

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 011

Page 1 of 4

Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Dùn Bràigh, Ballentink, Braehiller, Cuaig, Houstry, Baile an t-Sratha & Achadh an Achaidh*

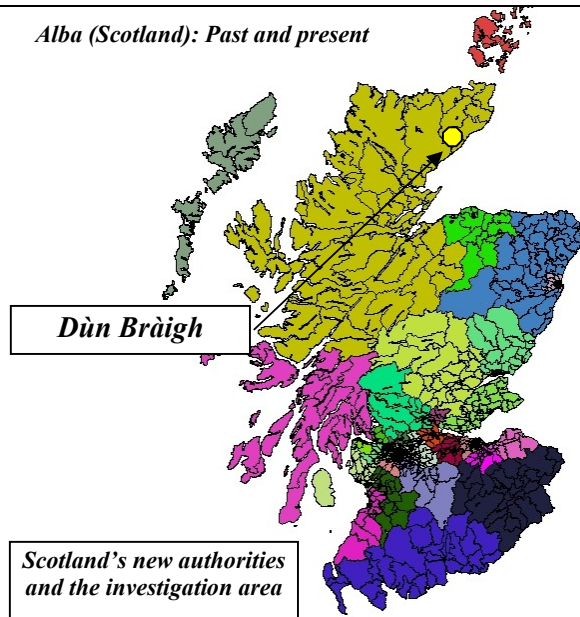
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Dunbrae, Balnatink, Braehiller, Houstry, Cuig, Balantra, Leodbist, Achnachy)

Number of households: 53 **Population present at census night:** 233

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 64.2 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Caithness	Latheron	Latheron	14	1-11

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

Still most residents spoke Gàidhlig. Older people were much more likely to speak the traditional language than younger persons, but the tongue was apparently not yet gone totally among children of the district.

There were even a handful of Gàidhlig monolingual persons around – most of them elderly persons of course.

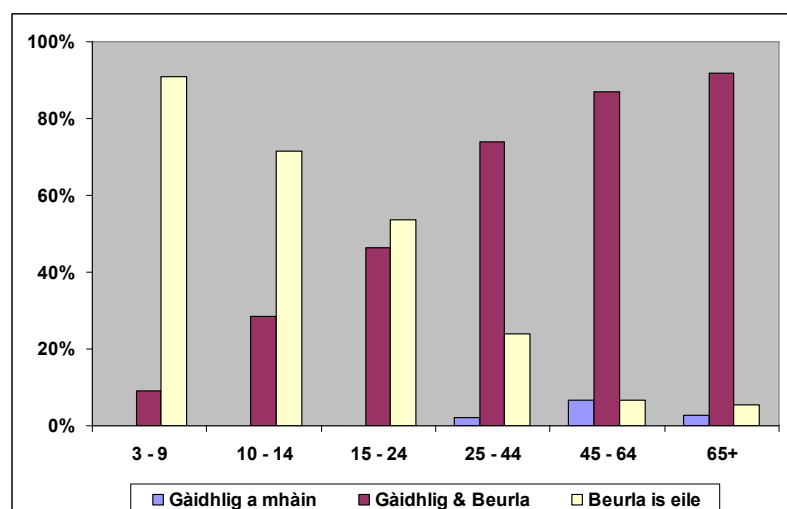
The language was especially strong in crofting hamlets such as Braehiller or Houstry with around 80 % of Gàidhlig-speakers.

Area description:

The district is situated in the south-western corner of *Gallaibh* (Caithness) in the north of Scotland. The land is mainly covered with peaty hillsides in the hinterland of the fishing villages of *Dùn Beathadh* (Dunbeath) and *Latharan a'Phuill* (Latheronwheel).

The people in the tiny hamlets around Houstry and *Dùn Bràigh* (Dunbrae) were mainly occupied with crofting in those days.

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

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 011

Page 2 of 4

Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Dùn Bràigh, Ballentink, Braehiller, Cuaig, Houstry, Baile an t-Sratha & Achadh an Achaidh*

	Population enumerated				Usually resident population (3+)			
	Total	Aged 0-2	Deaf & dumb	Visitors etc. ³	Total ⁴	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	233	14	0	4	215	5	133	64.2 %
3-4	12		0	0	12	0	0	0.0 %
5-9	21		0	0	21	0	3	14.3 %
10-14	21		0	0	21	0	6	28.6 %
15-24	29		0	1	28	0	13	46.4 %
25-44	50		0	0	50	1	37	76.0 %
45-64	47		0	1	46	3	40	93.5 %
65+	39		0	2	37	1	34	94.6 %
Gender								
Female	119	6	0	2	111	3	68	64.0 %
Male	114	8	0	2	104	2	65	64.4 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	209	14	0	2	193	5	119	64.2 %
In neighbouring parish¹	8	0	0	0	8	0	7	87.5 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	10	0	0	1	9	0	7	77.8 %
Other places	6	0	0	1	5	0	0	0.0 %

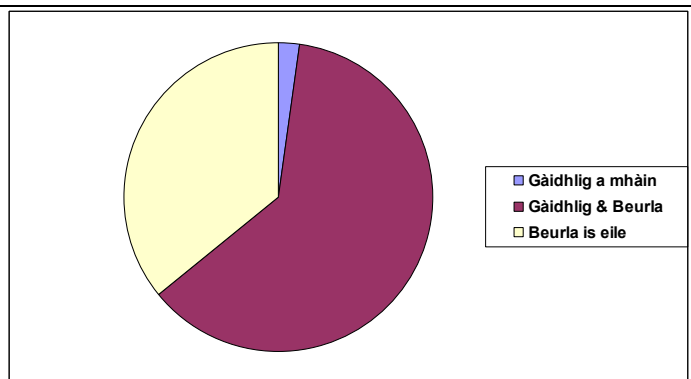
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten and Wick (both 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 factsheets are a welcome way to publish some of the “local gems”. More information is provided at http://www.linguae-celticae.org/GLP_english.htm.

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

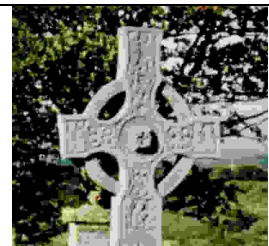
No. 011

Page 3 of 4

Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Dùn Bràigh, Ballentink, Braehiller, Cuaig, Houstry, Baile an t-Sratha & Achadh an Achaidh*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Dùn Bràigh	53	215	5	133	64.2 %
Individual communities					
Dùn Bràigh (Dunbrae)	8	38	5	9	36.8 %
Ballentink (Ballentink)	11	47	0	26	55.3 %
Braehiller (Braehiller)	3	13	0	10	76.9 %
Houstry (Houstry)	24	94	0	77	81.9 %
Baile an t-Sratha & Achadh an Achaidh (Balantrath & Achnachy)	7	23	0	11	47.8 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	12	72	0	43	59.7 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	3	12	0	6	50.0 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	4	28	0	1	3.6 %
Households with no children (0-14)	34	103	5	83	85.4 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	39	166	5	106	66.9 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	2	5	0	3	60.0 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	2	3	0	1	33.3 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	5	18	0	11	61.1 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	1	11	0	2	18.2 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	4	12	0	10	83.3 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

© Text and statistics: Copyright Kurt C. Duwe. All rights reserved except private and non-commercial use. Any other use has to be cleared by the author Kurt C. Duwe, Jägerstr. 120a, 21079 Hamburg, Germany (duwe@linguae-celticae.de) and it may also fall under restrictions of the Crown Copyright of census data. Statistics have been derived from 1891 census returns published by the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS). The use of this material here is permitted under Licence No. C02W0003665. Crown Copyright of census data is acknowledged. The digital boundaries shown on the Scotland map are courtesy of Ordnance Survey as part of the Geography Products provided by GROS. Additional individual profiles may be downloaded from a special page on the Linguae Celticae website: http://www.linguae-celticae.org/GLP_english.htm



Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 011

Page 4 of 4

Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Dùn Bràigh, Ballentink, Braehiller, Cuaig, Houstry, Baile an t-Sratha & Achadh an Achaidh*

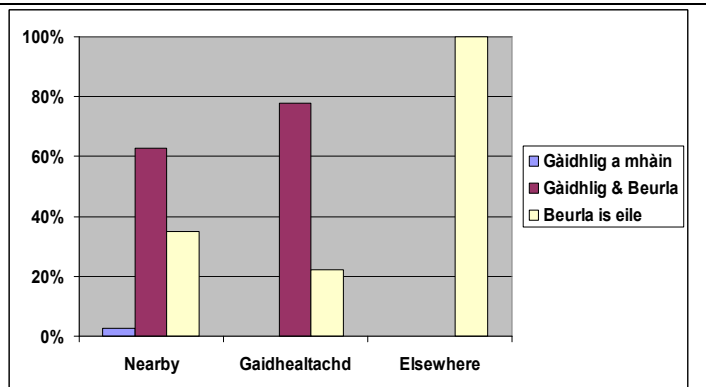
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The majority of locally born inhabitants was Gàidhlig-speaking. On the other hand, no-one born outside the *Gaidhealtachd* spoke the language.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Latheron or in the parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten and Wick (both 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. Five usually resident persons spoke no English. These were returned in the community of *Dùn Bràigh* (Dunbrae) as members of farming/crofting households.
2. The majority of locally born people still spoke *Gàidhlig*. Accordingly, the language was traditionally spoken in the district contrary to the belief that the language was alien to the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness).
3. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 233 persons of all ages. 131 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and six persons present at census night spoke no English. This led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 58.8 %. This was an under-estimate of 5.4 % compared with the more realistic figures considering only the usually resident population.
4. 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.