

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 1,101 (which corresponds to Litir 1,405). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Do you have a Gaelic word for 'pine cone'? The most common is durcan. But there is another word. That is cneatag. It is spelt in other ways – as cneutag, cnèatag (with cn at the beginning) and also creutag with cr at the beginning.

Cneatag also means 'a wooden football, a cricket ball or a shinty ball'. Where did the word cneat come from? I'm not sure. I didn't find it in the Irish or Manx dictionaries. I wonder if it came from English. There was a sport in England called creag in the fourteenth century. Some people think that 'cricket' came from that word. Pine cones were useful as balls in games like cricket.

I was considering other Gaelic words connected to cricket. What do we call a stick with which a ball is struck? In shinty, we strike a ball with a caman. But a 'caman' has to be bent.

In cricket, the bat is straight rather than bent. We call it a slacan. Slacan. He is batting – tha e a' slacadh no tha e a' batadh.

In English, there is a rather strange word connected to cricket. That is 'wicket'. Originally it meant

A bheil facal Gàidhlig agaibh airson 'pine cone'? 'S e am fear as cumanta – durcan. Ach tha facal a bharrachd ann. 'S e sin cneatag. Tha e air a litreachadh ann an diofar dhòighean – mar cneutag, cnèatag (le cn aig an toiseach) agus cuideachd creutag le cr aig an toiseach.

Tha cneatag cuideachd a' ciallachadh 'a wooden football, a cricket ball or a shinty ball'. Cò às a thàinig am facal cneat? Chan eil mi cinnteach. Cha do lorg mi e anns na faclairan Èireannach no Manainneach. Saoil an tàinig e bhon Bheurla? Bha spòrs ann an Sasainn air an robh creag mar ainm anns a' cheathramh linn deug. Tha dùil aig cuid gun tàinig 'cricket' on fhacal sin. Bha durcain, no cneatagan, feumail mar 'bhuill' airson gheamannan mar chriogaid.

Bha mi a' beachdachadh air faclan Gàidhlig eile co-cheangailte ri criogaid. Dè chanas sinn ris a' bhata leis am bithear a' bualadh a' bhuill? Ann an iomain, bidh sinn a' bualadh a' bhuill le caman. Ach feumaidh 'caman' a bhith cam.

Ann an criogaid, tha am bata dìreach, seach cam. Canaidh sinn slacan ris. Slacan. He is batting – tha e a' slacadh no tha e a' batadh.

Ann am Beurla, tha facal car annasach co-cheangailte ri criogaid. 'S e sin wicket. Bho thùs bha e a' ciallachadh

'small gate'. A wicket would be next to, or part of, a large gate. The wicket was large enough for only one person.

In cricket, 'wicket' means the three stumps that a batter protects. And what is the Gaelic for 'wicket' in cricket? Today, we often use the English word. Chaill Sasainn trì wickets ro àm lòn 'England lost three wickets before lunch'.

But the dictionaries give us this for 'wicket' in cricket: geata (a gate). That is meaningful enough. Leagail geata 'the fall of a wicket'. Glèidheadair-geata 'wicket keeper'. Now, 'wicket' has an additional meaning in cricket – the narrow strip between the two wickets (stumps). I'll call it a rèidhlean – but perhaps you have a better word ...

'geata beag'. Bhiodh wicket ri taobh, no mar phàirt de, gheata mòr. Bha am wicket mòr gu leòr airson dìreach aon duine.

Ann an criogaid, tha wicket a' ciallachadh nan trì stoban a tha slacair a' dìon. Agus dè a' Ghàidhlig a tha air wicket ann an criogaid? An-diugh, bidh sinn a' cleachdadh an fhacail Bheurla gu tric. Chaill Sasainn trì wickets ro àm lòn 'England lost three wickets before lunch'.

Ach tha na faclair a' toirt seo dhuinn airson wicket ann an criogaid: geata. Tha sin ciallach gu leòr. Leagail geata 'the fall of a wicket'. Glèidheadair-geata 'wicket keeper'. Nise, tha ciall a bharrachd air wicket ann an criogaid – an raon caol eadar an dà gheata. Canaidh mise 'an rèidhlean' ris – ach math dh'fhaodte gu bheil facal nas fheàrr agaibh fhèin ...