

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 389 (which corresponds to Litir 693). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk.

The Soap Man. A man who made a fortune from soap. Lord Leverhulme. He was at one time the landlord of Lewis and Harris.

Why am I naming Leverhulme?. Well, several weeks ago, I was on another estate that belonged to him. But I was in England, near Bolton.

William Hesketh Lever was born in Bolton in 1851. In 1885 he and his brother started the company Sunlight Soap.

He bought the Rivington Hall estate near Bolton. That was around a hill called Rivington Pike. He gave Liverpool Corporation the opportunity to buy the land. But the Corporation refused the opportunity. Lever retained 45 acres for himself. He gave the rest to Bolton Corporation. Just as he gave land away in Lewis, which is still owned by the Stornoway Trust.

Lever started to create a public park on Rivington Pike. But Liverpool Corporation changed their mind on the land. They were now wanting it. They took the matter to Parliament in London.

Bodach an t-Siabainn. Fear a rinn fortan à siabann. Am Morair Leverhulme. Bha e uaireigin na uachdaran air Leòdhas agus Na Hearadh.

Carson a tha mi ag ainmeachadh Leverhulme? Uill, o chionn beagan sheachdainean, bha mi air oighreachd eile a bhuineadh dha. Ach bha mi ann an Sasainn, faisg air Bolton.

Rugadh Uilleam Hesketh Lever ann am Bolton ann an ochd ceud deug, caogad 's a h-aon (1851). Ann an ochdad 's a còig (1885), thòisich e fhèin agus a bhràthair a' chompanaidh *Sunlight Soap*.

Cheannaich e oighreachd Rivington Hall faisg air Bolton. Bha sin timcheall cnoc air a bheil Rivington Pike. Thug e cothrom don Liverpool Corporation am fearann a cheannach. Bha Liverpool a' faighinn uisge bho lochan aig bonn a' chnuic. Ach dhiùlt an Corporation an cothrom. Chùm Lever ceathrad 's a còig acaire dha fhèin. Thug e an còrr do Bholton Corporation. Dìreach mar a thug e fearann seachad ann an Leòdhas, a tha fhathast le Urras Steòrnabhaigh.

Thòisich Lever air pàirc phoblach a chruthachadh air Rivington Pike. Ach dh'atharraich Liverpool Corporation am beachd air an fhearann. Bha iad ga iarraidh a-nise. Thug iad a' chùis don Phàrlamaid ann an Lunnainn. Aig a' cheann thall, bha

Eventually, Liverpool had to buy the land. But they paid twice the amount Lever paid. Lever kept his house and garden. Liverpool had to create a public park, however – and call it ‘Lever Park’. That’s still its name today.

In 1913, the wooden house that Lever built in the park was burned to the ground. It was Edith Rigby that did it. Edith was a suffragette [a lobbyist for voting rights for women].

Lever built a new stone house on the site. That was his summer house until he died in 1925. It is said that he contracted the pneumonia that killed him in that house. But he died in London. With his death, the history of Lewis and Harris changed, as did that of Lever Park on Rivington Pike.

aig Liverpool ris am fearann a cheannach. Ach phàigh iad a dhà uiread ’s a phàigh Lever. Ghlèidh Lever an taigh agus leas aige. Bha aig Liverpool ri pàirc phoblach a dhèanamh, ge-tà – agus an t-ainm a chur oirre – ‘Lever Park’. ’S e sin an t-ainm a tha oirre fhathast.

Ann an naoi ceud deug is trì-deug (1913), chaidh an taigh fiodha a thog Lever anns a’ phàirc a losgadh gu làr. ’S i Edith Rigby a rinn e. Bha Edith na tagraiche airson còraichean bhòtaidh do bhoireannaich.

Thog Lever taigh ùr cloiche air an làraich. B’ e sin a dhachaigh shamhraidh gus an d’ fhuair e bàs ann an naoi ceud deug ’s còig air fhichead (1925). Thathar ag ràdh gun do ghabh e am fiabhras-clèibhe a thug bàs dha anns an taigh sin. Ach chaochail e ann an Lunnainn. Le a bhàs, dh’atharraich eachdraidh Leòdhais is Na Hearadh, a bharrachd air Lever Park air Rivington Pike.