

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 067

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**Area:** *Steòrnabhadh (Stornoway): Sràid Tràigh bho Dheas, Sràid Sheumais, Sràid an Rubha, Sràid a'Bhanca, Sràid a'Chaisteil, Sràid a'Chidhe & Rathad a'Gharaidh*

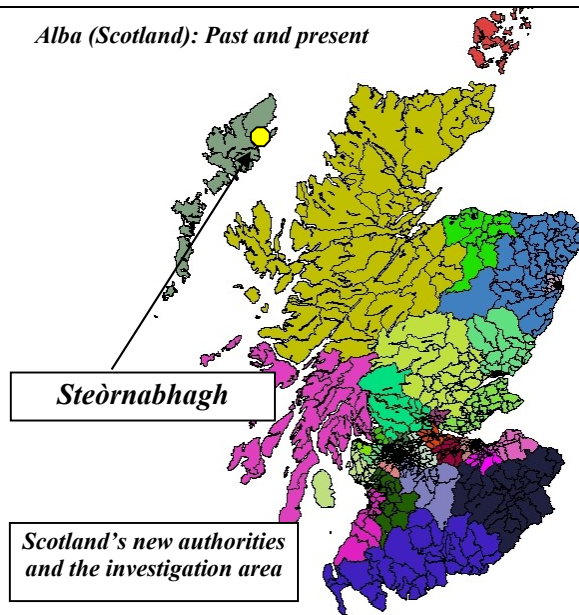
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Esplanade Rd, South Beach St, Caledonian Bank House, Cairn House, James St, Ship Yard, Point St, Imperial Hotel, Bank St, Castle St, Quay St & Garden Rd)

**Number of households:** 94      **Population present at census night:** 447

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig:** 80.6 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Ross & Cromarty	Stornoway	Stornoway	1	1 – 21

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

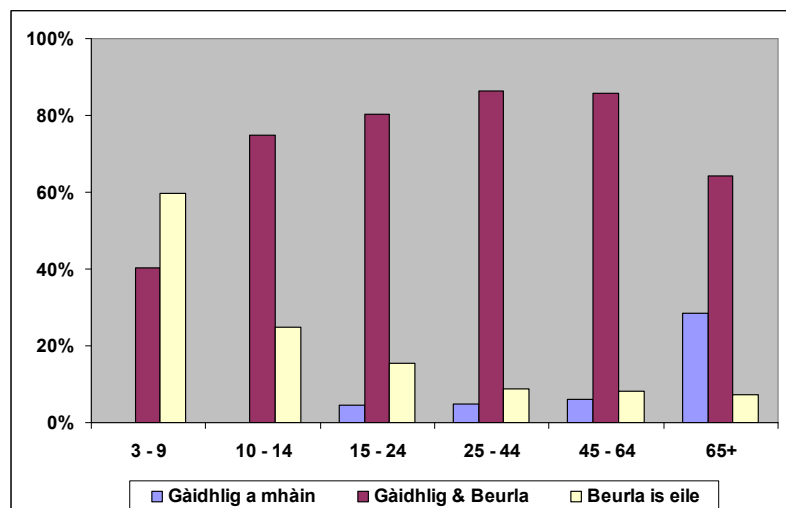
Apart from the very young the Gàidhlig language was almost universally spoken by locally born inhabitants. Bilingualism, however, was much the norm rather than an exception. Gàidhlig monolingual persons were confined to the older generation.

The language, however, was not the preferred tongue in every quarter. Whereas 90 % of people in *Sràid an Rubha* (Point Street) spoke Gàidhlig, just 40 % in *Rathad a'Gharaidh* (Garden Road) did so. On the other hand, roughly 80 % spoke the language independent of occupation of the residents.

## Area description:

The district described forms the south-western part of the harbour town of *Steòrnabhadh* (Stornoway) on the Hebridean island of *Leòdhas* (Lewis). In 1891 this area was administered by the County Council of *Ros is Cromba* (Ross & Cromarty).

The population in this part of the town was occupied with a variety of trades as *Steòrnabhadh* was not only the natural centre of island society but also a very important fishing and shipping location.



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>	<b>447</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>80.6 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23.1 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>39</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>46.2 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>48</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>75.0 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>101</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>84.6 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>126</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>91.3 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>54</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>91.8 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>30</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>92.9 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>81.6 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>79.2 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>76.9 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>110</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>94.3 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20.7 %</b>

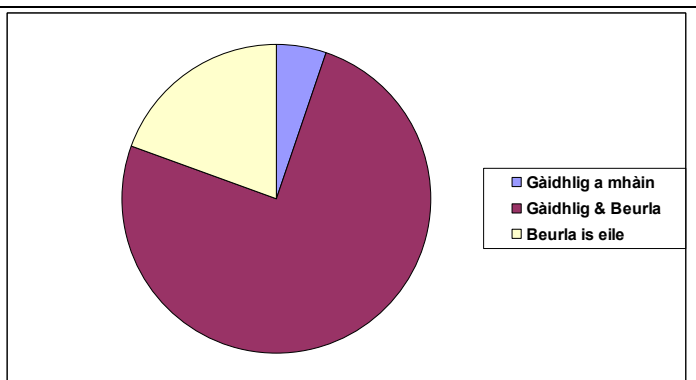
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Lochs, Barvas and Uig (all Ross & Cromarty).

<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 & Beurla, 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 factsheets 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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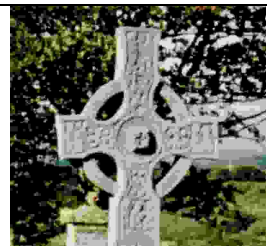
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b><i>Steòrnabhagh: Tràigh bho Dheas</i></b>	<b>94</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>80.6 %</b>
<b>Individual places of residence</b>					
<b><i>Sràid Tràigh bho Dheas</i></b> (South Beach St – including Esplanade St)	<b>27</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>76.4 %</b>
<b><i>Sràid Sheumais</i></b> (James St)	<b>12</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>77.8 %</b>
<b><i>Sràid an Rubha</i></b> (Point St)	<b>37</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>90.7 %</b>
<b><i>Sràid a'Chaisteil</i></b> (Castle St – including Bank St and Quay St)	<b>11</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>78.0 %</b>
<b><i>Rathad a'Gharaidh</i></b> (Garden Rd)	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>41.2 %</b>
<b>Language of parents</b>					
<b>Both parents Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>81.7 %</b>
<b>Single parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>83.9 %</b>
<b>One parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>38.7 %</b>
<b>No Gàidhlig speaking parent</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14.3 %</b>
<b>Households with no children (0-14)</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>91.9 %</b>
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
<b>Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>82.6 %</b>
<b>Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>73.3 %</b>
<b>Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>80.5 %</b>
<b>Living on private means</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>66.7 %</b>
<b>Manager, coachman, cook, etc.</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>84.6 %</b>
<b>Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>88.7 %</b>
<b>Remaining occupations</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100 %</b>

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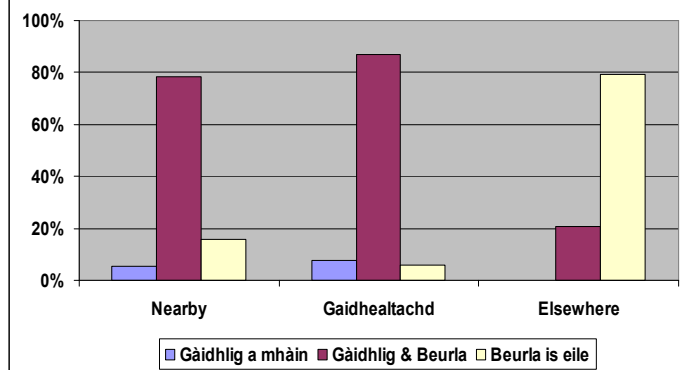
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The vast majority of those born in the *Gaidhealtachd* was bilingual – a few older persons did not even speak English. On the other hand, only a small proportion of people born elsewhere were returned as speaking also *Gàidhlig* besides their English mother tongue.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Stornoway or in the adjacent parishes of Barvas, Lochs and Uig (all Ross & Cromarty).

<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. In total 20 usually resident persons were enumerated as speaking “Gaelic only”. Most of them were women and originated mainly from rural parishes of the island.
2. In original census report terms this enumeration district had a population of 447 persons of all ages. 309 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 22 persons were reported as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. These figures led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 74.0 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this factsheet reveals that this percentage was a considerable under-estimate of 6.2 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.