

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 040

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Area: *Eilean Bharraigh (Isle of Barra): Bàgh a'Chaisteil & An Gleann*

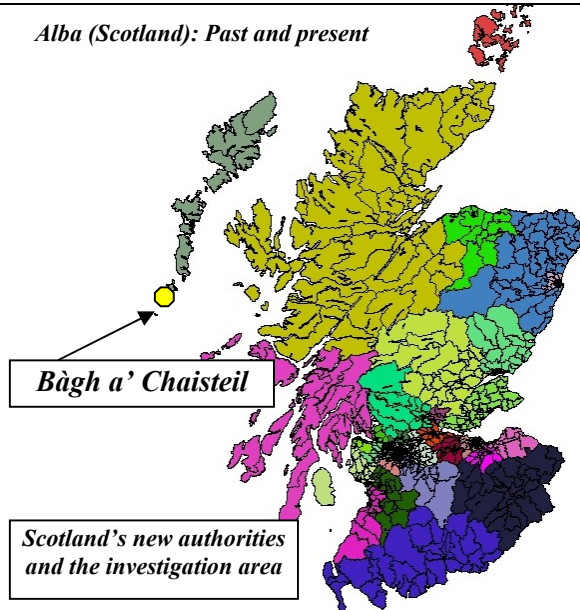
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Castle Bay, Glen)

Number of households: 81 Population present at census night: 428

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 95.8 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness-shire	Barra	Barra	5	1 – 19

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

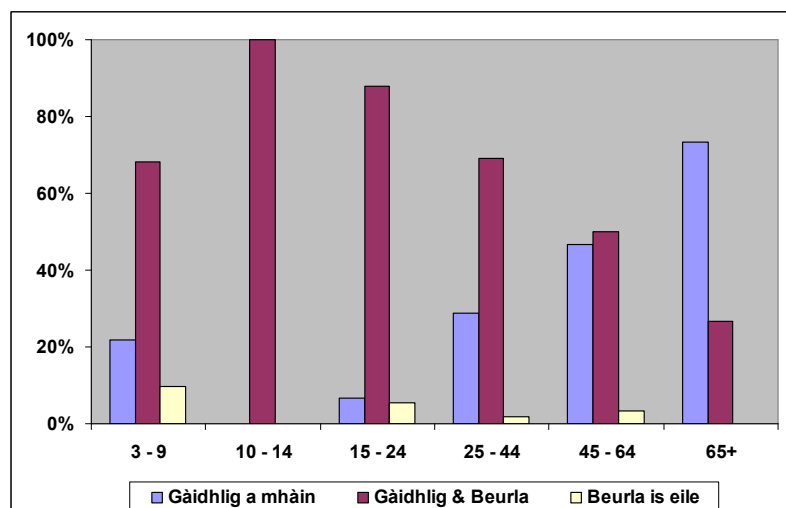
The island of *Barraigh* was almost totally *Gaidhlig* speaking. The only exception was the harbour of *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* (Castlebay) with a handful of incomers who were ignorant of *Gàidhlig*. On the other hand roughly a quarter of the population of this area in the south of the island did not speak English at all – most of them were at an advanced age. The age profile was well-balanced between the generations.

Incidence of language knowledge, however, differed very much locally between *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* (83.8 %) and the neighbouring hamlet of *An Gleann* (98.4 %).

Area description:

Nowadays *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* (Castlebay) is the centre of the island of *Barraigh* (Barra) in the Outer Hebrides. In 1891 it was a tiny port which provided the most important link to the outside world.

Most of the inhabitants of this tiny hamlet and the neighbouring crofting community of *An Gleann* (Glen) were dependent on the success of the local fishing fleet.



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	428	41	0	10	377	91	270	95.8 %
3-4	20	0	0	0	20	10	4	70.0 %
5-9	62	0	0	0	62	8	52	96.8 %
10-14	45	0	0	1	44	0	44	100 %
15-24	76	0	0	2	74	5	65	94.6 %
25-44	111	0	0	7	104	30	72	98.1 %
45-64	58	0	0	0	58	27	29	96.6 %
65+	15	0	0	0	15	11	4	100 %
Gender								
Female	230	24	0	3	203	65	130	96.1 %
Male	198	17	0	7	174	26	140	95.4 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	371	41	0	8	322	89	227	98.1 %
In neighbouring parish¹	16	0	0	1	15	1	14	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	26	0	0	1	25	1	23	96.0 %
Other places	15	0	0	0	15	0	6	40.0 %

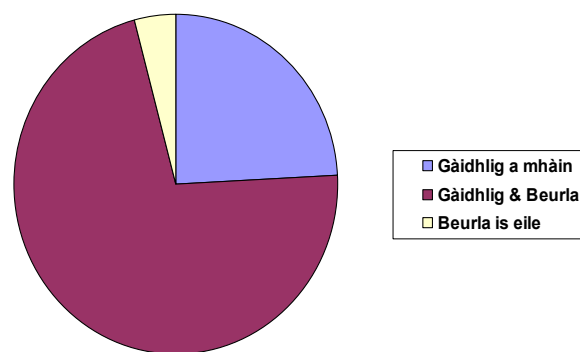
Notes:

¹ Parish of South Uist (Inverness).

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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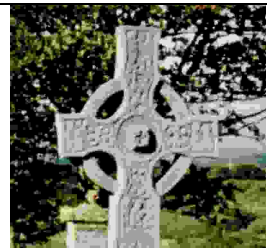
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Area: *Eilean Bharraigh (Isle of Barra): Bàgh a'Chaisteil & An Gleann*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	<i>Gàidhlig</i>	<i>Gàidhlig</i> & English	<i>Gàidhlig</i> speakers (%)
<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil & An Gleann</i>	81	377	91	270	95.8 %
Individual communities					
<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay)	16	68	6	51	83.8 %
<i>An Gleann</i> (Glen)	65	309	85	219	98.4 %
Language of parents					
Both parents <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking	47	261	63	191	97.3 %
Single parent <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking	8	36	4	30	94.4 %
One parent <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking	1	6	0	1	16.7 %
No <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking parent	1	3	0	1	33.3 %
Households with no children (0-14)	24	71	24	47	100 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	53	259	75	179	98.1 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	1	1	0	1	-
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	6	23	1	15	69.6 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	9	47	6	39	95.7 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	3	19	1	16	89.5 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	7	18	3	15	100 %
Remaining occupations	2	10	5	5	100 %

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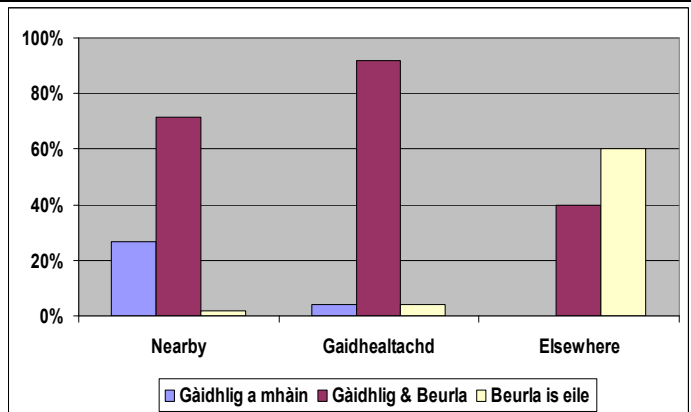
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

People born in the *Gaidhealtachd* were almost totally Gàidhlig speaking – many of them did not speak English. Even a remarkable minority of those born in the Lowlands could speak Gàidhlig.

Notes:

¹ Born either in the civil parishes of Barra and South Uist (both Inverness).

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. Most of the persons not speaking Gàidhlig lived in *Bàgh a'Chaisteil*. Most prominent were the two families of a fishery officer and a teacher.
2. In original census report terms both communities in total had a population of 428 persons of all ages. In all 278 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 95 were counted as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. These figures led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 87.1 %. Accordingly, this percentage was an under-estimate of 8.7 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the population base.