

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 426 (which corresponds to Litir 730). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about The Seven Men of Knoydart. They were wanting land for themselves in Knoydart, in the West Highlands. They were opposing the landlord, Lord Brocket. Brocket was wealthy. He had been a Conservative member of parliament. He had a bad reputation because he was supportive of the Nazis in Germany. And he was a good friend of Adolf Hitler. He was over in Germany for the Nuremberg Rally in 1938.

Ten years after Nuremberg, Brocket was involved in a legal struggle against The Seven Men of Knoydart. The raiders had support. The priest, Fr Colin Macpherson, who belonged to South Uist, was very supportive of them. The raiders reckoned they were following in the footsteps of heroes in Vatersay, Skye, Lewis and other places. In those places, the people stood up for their rights to live on the land of their ancestors.

And what did the landlord do? Hamish Henderson put words in Brocket's mouth in his song The Men of Knoydart: 'You're a shower

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Sheachdnar Chnòideirt. Bha iad ag iarraidh fearann dhaibh fhèin ann an Cnòideart, air taobh an iar na Gàidhealtachd. Bha iad a' dol an aghaidh an uachdarain, am Morair Brocket. Bha airgead mòr aig Brocket. Bha e air a bhith na bhall-pàrlamaid Tòraidheach. Bha droch chliù aige, oir bha e taiceil do na Natsaich anns a' Ghearmailt. Agus bha e na dheagh charaid do dh'Adolf Hitler. Bha e thall sa Ghearmailt airson Co-chruinneachadh mòr Nuremberg anns a' bhliadhna trithead 's a h-ochd (1938).

Deich bliadhna an dèidh Nuremberg, bha Brocket a' strì anns a' chùirt an aghaidh Seachdnar Chnòideirt. Bha taic aig na reudairean. Bha an sagart, Mgr Cailean Mac a' Phearsain, a bhuineadh do dh'Uibhist a Deas, gu math taiceil dhaibh. Bha na reudairean dhen bheachd gun robh iad a' leantainn ann an cas-cheumannan ghaisgeach ann am Bhatarsaigh, san Eilean Sgitheanach, ann an Leòdhas is àiteachan eile. Anns na h-àiteachan sin, sheas na daoine an còraichean a bhith a' fuireach air fearann an sinnsirean.

Agus dè rinn an t-uachdaran? Chuir Seumas MacEanraig faclan ann am beul Bhrocket anns an òran aige The Men of Knoydart: 'You're a shower of

of tartan bolshies, but I'll soon have you licked, I'll write to the Court of Session for an interim interdict...'

That's what happened. Brocket won the court case. But he got fed up of the strife. He sold the estate in 1952.

Between that year and 1999, Knoydart was in the hands of five other people – Col. Sir Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, Major Nigel Chamberlayne-Macdonald, Philip Rhodes, Reg Brealey and Stephen Hinchcliffe. The estate's population was falling. Development was needed.

In 1999, a community organisation, the Knoydart Foundation, bought the estate. Now, more young people live in Knoydart than before. And economic developments are taking place. The seven raiders didn't win their own struggle. But perhaps they built a foundation, upon which the Knoydart Foundation eventually built.

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'S e sin a thachair. Bhuannaich Brocket a' chùis-chùirte. Ach dh'fhàs e sgìth dhen strì. Reic e an oighreachd ann an caogad 's a dhà (1952).

Eadar a' bhliadhna sin agus naochad 's a naoi (1999), bha Cnòideart ann an làmhan còignear eile – An Coirneal Sir Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, Major Nigel Chamberlayne-Macdonald, Philip Rhodes, Reg Brealey agus Stephen Hinchcliffe. Bha sluagh na h-oighreachd a' dol sìos. Bha leasachadh a dhìth.

Ann an naoi ceud deug, naochad 's a naoi (1999), cheannaich buidheann coimhearsnachd, Bunait Chnòideirt, an oighreachd. A-nise, tha barrachd dhaoine òga a' fuireach ann an Cnòideart na bha. Agus tha leasachaidhean eaconamach a' dol air adhart. Cha do bhuannaich an seachdnar reudairean san strì aca. Ach 's dòcha gun do rinn iad bunait, air an do thog Bunait Chnòideirt aig a' cheann thall.