

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Anndra MacBhàtair

A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 1,139. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 835 corresponds to Litir 1,139.

Seo ceist dhuibh. Saoil an robh Gàidhlig sam bith aig a’ chiad fhear dhubh a chluich ball-coise airson sgioba nàiseanta na h-Alba?

B’ e an cluicheadair Anndra MacBhàtair, no Andrew Watson, a chluich airson sgioba na h-Alba anns na h-ochdadan dhen naoidheamh linn deug. Tha cuid a’ cumail a-mach gum b’ esan a chiad fhear dubh anns an t-saoghal a chluich ball-coise aig ìre eadar-nàiseanta. Agus carson a tha mi a’ cur na ceist – an robh Gàidhlig sam bith aige? Uill, a chionn ’s gun robh a theaghlach, air taobh athar, às a’ Ghàidhealtachd.

Rugadh Anndra ann an Guiana anns na h-Innseachan an Iar ann an ochd ceud deug, caogad ’s a sia (1856). Bhuineadh a mhàthair do Ghuiana, agus tha dùil gun robh sinnsireachd Afraganach aice. B’ e a h-ainm Anna no Hannah Rose.

Bhuineadh athair Anndra do dh’Alba. B’ esan Pàdraig MacBhàtair – Peter Miller Watson – agus rugadh e ann an Cill Tighearn ann an Ros an Ear ann an ochd ceud deug ’s a còig (1805). Bha e na uachdaran co-cheangailte ri gnìomhachas an t-siùcair ann an Guiana.

Tha Cill Tighearn faisg air Bail’ Eòghainn. Aig toiseach an naoidheamh linn deug, bha Gàidhlig làidir anns an sgìre sin. Tha an Seann Chunntas Staitistigeach, a chaidh fhoillseachadh ann an seachd ceud deug, naochad ’s a h-aon (1791), ag innse dhuinn gur i a’ Ghàidhlig a bu mhotha a bh’ air a bruidhinn anns an sgìre sin aig an àm, ach gun robh a’ Bheurla a’ dèanamh adhartas.

B’ e am fear a sgrìobh an cunntas ministear Chill Tighearn, an t-Urramach Eanraig Robasdan – *Harry Robertson* ann am Beurla. ’S e mo thuigse gum b’ esan sinn-seanair Anndra MhicBhàtair. Bhuineadh e fhèin agus na Robasdanaich do Shiorrachd Rois. Cha chuireadh e iongnadh sam bith orm nam biodh Gàidhlig aigesan agus aig a nighinn, seanmhair Anndra. Ach an do lean an cànan cho fada ri ginealach Phàdraig? ’S dòcha nach do lean.

Bhuineadh Clann ’ic Bhàtair do na Crìochan bho thùs. Chan eil mi an dùil gun robh Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn anns an taobh sin dhen teaghlach.

Co-dhiù, air ais gu Anndra, an cluicheadair ball-coise. Chaidh e fhèin is a phiuthar Annetta **cuide rin athair** a dh’fhuireach ann am Breatainn nuair a bha Anndra òg. A rèir choltais, dh’fhuirich am màthair ann an Guiana.

Bha Pàdraig beartach agus chaidh Anndra gu sgoiltean prìobhaideach ann an Sasainn. Dhearbh e gun robh e fìor mhath mar chluicheadair ball-coise. Chaidh e don oilthigh ann an Glaschu. Dh’fhuirich e sa bhaile sin airson ùine agus phòs e tè à

Glaschu. Thòisich e air cluich airson Queen's Park – cluba mòr aig an àm – agus chaidh a ghairm don sgioba nàiseanta trì tursan.

An uair sin, ghluais e a Shasainn le obair. Agus cha robh Comann Ball-coise na h-Alba ach a' taghadh chluicheadairean a bha stèidhichte ann an Alba. Mar sin, chluich e do dh'Alba dìreach trì tursan. Ach abair gun robh e soirbheachail. Seo toraidhean nan geamannan anns an robh e an sàs: Sasainn 1 – Alba 6; A' Chuimrigh 1 – Alba 5; agus Alba 5 – Sasainn 1. **B' iad sin na làithean!**

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Faclan na Litreach: Anndra MacBhàtair: *Andrew Watson*; sinnsireachd Afraganach: *African ancestry*; Cill Tighearn: *Kiltearn*; Ros an Ear: *Easter Ross*; Bail' Eòghainn: *Evanton*; Seann Chunntas Staitistigeach: *Old Statistical Account*; sinn-seanair: *great-grandfather*; na Crìochan: *the Borders*; beartach: *wealthy*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Saoil an robh Gàidhlig sam bith aig a' chiad fhear dhubh a chluich ball-coise airson sgioba nàiseanta na h-Alba?: *do you reckon the first black man to play football for Scotland's national team had any Gaelic?*; anns na h-ochdadan dhen naoidheamh linn deug: *in the 1880s*; a chiad fhear dubh anns an t-saoghal a chluich ball-coise aig ìre eadar-nàiseanta: *the first black man in the world who played football at international level*; air taobh athar: *on his father's side*; rugadh Anndra ann an Guiana anns na h-Innseachan an Iar: *Andrew was born in Guyana in the West Indies*; bha e na uachdaran co-cheangailte ri gnìomhachas an t-siùcair: *he was a landlord connected to the sugar industry*; gur i a' Ghàidhlig a bu mhotha a bh' air a bruidhinn anns an sgìre sin aig an àm: *that it was Gaelic that was widely spoken in that parish at the time*; ach gun robh a' Bheurla a' dèanamh adhartas: *but that the English language was making progress*; bhuineadh e fhèin agus na Robasdanaich do Shiorrachd Rois: *he himself and the Robertsons belonged to Ross-shire*; cha chuireadh e iongnadh sam bith orm nam biodh Gàidhlig aigesan agus aig a nighinn, seanmhair Anndra: *it would not surprise me at all if he and his daughter, Andrew's grandmother, spoke Gaelic*; an do lean an cànan cho fada ri ginealach Phàdraig?: *did the language persist until Peter's generation?*; 's dòcha nach do lean: *perhaps not*; dhearbh e gun robh e fìor mhath mar chluicheadair ball-coise: *he proved that he was an excellent footballer*; chaidh a ghairm don sgioba nàiseanta trì tursan: *he was called up to the national team three times*; cha robh Comann Ball-coise na h-Alba ach a' taghadh chluicheadairean a bha stèidhichte ann an Alba: *the Scottish Football Association were only picking players who were based in Scotland*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Chaidh e fhèin is a phiuthar **cuide rin athair**: *he and his sister went [together] with their father*. Cuide ri is a dialectal alternative to còmhla ri. Rin is her a combined form of the preposition ri and the possessive article an (third person plural).

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **B' iad sin na làithean!**: *those were the days!*

Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA