

Unit 2

1 Hockey or shinty?

Gwen: Hi Ethan. You look tired! Have you been practising the bagpipes?

Ethan: No, don't be silly. I've been playing shinty.

Gwen: Shinty? What's that?

Ethan: It's a sport. Like hockey, only older. And hockey is played everywhere, but shinty ...

Gwen: I've never heard of it. Is it a Scottish sport?

Ethan: Yes, like lots of sports. You know, golf, football, ice hockey ...

Gwen: Football is English and ice hockey is Canadian.

Ethan: Is it? Well, you know more than me, Gwen.

Gwen: Well, we learnt that ice hockey was first played in Canada in the nineteenth century. It's still one of the most popular sports in Canada and the USA, but people play it in Europe too. Everybody knows that football is an English game. But tell me about shinty. Is it only played in Scotland?

Ethan: Yes, it's only played in the Scottish Highlands really.

Gwen: But you don't live in the Highlands.

Ethan: Yes, I know. There are a few teams in the cities too.

Gwen: And how many people play on a team?

Ethan: Twelve. It's very similar to hockey, but of course there are only eleven people on a hockey team. Officially hockey was started in England in the eighteenth century, but you know I'm sure the English just stole the game from us like they stole our land.

Gwen: Oh Ethan. You know the Scots fought the English too, but don't let's have an argument. So how old is shinty then?

Ethan: It's been played since prehistoric times. And it was very cold then so I'm sure they played it on ice too. It's very much like ice hockey because it's ...

Gwen: But there are only six players on ice hockey teams, aren't there?

Ethan: Gwen, how do you know so much about sport? You don't play anything.

Gwen: That isn't true – and I read a lot and I like running!

Ethan: Anyway, as I was saying ... shinty is like ice hockey because they're both really hard games.

Gwen: Just like the Scots.

Ethan: Yes, so be careful what you say!