

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Geamannan Gàidhealach (1)

*Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,337. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,033 corresponds to Litir 1,337. The Litir is also available at [www.bbc.co.uk/litir](http://www.bbc.co.uk/litir) and [www.learnghaelic.scot/litir](http://www.learnghaelic.scot/litir). Ruairidh can be contacted at [fios@learnghaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learnghaelic.scot).*

Dè na geamannan Gàidhealach a chluicheas sinn an-diugh? Tha mòran dhiubh air bàs fhaighinn, tha eagal orm. Ach saoil a bheil dòigh ann feadhainn a thoirt beò às ùr? Feumaidh mi mìneachadh an toiseach, dè tha mi a' ciallachadh le 'geamannan Gàidhealach'. Mar as trice, bidh daoine a' smaoinichadh mu 'Highland Games' – farpaisean anns am bi daoine làidir a' cur a' chabair no a' caitheamh na cloiche.

Ach chan e sin na geamannan air a bheil mi a' beachdachadh. Tha m' aire air geamannan beaga a bhiodh na Gàidheil a' cluich aig an taigh, air a bheil ainmean Gàidhlig.

Bha mi a' leughadh alt anns an iris *The Celtic Review* air a bheil 'Uist Games'. Chaidh a sgrìobhadh le fear Alasdair Moireasdan. Chaidh fhoillseachadh ann an naoi ceud deug 's a h-ochd (1908). Tha e a' dèanamh tuairisgeul de dh'fhichead geama. Tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu chuid dhiubh.

An toiseach, **geama a bha gu leòr** ann an Uibhist **fhathast a' cluich** aig deireadh an naoidheamh linn deug. B' e sin *Speilean*. Seo mar a thathar a' cluich a' gheama sin.

Tha dà sgioba ann, fear a tha ri batadh, agus fear a tha ri glacadh. Thathar a' dèanamh toll anns an talamh anns am bithear a' cur aon cheann *speile*, pìos beag fiodha. Tha am ball air a chur air a' cheann sin dhen speil os cionn an tuill. Bidh am batair a' bualadh ceann eile an speile le bata, a' cur a' bhuill suas. Fhad 's a tha am ball shuas, tha an neach sin ga bhualadh **le uile neart**.

Tha e a' feuchainn ris am ball iomain cho fada 's as urrainn. Ma ghlacas duine sam bith e mus ruig e an talamh, bidh am batair a-mach. Ach ma bhuaileas am ball an talamh, bidh a' chiad duine dhen sgioba-glacaidh a gheibh greim air, ga thilgeil a dh'ionnsaigh a' bhatair. Chanadh iad gun robh an duine sin 'a' toirt faireag'.

Bidh am batair a' bualadh a' bhuill a-rithist. Ma ghlacas duine e, tha am batair a-mach. Mura glac, bidh a' chiad neach a gheibh grèim air a' bhall ga thilgeil a dh'ionnsaigh an tuill. 'S e *piceadh* a chanadh daoine ri sin. Ma thèid am ball a-steach don toll, tha am batair a-mach. Mura tèid, bidh daoine a' tomhas dè cho fada 's a tha am ball bhon toll nuair a stadas e.

Ma tha an t-astar nas lugha na fad a' bhata, tha am batair a-mach. Ma tha e nas motha na fad a' bhata, bidh am batair a' cumail a dol agus gheibh an sgioba aige puing.

Tha an geama a' leantainn gus an ruig aon sgioba ceud puing no gus am bi iad uile a-mach. An uair sin bidh an sgioba eile a' batadh.

Tha Alasdair Moireasdan a' dèanamh tuairisgeul de gheama eile dhen aon seòrsa a bha rudeigin coltach ri *rounders*. 'S e *Cluich an Taighe* an t-ainm a bh' air. Agus tha e ag innse dhuinn gun robh treas geama ann a bha coltach ri Cluich an Taighe, ach gur e *Goid a' Chrùin* a bha air mar ainm.

'S ann ainneamh a chì sinn geamannan dhen t-seòrsa air an cluich ann an Alba san latha a th' ann – ann an coimhearsnachd no cànan sam bith. Is mòr am beud.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** batair: *batter*; a' tomhas: *measuring*; an t-astar: *the distance*; puing: *point*; tuairisgeul: *description*; treas: *third*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Tha mòran dhiubh air bàs fhaighinn, tha eagal orm: *many of them have died a death, I'm afraid*; saoil a bheil dòigh ann feadhainn a thoirt beò às ùr?: *do you think there is a way of reviving any?*; feumaidh mi mìneachadh an toiseach: *first, I must explain*; farpaisean anns am bi daoine làidir a' cur a' chabair no a' caitheamh na cloiche: *competitions in which strong people toss the caber or put the stone*; tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu chuid dhiubh: *I want to tell you about some of them*; tha dà sgioba ann, fear a tha ri batadh, agus fear a tha ri glacadh: *there are two teams, one that is batting and one that is fielding*; thathar a' dèanamh toll anns an talamh: *a hole is made in the ground*; anns am bithear a' cur aon cheann speile: *in which one end of a speile is put*; os cionn an tuill: *above the hole*; a' cur a' bhuill suas: *sending the ball upwards*; mus ruig e an talamh: *before it reaches the ground*; bidh a' chiad duine dhen sgioba-glacaidh a gheibh greim air, ga thilgeil a dh'ionnsaigh a' bhatair: *the first person of the fielding team that grabs it throws it towards the batter*; ma thèid am ball a-steach don toll, tha am batair a-mach: *if the ball goes into the hole, the batter is out*; nas lugha na fad a' bhata: *less than the length of the bat*; gus an ruig aon sgioba ceud puing: *until one team reaches a hundred points*; san latha a th' ann: *in this day and age*; is mòr am beud: *more's the pity*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** **geama a bha gu leòr** ann an Uibhist **fhathast a' cluich:** *a game that many people in Uist were still playing*. Gu leòr is recognised as an adverb grammatically meaning 'enough, plenty' (and, of course, 'galore') but idiomatically it can have other grammatical functions. Here it functions as a noun meaning 'many people', which might be interpreted as a reduction of daoine gu leòr or gu leòr de dhaoine. I might have replaced gu leòr with mòran daoine or just mòran, and if the people were particularly numerous I might have used the noun uimhir.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** tha an neach sin ga bhualadh **le uile neart:** *that person hits it with all their ['his'] strength*.

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