

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 470 (which corresponds to Litir 774). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

The crofters in the parish of Lochs in Lewis were going ahead with the Park Deer Raid. The government wasn't happy. They were on the side of the landlord. They sent police and soldiers to the island. That was in November 1887.

On the third day of the affair, the sheriff, Mr Fraser, met a group of crofters on the Park estate. He read the Riot Act in English. He explained the act in Gaelic. The crofters – who were polite to the sheriff – started to return home.

The raid came to an end peacefully. Six people were arrested – Ruairidh Sheòrais, Iain 'an Mhurchaidh, Murchadh an Tàilleir, Calum Alasdair Ruaidh and Dòmhnall Aonghais Iain. They were from Balallan, Gravir and Crossbost.

And there was a sixth person – the schoolmaster, Donald MacRae from Balallan. The six people appeared at the High Court in Edinburgh. There were three judges, and a jury.

The power of the state was against them. But the crofters

Bha croitearan air na Lochan ann an Leòdhas a' dol air adhart le 'Creach Mhòr nam Fiadh'. Cha robh an riaghaltas toilichte. Bha iadsan air taobh an uachdarain. Chuir iad poilis agus saighdearan don eilean. Bha sin anns an t-Samhain ochd ceud deug, ochdad 's a seachd (1887).

Air an treas latha dhen ghnòthach, thachair an siorram, Mgr Friseal, ri buidheann de chroitearan air oighreachd na Pàirce. Leugh e Achd na h-Aimhreit ann am Beurla. Mhìnich e an achd ann an Gàidhlig. Thòisich na croitearan – a bha modhail don t-siorram – air tilleadh dhachaigh.

Thàinig a' chreach gu ceann gu sìtheil. Bha sianar air an cur an grèim – Ruairidh Sheòrais, Iain 'an Mhurchaidh, Murchadh an Tàilleir, Calum Alasdair Ruaidh agus Dòmhnall Aonghais Iain. Bha iad à Bail' Ailein, Grabhair agus Crossabost.

Agus bha siathamh duine ann – am maighstir-sgoile, Dòmhnall MacRath à Bail' Ailein. Nochd an t-sianar aig an Àrd-chùirt ann an Dùn Èideann. Bha trìuir bhritheamhan ann, agus diùraidh.

Bha cumhachd na stàite nan aghaidh. Ach fhuair na croitearan taic

received a lot of support from people around the world. Thousands of pounds were sent to them.

Scotland's Solicitor-General said that the six people should be prosecuted for rioting. He said it was Donald MacRae that was the leader. The Solicitor-General had sympathy for the crofters, he said. But he had no sympathy for MacRae. The teacher was misusing his position. He was encouraging people to break the law.

But the jury supported MacRae and his companions. They didn't deliberate for long. Within half an hour, they delivered a verdict – not guilty. Donald MacRae was lifted on supporters' shoulders down the High Street in Edinburgh.

Donald got involved in politics. He stood for Parliament. That was on behalf of the Land League in Inverness-shire. But he wasn't successful. He lost to the Conservative candidate. The Conservatives were promising a shake-up of Scotland's land laws. But Donald MacRae is still remembered in Lewis, and indeed throughout the Highlands, for what he did on the people's behalf.

mhòr bho dhaoine air feadh an t-saoghail. Chaidh mìltean notaichean a chur thuca.

Thuir Àrd-neach Lagha na h-Alba gum bu chòir don t-sianair a bhith air an dìteadh de dh'aimhreit. Thuir e gur e Dòmhnall MacRath a bha air ceann a' ghnòthaich. Bha co-fhaireachdainn aig an Àrd-neach Lagha do na croitearan, thuir e. Ach cha robh co-fhaireachdainn aige do MhacRath. Bha an tidsear a' dèanamh mì-chleachdadh dhen t-suidheachadh aige. Bha e a' brosnachadh dhaoine gus an lagh a bhriseadh.

Ach thug an diùraidh taic do MhacRath agus a chompanaich. Cha do mheòraich iad fada. Taobh a-staigh leth-uair a thìde, thug iad breith – neoichiontach. Bha Dòmhnall MacRath air a thogail air guailnean luchd-taice sìos an Àrd-shràid ann an Dùn Èideann.

Chaidh Dòmhnall an sàs ann am poilitigs. Sheas e airson na Pàrlamaid. Bha sin às leth Lìog an Fhearainn ann an Siorrachd Inbhir Nis. Ach cha robh e soirbheachail. Chaill e don tagraiche Thòraidheach. Bha na Tòraidhean a' gealltainn ath-leasachadh air laghan fearainn na h-Alba. Ach tha Dòmhnall MacRath air a chuimhneachadh ann an Leòdhas fhathast, agus gu dearbh air feadh na Gàidhealtachd, airson na rinn e às leth nan daoine.