

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 009

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Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Am Bad Beithe, Borghaidh, Am Port Nuadh, Badrinsary, Bearghdal & Gleann Langail*

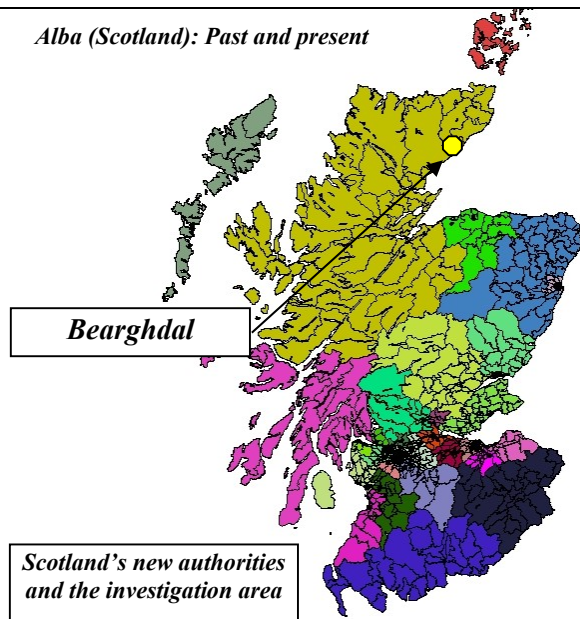
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Ousdale, Badbea, Borgie, Lower Newport, Newport, Badrinsary, Berriedale, Glen Langwell)

Number of households: 58 **Population present at census night:** 263

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 36.2 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Caithness	Latheron	Latheron	19	1-12

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

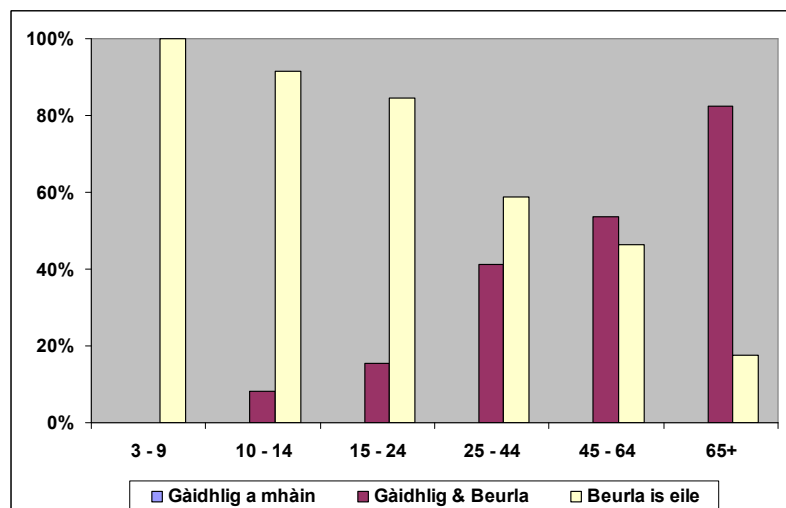
A substantial part of the inhabitants still spoke Gàidhlig – mainly in the older generation. Effective inter-generational language transmission seems to have seized in the 1850s in this district.

The language was strongest in crofting families. Women were more likely to speak Gàidhlig than men. The share of speakers was especially high in the communities of *Am Port Nuadh* (Newport) and Badrinsary.

Area description:

The district forms the south-western portion of the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness). People lived in small hamlets like *Am Port Nuadh* (Newport) and *Bearghdal* (Berriedale) along the rocky coast whereas the vast hilly hinterland was almost uninhabited with the exception of a few shepherds and gamekeepers in *Gleann Langail* (Glen Langwell). Crofting and some work on the local estates provided the most important means to earn a living.

Please see the remark regarding the use of placenames in Caithness on page 4 of this factsheet!



Age profile: Share of population speaking (1) Gàidhlig, (2) Gàidhlig & English, or (3) no Gàidhlig at all

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	Population enumerated				Usually resident population (3+)			
	Total	Aged 0-2	Deaf & dumb	Visitors etc. ³	Total ⁴	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	263	19	0	12	232	0	84	36.2 %
3-4	12	0	0	0	12	0	0	0.0 %
5-9	19	0	0	0	19	0	0	0.0 %
10-14	25	0	0	1	24	0	2	8.3 %
15-24	41	0	0	2	39	0	6	15.4 %
25-44	70	0	0	7	63	0	26	41.3 %
45-64	42	0	0	1	41	0	22	53.7 %
65+	35	0	0	1	34	0	28	82.4 %
Gender								
Female	117	5	0	2	110	0	45	40.9 %
Male	146	14	0	10	122	0	39	32.0 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	194	17	0	2	175	0	66	37.7 %
In neighbouring parish¹	25	0	0	7	18	0	6	33.3 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	16	0	0	1	15	0	8	53.3 %
Other places	28	2	0	2	24	0	4	16.7 %

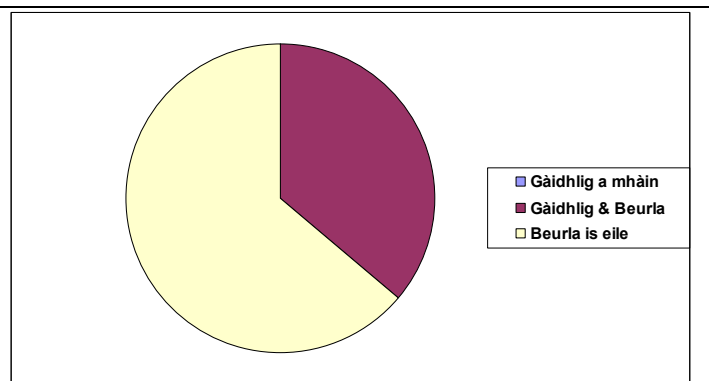
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland) or in the parishes of Halkirk, Watten or Wick (all Caithness).

² Other parishes in Scotland with more than 50 % Gàidhlig speakers in the 1891 census.

³ People described as visitors, boarders, lodgers or other similar terms.

⁴ Number of enumerated persons who were (1) older than 2 years of age, who were (2) not deaf & dumb and who (3) did not live only temporarily in the area.



Share of population speaking (1) Gàidhlig, (2) Gàidhlig & English, or (3) no Gàidhlig at all

Background of Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profiles:

The 1891 census was the first such enumeration exercise with an unequivocal language question. After more than 100 years the original census forms are publicly available for detailed analysis. During research concerned with the “Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Studies” a vast number of such local statistics have been gathered about the Gàidhlig speaking population of Scotland in that year. As many of these results could not be included in the reports these concise fact-sheets are a welcome way to publish some of the “local gems”. More information is provided at http://www.linguae-celticae.de/GLP_english.htm.

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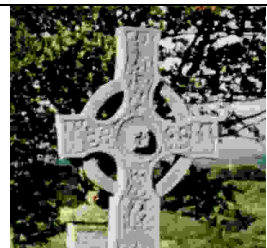
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Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Am Bad Beithe, Borghaidh, Am Port Nuadh, Badrinsary, Bearghdal & Gleann Langail*

	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Bearghdal & Am Port Nuadh</i>	58	232	0	84	36.2 %
Individual communities					
<i>Ousdale & Am Bad Beithe</i> (Ousdale & Badbea)	9	41	0	17	41.5 %
<i>Borghaidh</i> (Borgie)	7	22	0	6	27.3 %
<i>Am Port Nuadh Iosal</i> (Lower Newport)	6	25	0	9	36.0 %
<i>Am Port Nuadh & Badrinsary</i> (Newport & Badrinsary)	13	59	0	31	52.5 %
<i>Bearghdal</i> (Berriedale)	16	55	0	17	30.9 %
<i>Gleann Langail</i> (Glen Langwell)	7	30	0	4	13.3 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	8	53	0	23	43.4 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	5	23	0	10	43.5 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	5	31	0	7	22.6 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	8	39	0	3	7.7 %
Households with no children (0-14)	32	86	0	41	47.7 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	19	81	0	43	53.1 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	8	40	0	14	35.0 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	2	4	0	0	0.0 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	9	44	0	8	18.2 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	4	17	0	3	17.6 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	16	46	0	16	34.8 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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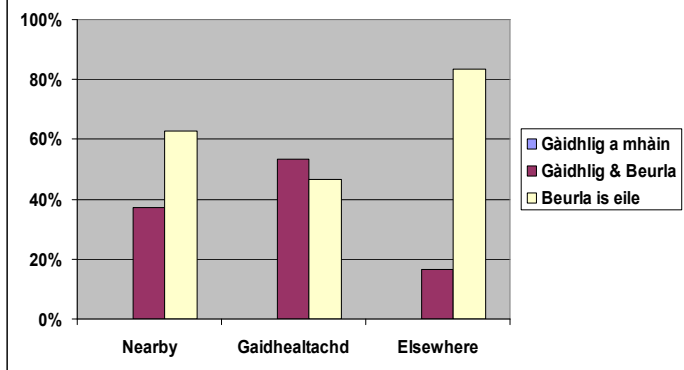
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Over a third of locally born inhabitants still spoke Gàidhlig. This proportion was of course higher among people who originated from other parts of *Gaidhealtachd*.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Latheron or in the parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten or Wick (all Caithness).

² Born in other parishes of Scotland with more than 50 % Gàidhlig speakers in the 1891 census.



Speakers according to place of birth (1) nearby¹
(2) in remaining *Gaidhealtachd*², or (3) elsewhere

Remarks:

1. A large proportion of *Gàidhlig*-speakers was born in the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness). This underlines the fact that the language was not alien in an area which today many characterize as a “Lowland” county.
2. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 263 persons of all ages. 85 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English”. This led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 32.3 %. This was a very high under-estimate of 3.9 % compared with the realistic figures considering only the usually resident population!
3. There are many names of settlements in Caithness – even in the west of the county – where no distinct *Gàidhlig* placenames have been ascertained or documented. This does not mean that there were no *Gàidhlig* descriptions by the local inhabitants. Often some parts of names suggest at least a partially *Gàidhlig* topographic description like “ach-“, “dun-“, “brae-“, “knock-“, or “bal-“. However, the names used on Ordnance Survey maps are used in these factsheets.