# Inverlair Lodge’s secret wartime role as SOE sanctuary and inspiration for The Prisoner revealed as it goes on sale



Inverlair Lodge, a historic estate nestled in the Scottish Highlands, has been put up for sale, drawing attention to its remarkable, albeit covert, role during World War II. In 1941, the lodge was commandeered by the Special Operations Executive (SOE), a clandestine unit of saboteurs and guerrilla fighters tasked with executing secret operations behind enemy lines. The SOE transformed Inverlair into the No. 6 Special Workshop School, a facility that housed foreign agents deemed unsuitable for active duty due to various personal or health-related limitations.

These residents of Inverlair were not merely casualties of warfare; they were individuals holding sensitive information vital to the Allied war effort. The lodge provided a sanctuary from the dangers of espionage, where agents could be kept away from the public eye and prevented from revealing their secrets. According to historical accounts, they were supervised by British soldiers and kept productively engaged with tasks such as mending boots and salvaging scrap metal from the surrounding countryside. This effort not only served to keep them occupied but also contributed to the war effort in more mundane yet essential ways.

The location's remoteness offered a further strategic advantage: it became known informally as "The Cooler," a place where compromised agents could be monitored while preventing potential leaks about Allied operations. The surrounding rugged terrain was also ideal for training covert operatives, with the SOE managing around 30 similar camps across Scotland, indicating the pivotal role that the Highlands played in British intelligence operations during the conflict.

Inverlair itself dates back to the late 18th century, acquired in 1834 by John Walker of Crawfordton. Its post-war renown is further amplified by its connection to historical figures. Notably, Rudolf Hess—the Deputy Führer to Adolf Hitler—was briefly imprisoned there after his infamous flight to Scotland in 1941, an incident that added chapters to the lodge's intriguing past. Hess later faced trial at Nuremberg and died in Spandau Prison in 1987.

The lodge's dual legacy of military significance and cultural impact is noteworthy. Elements of its history inspired aspects of the acclaimed 1960s television series "The Prisoner," specifically its portrayal of isolation and state surveillance, reflecting a broader narrative of distrust and control prevalent in that era. The character of Number Six draws from the experiences of those housed at Inverlair, illustrating how history intertwines with popular culture.

While details on the sale of Inverlair Lodge are currently sparse, its historical significance continues to captivate the public imagination, serving as a tangible reminder of the complexities of wartime experience and the secretive nature of intelligence work. As the property seeks a new owner, it stands not just as a residence but as a monument to a distinctive chapter in Scotland's and the wider world's wartime legacy.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9q0renwzywo), [[4]](https://www.flickr.com/photos/summonedbyfells/6946244955)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9q0renwzywo), [[2]](https://www.historynet.com/wwii-today-january-2009/), [[5]](https://secretscotland.wordpress.com/tag/inverlair/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18423338.neil-mackay-strange-saga-scotland-spies-special-forces/), [[6]](https://sohopress.com/number-6-james-r-benn-discusses-inspiration-behind-the-red-horse/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.flickr.com/photos/summonedbyfells/6946244955), [[7]](https://www.theunmutual.co.uk/inverlair.htm)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9q0renwzywo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.historynet.com/wwii-today-january-2009/> - Inverlair Lodge, a Scottish estate, was requisitioned by the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during World War II and known as the Number 6 Special Workshop School. It housed agents deemed unsuitable for operations due to personality issues or physical limitations. These agents, often foreign nationals, were kept in relative comfort and engaged in tasks like mending boots and salvaging scrap metal. The lodge's role was to ensure these individuals, possessing sensitive information, remained isolated until the end of the war. The facility's existence inspired elements of the 1960s television series 'The Prisoner'.
3. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18423338.neil-mackay-strange-saga-scotland-spies-special-forces/> - Inverlair Lodge, located in Inverness-shire, Scotland, was used by the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during World War II to house agents who had failed training or been recalled from duty. Known as 'The Cooler', it provided a secluded environment to ensure these individuals did not leak sensitive information. The lodge's remote location also made it suitable for intercepting Nazi spies attempting to infiltrate Britain. The area's rugged terrain was ideal for training spies, saboteurs, and assassins, with SOE operating around 30 camps in secluded locations across Scotland.
4. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/summonedbyfells/6946244955> - Inverlair Lodge, dating from the late 18th century, was acquired by John Walker of Crawfordton in 1834. During World War II, it was requisitioned by the War Office and known as 'Special Workshop No 6'. The Special Operations Executive (SOE) used the lodge for training in clandestine operations. In 1941, Rudolf Hess, Deputy Führer to Adolf Hitler, flew to Scotland in an attempt to meet the Duke of Hamilton. His plane crashed, and he was imprisoned in the Tower of London before being transferred to Inverlair Lodge. Hess was later sentenced to life imprisonment at the Nuremberg War Trials and transferred to Berlin. He died in Spandau Prison in 1987 by his own hand.
5. <https://secretscotland.wordpress.com/tag/inverlair/> - Inverlair Lodge, located in the Scottish Highlands, was requisitioned during World War II and became one of the facilities operated by the Special Operations Executive (SOE), known as No.6 Special Workshop School. It served as a detention or internment camp for individuals who had been compromised or were unsuitable for operations. The lodge provided a safe haven for former agents or spies who could not risk being seen in public due to fear of recognition and retaliation. The existence of Inverlair Lodge inspired elements of the 1960s television series 'The Prisoner'.
6. <https://sohopress.com/number-6-james-r-benn-discusses-inspiration-behind-the-red-horse/> - Inverlair Lodge, also known as SOE Number 6 Special Workshop School, was a remote Scottish estate used during World War II to house agents deemed unsuitable for operations. These agents, possessing sensitive information, were kept isolated to prevent leaks. The lodge's existence inspired elements of the 1960s television series 'The Prisoner', with the character Number Six being a nod to the SOE Number 6 school. The lodge's role in housing compromised agents and its influence on popular culture highlight its significance in wartime intelligence operations.
7. <https://www.theunmutual.co.uk/inverlair.htm> - Inverlair Lodge, also known as ISRB Workshops or No.6 Special Workshop School, was a facility operated by the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during World War II. It served as a training school outside the restricted area, providing agents with further training in clandestine operations. The lodge's role in housing agents who had failed training or been recalled from duty ensured they remained isolated until deemed safe to release. The existence of Inverlair Lodge and its function as a detention or internment camp for compromised agents inspired elements of the 1960s television series 'The Prisoner'.