

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 059

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Area: *Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan): Gleann Droighinn, Achadh na h-Àtha, Plocaig, Sanna, Port Uairce, Àird nam Murchan (Taigh Soluis), Griogadal & Achadh Osnaich*

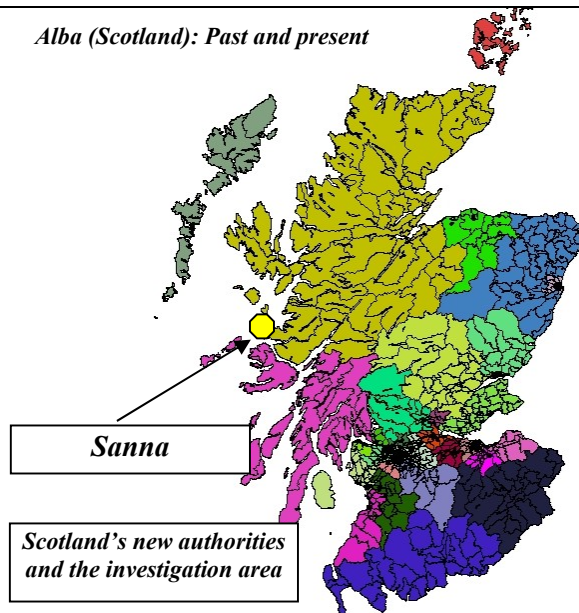
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Glendrian, Achnaha, Plocaig, Sanna, Portuairk, Ardnamurchan Lighthouse, Grigidale & Achosnich)

Number of households: 59 **Population present at census night:** 258

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 95.2 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Argyll	Ardnamurchan	Western Ardnamurchan	4	1 – 15

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

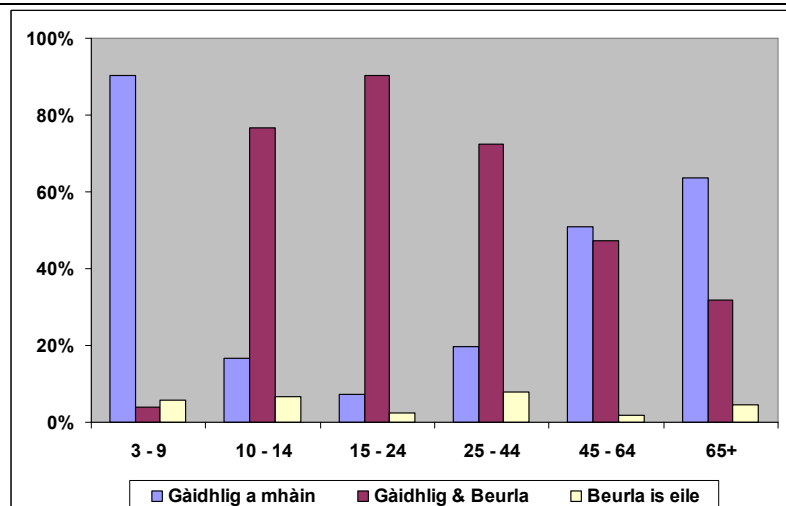
Apart from the households of the local schoolmaster and the lighthouse keepers at *Rubha Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan Point) Gàidhlig was the dominant (often the only) language of this district. In all crofting hamlets and dwellings, the traditional language was the natural means of communication.

Gàidhlig monolingual speakers were most numerous of course among very young children and older members of the community. The handful of English monoglots on the other hand was overwhelmingly of Lowland or English origin.

Area description:

The district occupies the westernmost tip of the parish of *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan) in a secluded mainland portion of the old county of *Earra-Ghaidheal* (Argyll). It comprised scattered crofting townships like *Port Uairce* (Port Uairk) and *Sanna* and a handful of other remote dwellings. In addition, the lighthouse at *Rubha Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan Point) is situated in this district.

The main occupation in the area was crofting besides some work as shepherds, gamekeepers, or servants for 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. ³	Total ⁴	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	258	9	0	1	248	105	131	95.2 %
3-4	12		0	0	12	11	0	91.7 %
5-9	39		0	0	39	35	2	94.9 %
10-14	30		0	0	30	5	23	93.3 %
15-24	41		0	0	41	3	37	97.6 %
25-44	51		0	0	51	10	37	92.2 %
45-64	54		0	1	53	27	25	98.1 %
65+	22		0	0	22	14	7	95.5 %
Gender								
Female	132	5	0	0	127	58	61	93.7 %
Male	126	4	0	1	121	47	70	96.7 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	219	8	0	1	210	97	112	99.5 %
In neighbouring parish¹	9	0	0	0	9	3	6	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	15	1	0	0	14	4	8	85.7 %
Other places	15	0	0	0	15	1	5	40.0 %

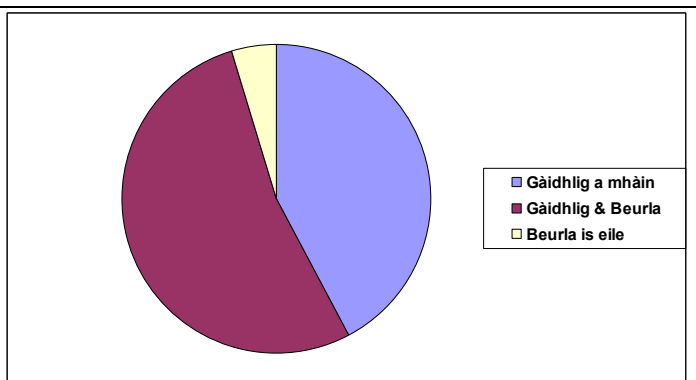
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Ardgour, Morvern (both Argyll); Arisaig & Moidart, Kilmallie (all 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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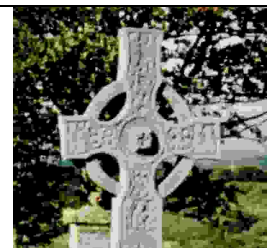
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Rubha Àird nam Murchan & Sanna</i>	59	248	105	131	95.2 %
Individual communities					
<i>Gleann Droighinn</i> (Glendrian)	5	19	6	13	100 %
<i>Achadh na h-Àtha</i> (Achnaha)	7	25	16	9	100 %
<i>Plocaig</i> (Plocaig)	5	14	3	11	100 %
<i>Sanna</i> (Sanna)	22	81	32	48	98.8 %
<i>Port Uairce</i> (Portuairk)	11	64	29	35	100 %
<i>Àird nam Murchan (Taigh Soluis)</i> (Ardnamurchan Lighthouse)	2	7	0	0	0.0 %
<i>Griogadal & Achadh Osnaich</i> (Grigidale & Achosnich)	7	38	19	15	89.5 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	16	99	46	53	100 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	12	59	28	30	98.3 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	1	5	0	1	20.0 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	2	7	0	0	0.0 %
Households with no children (0-14)	28	78	31	47	100 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	51	288	98	129	99.6 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	1	2	1	1	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	3	12	0	1	8.3 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	4	6	6	0	100 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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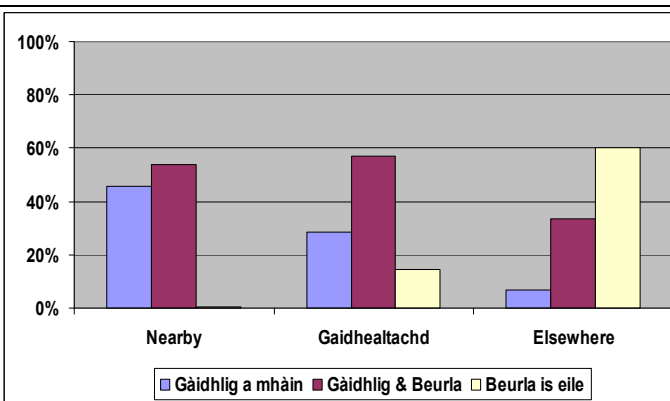
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Most of the few “English only” speakers were born outside the *Gaidhealtachd*. Many local people on the other hand did not speak English at all.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Ardnamurchan or in the adjacent parishes of Ardgour, Morvern (both Argyll); Arisaig & Moidart, Kilmallie (all 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. Twelve persons were returned as not speaking *Gàidhlig*. Seven of those residents were counted among the lighthouse keepers at *Rubha Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan). The England born schoolmaster's wife and three of her children at *Achadh Osnaich* (Achosnich) also belonged to this group of “foreigners”. The remaining “English only” return came from a five-year-old boy (the grandson of a local crofter at *Sanna*) who was born in Glasgow.
2. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 258 persons of all ages. 131 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 108 were counted as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. This led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 92.6 %. This was still an under-estimate of 2.6 % compared with the figures related to the usually resident population!