean. Tha e a' tighinn bho *Yn Kiare as Feed* – a' ciallachadh 'An Ceithir air Fhichead' – oir 's e sin àireamh nam ball anns an taigh.

Tha a' Ghàidhlig Mhanainneach air a teagasg ann an cuid de sgoiltean anns an eilean. Thàinig i faisg air a bàs, ach tha i beò fhathast. Guma fad' a mhaireas na trì cànanan Gàidhealach beò!