

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 019

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Area: **Latharan (Latheron): Latharan, Latharan Uarach & Beinn a'Cheilt**

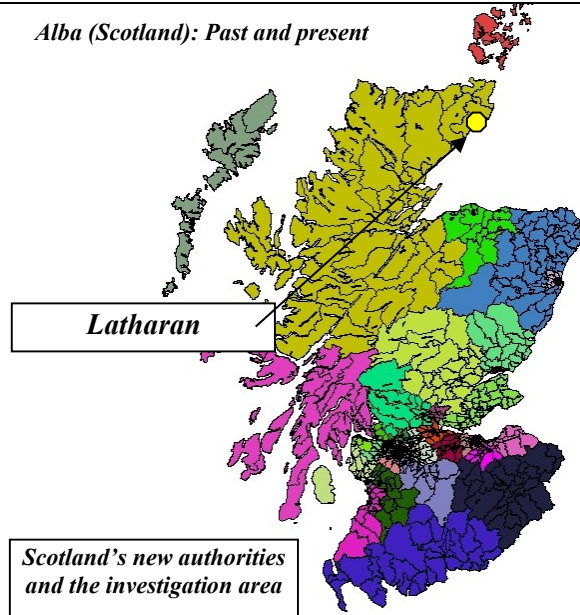
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Latheron, Upper Latheron & Benacheilt)

Number of households: **53** Population present at census night: **198**

Share of resident population (aged three years +) speaking **Gàidhlig: 68.8 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Caithness	Latheron	Latheron	11	1 - 9

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

Gàidhlig was surprisingly strong in this part of *Gallaibh* (Caithness). Over two thirds of the usually resident population spoke the “Highland” language with a remarkable proportion of young people able to converse in the traditional tongue. The strongest community in this district was the crofting hamlet of *Beinn a'Cheilt* in the hinterland of the fishing village of *Latharan*. 77.8 % of all residents were Gàidhlig-speaking.

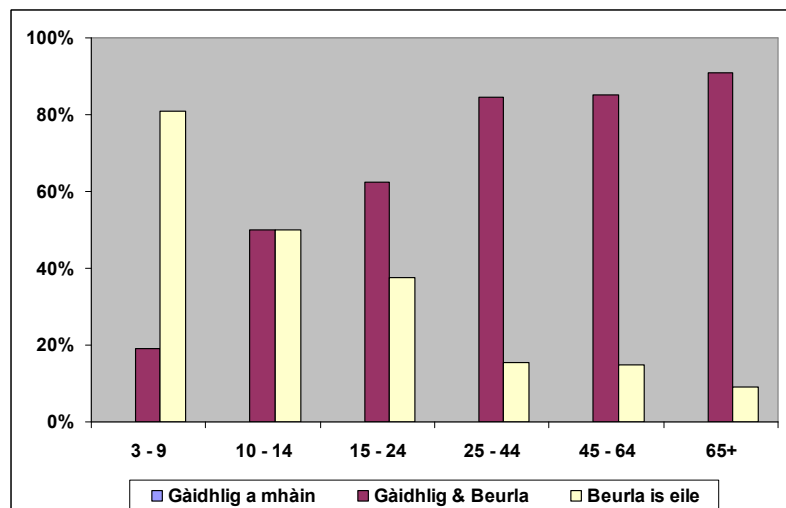
The area can rightfully be considered as a major stronghold of the language in the “Lowland” county during this period.

## Area description:

The fishing village of *Latharan* (Latheron) and the two neighbouring crofting hamlets of *Latharan Uarach* (Upper Latheron) and *Beinn a'Cheilt* are object of this study. These communities are situated in the south-eastern corner of the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness) in Scotland's rocky North Sea coast.

Main economic factors were fishing and crofting in 1891. The whole area at the time was part of one local estate.

**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. <sup>3</sup>	Total <sup>4</sup>	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b>Age</b>								
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>68.8 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25.0 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>19</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16.7 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>25</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>50.0 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>33</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>62.5 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>84.6 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>47</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>85.1 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>33</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>90.9 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>67.3 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>70.9 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>75.5 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27.8 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12.5 %</b>

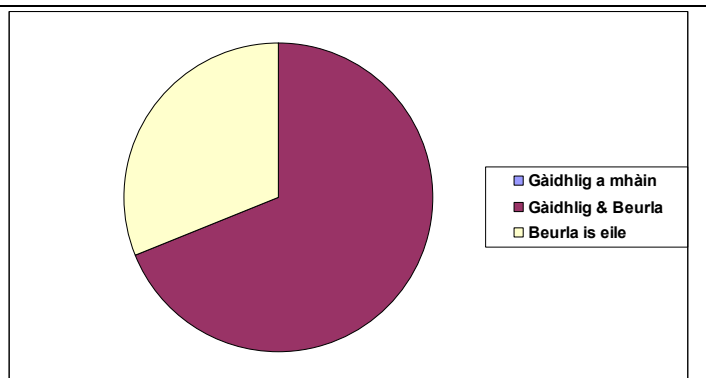
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten and Wick (all 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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Area: *Latharan* (Latheron): *Latharan*, *Latharan Uarach* & *Beinn a'Cheilt*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	<i>Gàidhlig</i>	<i>Gàidhlig</i> & English	<i>Gàidhlig</i> speakers (%)
<b><i>Latharan</i></b>	<b>53</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>68.8 %</b>
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<b><i>Latharan</i> (Latheron)</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>67.9 %</b>
<b><i>Latharan Uarach</i> (Upper Latheron)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>63.6 %</b>
<b><i>Beinn a'Cheilt</i> (Benacheilt)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>77.8 %</b>
<b>Language of parents</b>					
<b>Both parents <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>62.5 %</b>
<b>Single parent <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>73.0 %</b>
<b>One parent <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16.7 %</b>
<b>No <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking parent</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12.5 %</b>
<b>Households with no children (0-14)</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>81.0 %</b>
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
<b>Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>73.1 %</b>
<b>Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>66.7 %</b>
<b>Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>50.0 %</b>
<b>Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>59.3 %</b>
<b>Living on private means</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Manager, coachman, cook, etc.</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>50.0 %</b>
<b>Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>75.6 %</b>
<b>Remaining occupations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>

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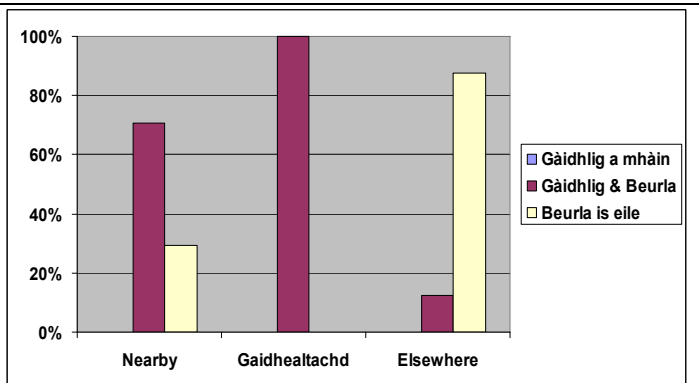
**Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:**

The vast majority of locally born residents spoke Gàidhlig. On the other hand, those born outside the *Gaidhealtachd* scarcely spoke the traditional language.

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Latheron or in the parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten and Wick (all 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. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 198 persons of all ages. 129 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English”. This led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 65.2 %. The figure was therefore an underestimate of 6.3 % compared with the more realistic figures considering only the usually resident population.
2. 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 many characterize as a “Lowland” county today.
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.