

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Seachdnar Chnòideirt (1)

A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 729. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 425 corresponds to Litir 729.

Cò iad na daoine seo? Alasdair Mac-a-Phì, Dòmhnall Mac-a-Phì, Uilleam Quinn, Jack McHardy, Donnchadh MacPhàil, Eairdsidh Dòmhnallach agus Eanraig MacAsgaill? Chan eil sibh cinnteach? Rinn iad iad fhèin ainmeil anns an t-Samhain naoi ceud deug, ceathrad 's a h-ochd (1948).

'S iad na daoine – na gaisgich, gu dearbh – a rinn agairt air fearann air taobh an iar na Gàidhealtachd – ann an sgìre a bha fo smachd uachdarain aig an robh, agus aig a bheil fhathast, fìor dhroch chliù. B' iad sin Seachdnar Chnòideirt. Air an ochdamh latha dhen t-Samhain, chaidh iad a-steach air na tuathanasan ann an Cille Chomhghain agus Sgotas ann an Cnòideart, agus chomharraich iad pìosan fearainn dhaibh fhèin. Agus cha robh an t-uachdaran toilichte.

Mar a sgrìobh Seumas MacEanraig anns an òran ainmeil aige ‘The Men of Knoydart’: *Twas down by the farm of Scottas, Lord Brocket walked one day, and he saw a sight that troubled him far more than he could say. For the seven men of Knoydart were doing what they'd planned. They'd staked their claim, they were digging their drains on Brocket's private land.*

Dona 's gu bheil cliù cuid de dh' uachdarain air a' Ghàidhealtachd anns an naoidheamh linn deug agus san fhicheadamh linn, 's e glè bheag dhiubh aig a bheil cliù cho dona ris a' Mhorair Brocket. Chan e a-mhàin gun robh e coma mu chòraichean muinntir an àite, ach gu robh e na dheagh charaid do dh' Adolf Hitler. Cha chuala mi riamh facal math mu dheidhinn air a' Ghàidhealtachd. 'S dòcha gun robh e laghach ri coin, cait is seann chailleachan, ach chan urrainn dhomh a bhith cinnteach.

A bharrachd air an t-seachdnar a dh'ainmich mi, bha fear eile de mhuinntir Chnòideirt an sàs anns an reud-fearainn – Eairdsidh MacDhùghaill. Bha fearann air a chomharrachadh dhàsan cuideachd ach cha b' urrainn dha a bhith an làthair, oir bha e ann an seirbheis a' chrùin – anns na feachdan dìon. Bha mi fortanach gu leòr tachairt ri Eairdsidh turas. Sgrìobh e leabhar mu na thachair agus chùm e cuimhne na coimhearsnachd air gaisge nan reudairean beò fhad 's a bu bheò e fhèin.

Aig deireadh nan naochadan, nochd aithris sna meadhanan gun robh Eairdsidh air Adolf Hitler fhaicinn ann an Cnòideart anns a' bhliadhna trithead 's a seachd (1937). Bha Brocket air cuireadh a thoirt do a charaid Ghearmailteach thigheinn don taigh aige ann an Inbhir Aoidh. Bha Eairdsidh, a rèir na h-aithris, ag obair ann an leas an taigh mhòir. Choimhead e suas agus chunnaic e Hitler. Bha seacaid gheal air agus bha a làmhnan air am pasgadh air a chùlaibh.

Tha teagamh aig luchd-eachdraidh mun aithris. 'S ann air bàt'-aiginn a dh'fheumadh Hitler thighinn a dh'Alba, agus tha dùil gun robh e ro thrang ann an trithead 's a seachd, agus e na Sheansalair ann am Berlin, airson a dhol air a leithid de thuras. Ach tha aithrisean ann gun robh von Ribbentrop, a bha na Mhinistear Cèin sa Ghearmailt, agus Sir Oswald Mosley, ceannard nam Faisisteach ann am Breatainn, **air aoigheachd aig** Brocket ann an Cnòideart.

Cha b' e Brocket a' **chiad droch uachdaran** ann an Cnòideart. Thòisich fuadaichean cho fada air ais ri seachd ceud deug, ochdad 's sia (1786) nuair a bha an sgìre fo smachd Clann Dòmhnail Ghleanna Garadh. Bheir sinn sùil a bharrachd air Cnòideart an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: gaisgich: *heroes*; Seachdnar Chnòideirt: *The Seven Men of Knoydart*; Seumas MacEanraig: *Hamish Henderson*; Inbhir Aoidh: *Inverie*; bàt'-aiginn: *submarine*; Seansalair: *Chancellor*; fuadaichean: *clearances*; Clann Dòmhnail Ghleanna Garadh: *The MacDonells of Glengarry*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a bha fo smachd uachdarain aig an robh fìor dhroch chliù: *under the control of a landlord who had a really bad reputation*; a-steach air na tuathanasan ann an Cille Chomhghain agus Sgotas: *onto the farms at Kilchoan and Scottas*; pìosan fearainn dhaibh fhèin: *pieces of land for themselves*; dona 's gu bheil cliù cuid de dh' uachdarain: *as bad as the reputation of some landlords is*; cho dona ris a' Mhorair Brocket: *as bad as Lord Brocket*; chan e a-mhàin gun robh e coma mu chòraichean muinntir an àite: *not only did he have no interest in the rights of the local people*; ach gu robh e na dheagh charaid do X: *but he was also a good friend of X*; 'S dòcha gun robh e laghach ri coin, cait is seann chailleachan: *perhaps he was nice to dogs, cats and elderly ladies*; cha b' urrainn dha a bhith an làthair: *he couldn't be present*; bha e ann an seirbheis a' chrùn – anns na feachdan dìon: *he was in the service of the crown – in the armed forces*; chùm e cuimhne na coimhearsnachd air gaisge nan reudairean beò: *he kept the community memory of the raiders alive*; fhad 's a bu bheò e fhèin: *while he himself was alive*; leas an taigh mhòir: *the garden of the big house*; bha a làmhan air am pasgadh air a chùlaibh: *his hands were folded behind him*; airson a dhol air a leithid de thuras: *to go on such a journey*; a bha na Mhinistear Cèin sa Ghearmailt: *who was the Foreign Minister in Germany*; ceannard nam Faisisteach: *the head of the Fascists*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Cha b' e Brocket a' **chiad droch uachdaran**: *Brocket wasn't the first bad landlord. Did you expect me to say a' chiad dhroch uachdaran? After all, a' chiad usually induces lenition – eg a' chiad fhear, a' chiad bhoireannach, a' chiad chomhairliche. However, when the next noun starts with a 'd' (the same letter as at the end of a' chiad), the homophonic situation usually means we drop the lenition – it is easier for the mouth to form another 'd' rather than a 'dh'. Thus we also say a' chiad duine, a' chiad dràibhear, a' chiad dinnear.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: tha aithrisean ann gun robh von Ribbentrop ... **air aoigheachd aig** Brocket ann an Cnòideart: *there are reports that von Ribbentrop ... was a guest of Brocket in Knoydart.*

Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA