

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 060

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Area: *Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan): Coire a'Mhuilinn, Càrn, Miogharraidh, Tom a'Chrochair, Cill Chomhghain, Ormsaig Mhòr & Ormsaig Bheag*

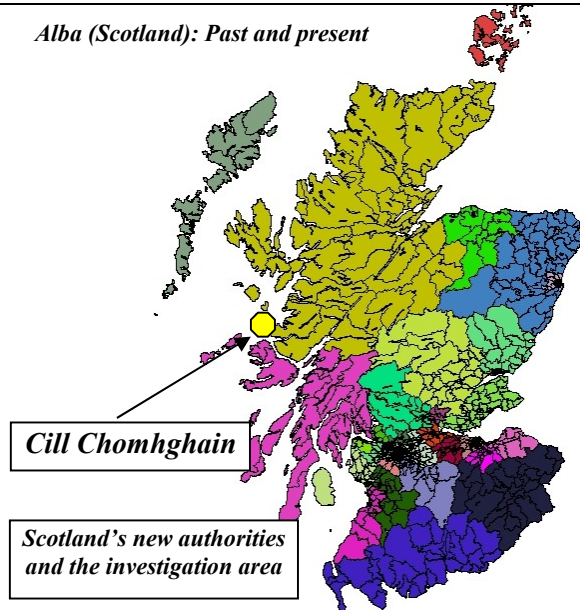
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Coryvulin, Cam, Mingarry, Tomchrocher, Kilchoan, Ormsaigmore & Ormsaigbeg)

Number of households: 52 **Population present at census night:** 248

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 98.7 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Argyll	Ardnamurchan	Western Ardnamurchan	3	1 – 11

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

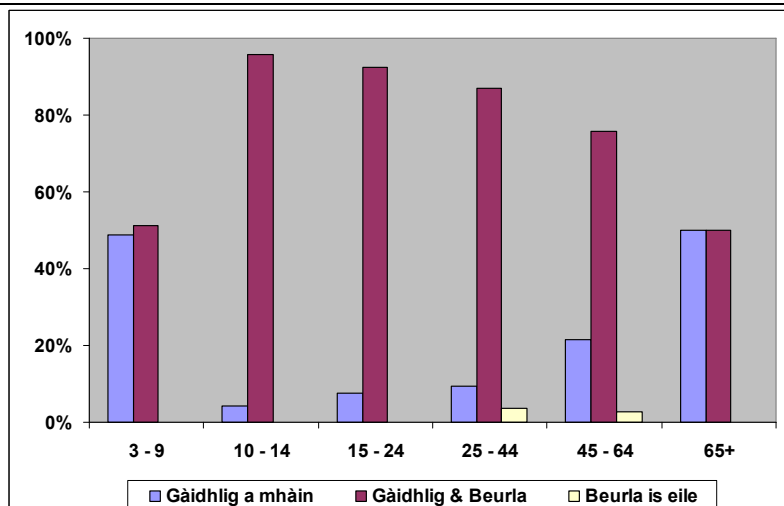
The community was almost exclusively Gàidhlig speaking with only three persons unable to speak the local language. All three were born outside the parish.

Around 20 % of the usually resident population did not speak English – mostly children or older people. The majority of these Gàidhlig monolingual speakers had a birthplace either in the parish itself or in neighbouring districts.

Area description:

The district lies in the western part of the parish of *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan) in a remote mainland portion of the old county of *Earra-Ghaidheal* (Argyll). It mainly comprised the crofting townships of *Cill Chomhghain* (Kilchoan) and *Ormsaig Bheag* (Ormsaigbeg) on the northern shores of *Loch Suaineirt* (Loch Sunart).

The main occupation in the area was crofting besides some work as shepherds, gamekeepers, or servants for the local estate.



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	248	15	1	1	231	55	173	98.7 %
3-4	12		0	0	12	9	3	100 %
5-9	35		0	0	35	14	21	100 %
10-14	24		0	0	24	1	23	100 %
15-24	39		0	0	39	3	36	100 %
25-44	54		0	0	54	5	47	96.3 %
45-64	39		1	1	37	8	28	97.3 %
65+	30		0	0	30	15	15	100 %
Gender								
Female	121	8	0	1	112	28	82	98.2 %
Male	127	7	1	0	119	27	91	99.2 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	203	14	1	1	187	50	137	100 %
In neighbouring parish¹	2	0	0	0	2	1	1	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	20	0	0	0	20	3	16	95.0 %
Other places	23	1	0	0	22	1	19	90.9 %

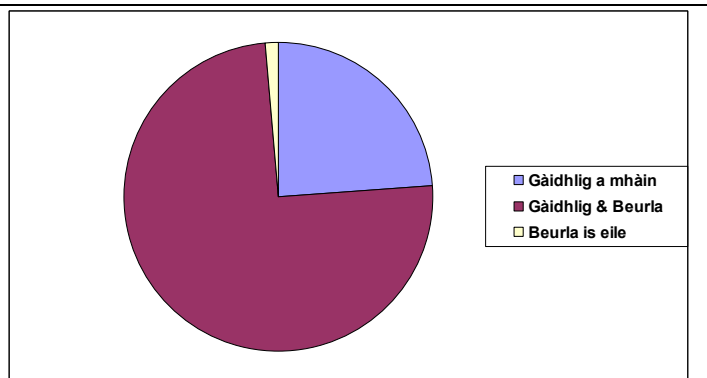
Notes:

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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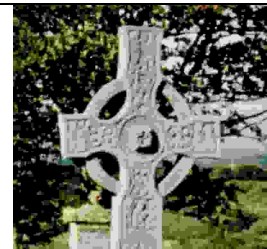
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Cill Chomhghain & Ormsaig Bheag</i>	52	231	55	173	98.7 %
Individual communities					
<i>Miogharraidh & Tom a'Chrochair</i> (Mingarry & Tomchrocher)	8	22	8	14	100 %
<i>Cill Chomhghain</i> (Kilchoan)	17	80	23	55	97.5 %
<i>Ormsaig Mhòr</i> (Ormsaigmore)	3	17	6	11	100 %
<i>Ormsaig Bheag</i> (Ormsaigbeg)	24	112	18	93	99.1 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	14	91	25	66	100 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	14	70	14	56	100 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	1	5	0	3	60.0 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	0	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	23	65	15	48	98.5 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	30	142	42	99	99.3 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	2	10	3	7	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	3	17	0	15	88.2 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	9	41	6	35	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	7	17	4	13	100 %
Remaining occupations	1	4	0	4	100 %

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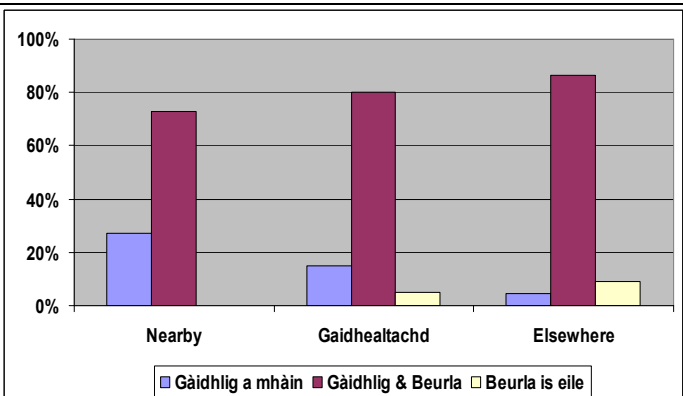
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

All three “English only” speakers were not born locally. Most of the Gàidhlig monolingual speakers, however, had a birthplace either in the parish itself or in neighbouring districts.

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. Three persons only were returned as not speaking *Gàidhlig*. A 61-year-old crofters' wife (born in Glasgow) at *Ormsaig Bheag* (Ormsaigbeg) did not speak the local tongue as well as the 28-year-old ministers' wife and a servant from Kirkoswald in Ayrshire.
2. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 248 persons of all ages. 175 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 64 were counted as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. This led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 96.3 %. Compared with the usually resident population figure used here this was still an under-estimate of 2.4 %!