

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 063

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Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Innis Allt, Achadh Mharasdail, Am Blàr Mòr, Bòrlum & Baile a'Mhuilinn*

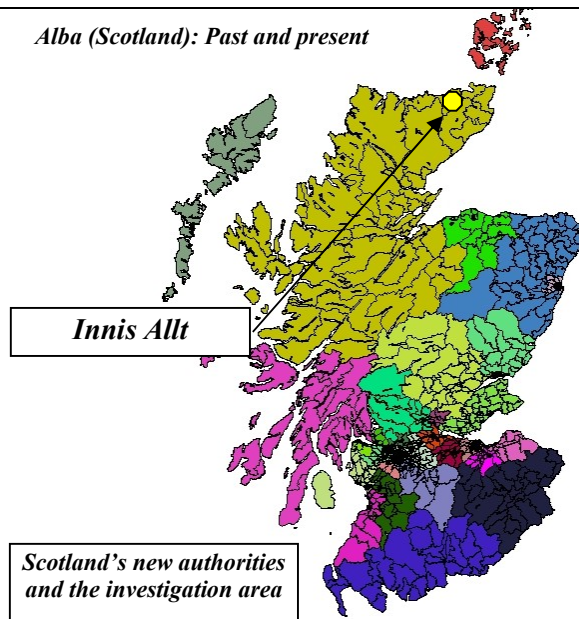
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Isauld, Achvarasdal, Achbuiligan, Gunnscoft, Blarmore, Achins, Achunabost, Borlum, Loansibost, Milton)

Number of households: 47 **Population present at census night:** 207

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 45.4 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Caithness	Reay	Reay	1	1-5; 16-20

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

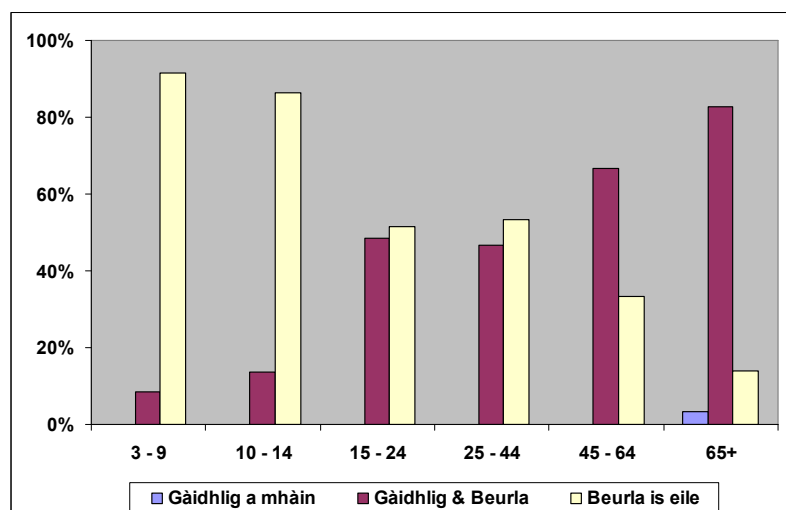
Almost 50 % of locally born inhabitants spoke Gàidhlig besides English. Although most speakers were older than 24 years of age still several younger people spoke the language of their forebears. Slightly more women than men were enumerated as Gàidhlig speakers. Only one elderly woman spoke no English at all.

Gàidhlig was most prominent in the hamlets of *Achadh Mharasdail* (Achvarasdal) and *Baile Mhuilinn* (Milton) with most people speaking the language of the *Gaidhealtachd*.

Area description:

This district of *Gallaibh* (Caithness) is part of the north-western parish of *Meaghrath* (Reay). It includes several small farms and groups of houses around the village of *Innis Allt* (Isauld). This is relatively fertile agricultural land. This fact also dominated the occupations of the inhabitants with farming skills mostly necessary in 1891.

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. ³	Total ⁴	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	207	8	0	5	194	1	87	45.4 %
3-4	10	0	0	0	10	0	0	0.0 %
5-9	25	0	0	0	25	0	3	12.0 %
10-14	22	0	0	0	22	0	3	13.6 %
15-24	37	0	0	4	33	0	16	48.5 %
25-44	45	0	0	0	45	0	21	46.7 %
45-64	31	0	0	1	30	0	20	66.7 %
65+	29	0	0	0	29	1	24	86.2 %
Gender								
Female	111	5	0	4	102	1	47	47.1 %
Male	96	3	0	1	92	0	40	43.5 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	108	8	0	1	99	0	51	51.5 %
In neighbouring parish¹	35	0	0	0	35	0	12	34.3 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	21	0	0	1	20	1	18	95.0 %
Other places	43	0	0	3	40	0	6	15.0 %

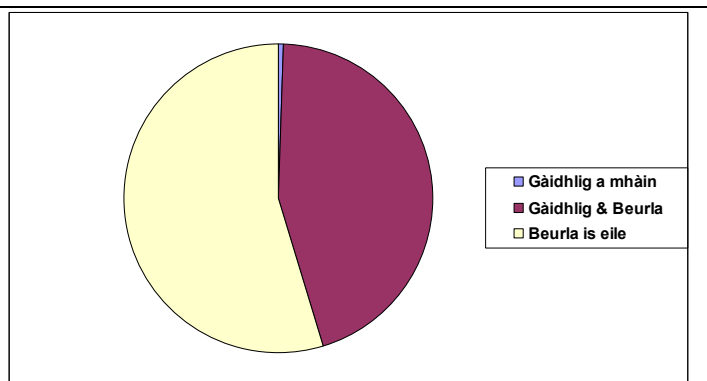
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Farr (Sutherland) or the parishes of Halkirk or Thurso (both Caithness).

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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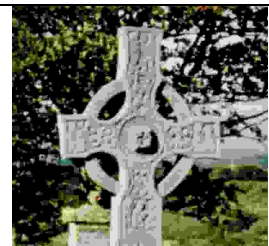
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Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Innis Allt, Achadh Mharasdail, Am Blàr Mòr, Bòrlum & Baile a'Mhuilinn*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Innis Allt & Achadh Mharasdail</i>	47	194	1	87	45.4 %
Individual communities					
<i>Achadh Mharasdail</i> (Achvarasdail)	6	20	0	14	70.0 %
<i>Innis Allt & Gunnscoft</i> (Isauld & Gunnscoft)	24	90	1	32	36.7 %
<i>Am Blàr Mòr & Achunabost</i> (Blarmore & Achunabost)	2	17	0	4	23.5 %
<i>Bòrlum</i> (Borlum)	6	32	0	16	50.0 %
<i>Baile a'Mhuilinn</i> (Milton)	9	35	0	21	60.0 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	9	58	0	36	62.1 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	2	15	0	2	13.3 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	7	41	0	2	4.9 %
Households with no children (0-14)	29	80	1	47	60.0 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	15	74	0	43	58.1 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	5	21	0	12	57.1 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	5	22	0	7	31.8 %
Living on private means	2	3	0	3	100 %
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	3	10	0	5	50.0 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	17	64	1	17	28.1 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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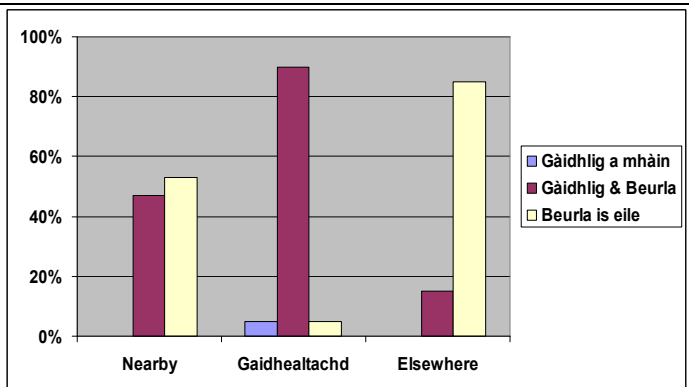
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Almost 50% of locally born residents spoke Gàidhlig. Those born in the *Gaidhealtachd* were enumerated almost completely as Gàidhlig-speaking.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Reay or in the parishes of Farr (Sutherland), Halkirk and Thurso (both Caithness).

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. A sole inhabitant of the village of *Innis Allt* (Isauld) spoke *Gàidhlig* but not English: A 69-year-old lady who originated from *Diùirnis* (Durness).
2. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 207 persons of all ages. 88 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and one person present at census night spoke no English. This led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 43.0 %. This was an under-estimate of 2.4 % compared with the more realistic figures considering only the usually resident population.
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.