

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 030

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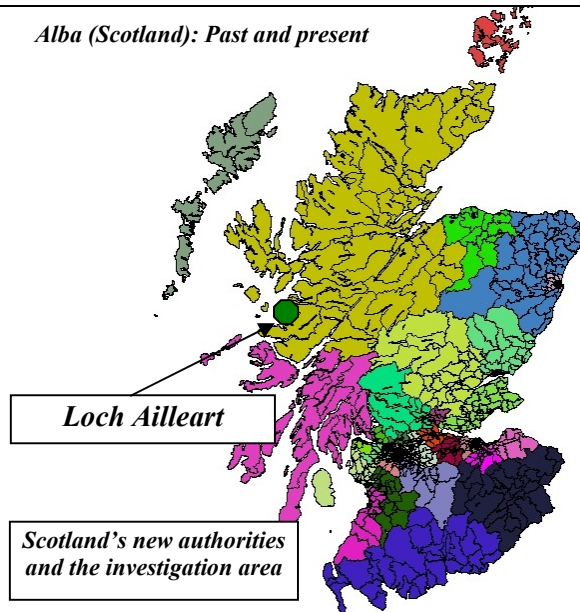
**Area:** *Ceann Loch Ailleart, Gleann Ailleart, Inbhir Ailleart, Poll Nis, Peighinn Meadhonach, Lagan, Glas na Ceàrdaich, Sloc, Mullach Buidhe, Easan, Meobal, Leitir Mòrair, Sgamadal*  
 (Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Kinlochailort, Glenailort, Inverailort, Polish, Penmeanach, Laggan, Glasnacardoch, Slock, Mullachbuie, Essan, Arganiskill, Meoble, Lettermorar, Scamadale & Sumisletter)

**Number of households:** 47      **Population present at census night:** 246

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig:** 97.8 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness-shire	Arisaig & Moidart	Arisaig	3	1 - 5; 8 - 13
			4	1
			5	1 - 5

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*

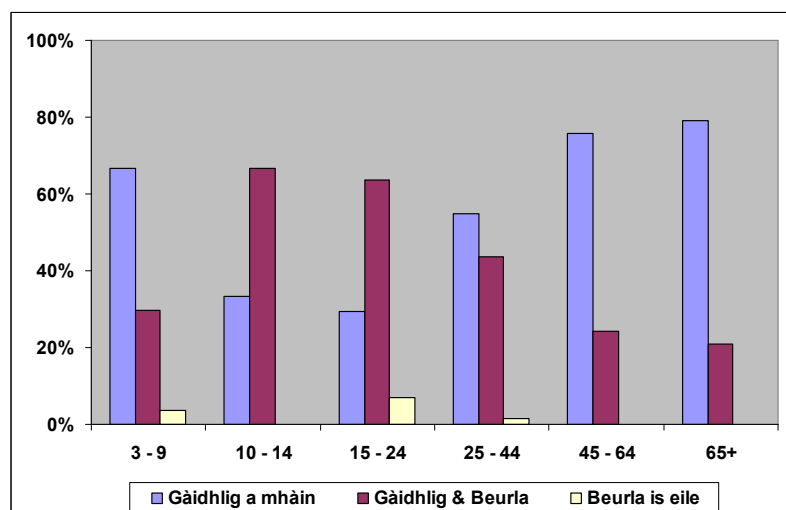


## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

Almost the whole resident population spoke Gàidhlig in the district. Most speakers were still monolingual especially in communities on the *Àird Nis* (Ardnish) peninsula and the southern shores of *Loch Mòrar*. Only the generation aged between 10 and 24 did show a majority for those who were (also) speaking English. Locals were slightly more likely to speak only Gàidhlig than people born in other parts of the *Gaidhealtachd*.

## Area description:

The communities described here occupied the land around the northern part of *Loch Ailleart* (Loch Ailort) on the north-western coast of the Highlands. They included especially several crofting hamlets on the *Àird Nis* peninsula. In contrast only a handful of shepherds and gamekeepers inhabited some of the neighbouring glens towards *Gleann Fhionghain* (Glenfinnan) and *Loch Mòrar*.



**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>	246	15	0	6	225	124	96	97.8 %
<b>3-4</b>	10	0	0	0	10	8	1	90.0 %
<b>5-9</b>	17	0	0	0	17	10	7	100 %
<b>10-14</b>	27	0	0	0	27	9	18	100 %
<b>15-24</b>	46	0	0	2	44	13	28	93.2 %
<b>25-44</b>	63	0	0	1	62	34	27	98.4 %
<b>45-64</b>	42	0	0	1	41	31	10	100 %
<b>65+</b>	26	0	0	2	24	19	5	100 %
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	125	6	0	4	115	70	44	99.1 %
<b>Male</b>	121	9	0	2	110	54	52	96.4 %
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	184	11	0	3	170	101	69	100 %
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	38	3	0	0	35	14	17	88.6 %
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	19	0	0	1	18	9	9	100 %
<b>Other places</b>	5	1	0	2	2	0	1	50.0 %

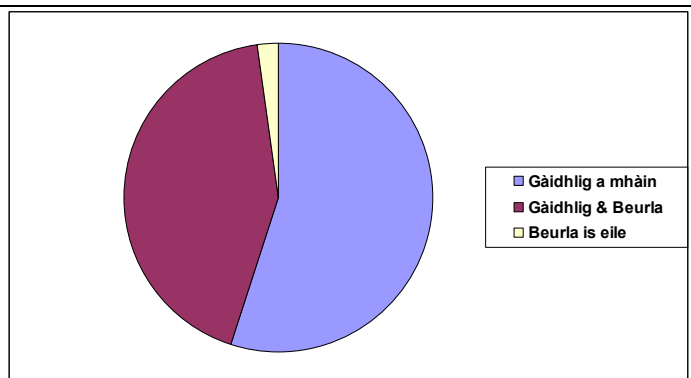
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Ardnamurchan, Ardgour (both Argyll); Glenelg, Kilmallie (both Inverness).

<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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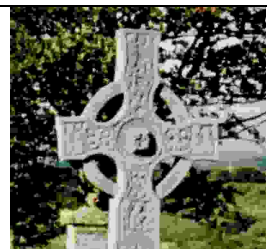
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	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig (%)
<b><i>Loch Ailleart</i></b>	<b>47</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>97.8 %</b>
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Ceann Loch Ailleart &amp; Inbhir Ailleart</i> (Kinlochailort & Inverailort)	7	21	13	7	95.2 %
<i>Ceann Loch nan Uamh &amp; Poll Nis</i> (Kinlochnanuagh & Polish)	7	28	18	9	96.4 %
<i>Lagan</i> (Laggan)	2	18	6	12	100 %
<i>Peighinn Meadhonach</i> (Penmeanach)	7	44	22	22	100 %
<i>Glas na Ceàrdaich</i> (Glasnacardoch)	3	15	10	5	100 %
<i>An Sloc</i> (Slock)	3	13	8	5	100 %
<i>Mullach Buidhe</i> (Mullachbuie)	3	13	13	0	100 %
<i>Easan &amp; Loch Eilde</i> (Essan & Loch Eilt)	4	17	2	13	88.2 %
<i>Meobal</i> (Meoble)	4	27	6	20	96.3 %
<i>Leitir Mòrair &amp; Sgamadal</i> (Lettermorar & Scamadale)	7	29	26	3	100 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
<b>Both parents Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>96.5 %</b>
<b>Single parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>One parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>No Gàidhlig speaking parent</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Households with no children (0-14)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>98.5 %</b>
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
<b>Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>99.3 %</b>
<b>Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>91.9 %</b>
<b>Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100 %</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>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>93.3 %</b>
<b>Remaining occupations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>

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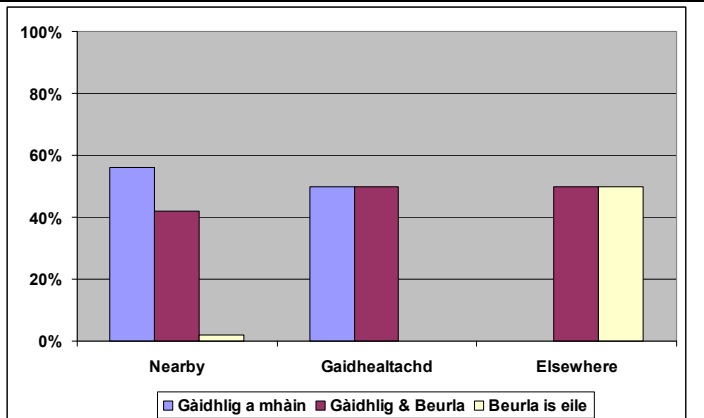
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Monolingual Gàidhlig speakers were predominant in the “local” population and amounted to 50 % among those born in the remaining *Gaidhealtachd*.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Arisaig & Moidart or in the adjacent parishes of Ardnamurchan, Ardgour (both Argyll); Glenelg, Kilmallie (both Inverness).

<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. Only five persons were reported as not Gàidhlig speaking. Obvious returns in this respect came from the teacher (born in Ft. Augustus) at *Meobal* and from a gardener of Irish birth. The remaining three “no Gaelic” returns came from a three-year-old child and two servants (15 and 19 years old) who were born in nearby *Mòrar*. At least the latter persons, however, were very unlikely unable to speak the community language of their childhood. Perhaps they did not use the language in front of their masters (who normally provided census information as heads of household to the enumerator).
2. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 246 persons of all ages. 96 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 142 were counted as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. This led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 96.7 %. Accordingly, this percentage was an under-estimate of 1.1 %.