

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 012

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**Area:** *Latharan (Latheron): Creagan nan Reitheachan, Borbh Shuas & Borbh*

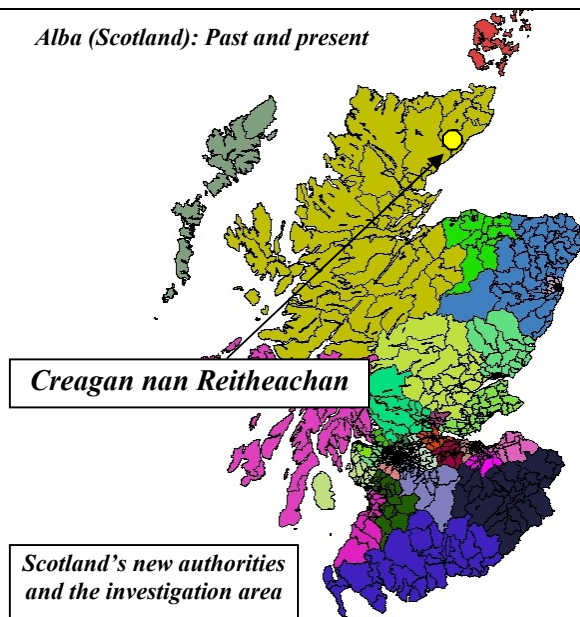
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Ramscaigs, Upper Borgue, Borgue)

**Number of households:** 72      **Population present at census night:** 312

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig:** **56.5 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Caithness	Latheron	Latheron	16 17	9-11 13-23

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



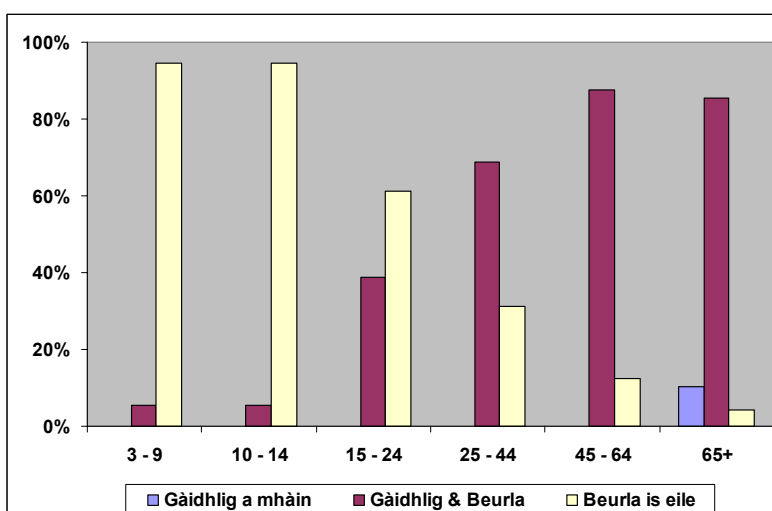
## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

Most residents still spoke Gàidhlig in this period. A few elderly persons did not even speak English. The language community, however, was already ageing because there were only a few children who still spoke the language of their parents. Locally there was not much of a difference in intensity of Gàidhlig-speaking between the two main townships *Creagan nan Reitheachan* (Ramscaigs) and *Borbh* (Borgue) with well above 50 % of residents speaking the traditional tongue.

## Area description:

The area concerned is located almost halfway between the fishing villages of *Dùn Bèithe* (Dunbeath) and *Bearghdal* (Berriedale) in the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness).

The district includes the hamlets of *Creagan nan Reitheachan* (Ramscaigs) as well as *Borbh* (Borgue) whose inhabitants were mainly occupied with crofting and fishing. A few persons were also working as servants, shepherds or gamekeepers on the local estates.



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. <sup>3</sup>	Total <sup>4</sup>	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b>Age</b>								
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>56.5 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>28</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7.1 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>36</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5.6 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>54</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>38.9 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>63</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>68.9 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>65</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>87.5 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>48</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>95.8 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>64.0 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>64.4 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>59.9 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>70.0 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33.3 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0 %</b>

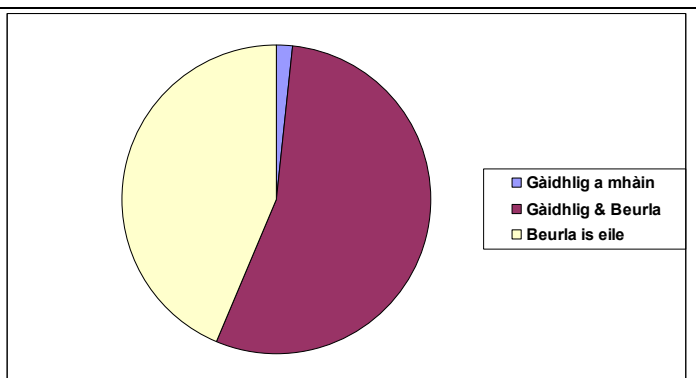
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten and Wick (both Caithness).

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

<sup>3</sup> People described as visitors, boarders, lodgers or other similar terms.

<sup>4</sup> 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](http://www.linguae-celticae.de/GLP_english.htm).

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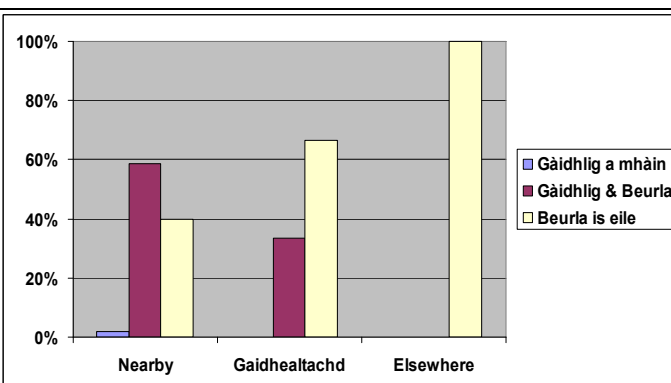
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

All persons born outside the *Gaidhealtachd* did not speak Gàidhlig. On the other hand, most locally born residents spoke Gàidhlig. A few of them were still monolingual.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Latheron or in the parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten and Wick (both Caithness).

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



Speakers according to place of birth (1) nearby<sup>1</sup>  
(2) in remaining *Gaidhealtachd*<sup>2</sup>, or (3) elsewhere

## Remarks:

1. Five local residents spoke no English. These were returned in *Dùn Bràigh* (Dunbrae) and comprised two farmer/crofter 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 312 persons of all ages. 162 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and five persons present at census night spoke no English. This led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 53.5 %. This was an under-estimate of 3.0 % compared with the more realistic figures considering only the usually resident population.