

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 072

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**Area:** *Cataibh an Ear (East Sutherland): Àsdal, Druim Àsdail, Eibhleag, An Clais Mòr, Sgiobal & Clais Mucach*

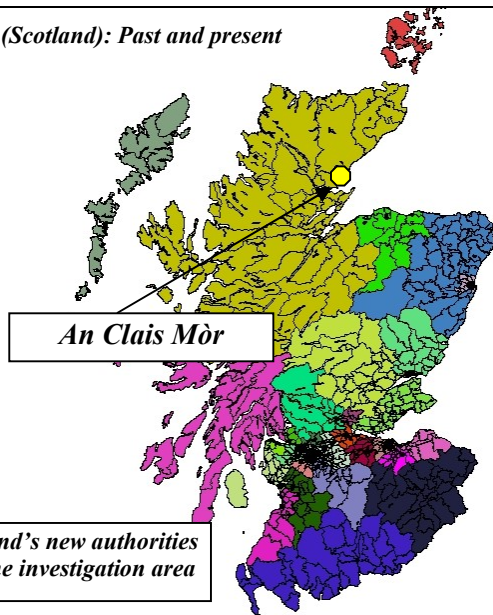
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Astle, Drimastle, Evelix Cottage, Clashmore, Rosebank, Skibo, Overskibo, Clashmugach)

**Number of households:** 51      **Population present at census night:** 204

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig:** 65.6 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Sutherland	Dornoch	Dornoch	5	1 - 14

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

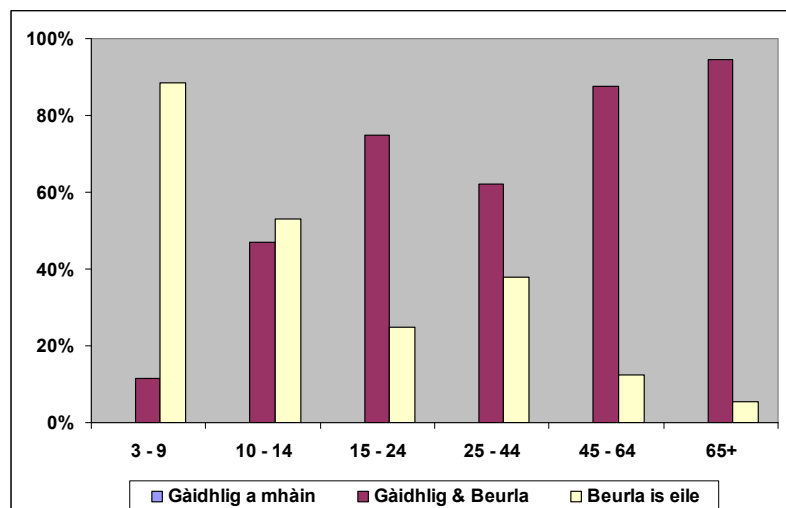
Although a large majority of the usually resident population was Gàidhlig-speaking, the language was already very much a minority issue in the younger generation. No monolingual Gàidhlig speaker was found in the district.

By far the strongest Gàidhlig community was the crofting hamlet of *Àsdal* (Astle) with 97.5 % of the population speaking the language. On the other hand, people around *Caisteal Sgiobail* (Skibo Castle) were far less likely to speak Gàidhlig. Many of them of course originated from the Lowlands or further away.

## Area description:

The area covered occupies the western part of the parish of *Dòrnach* (Dornoch) in the county of *Cataibh* (Sutherland). This rural district had a very diverse settlement structure with small crofting communities like *Àsdal* (Astle) or *An Clais Mòr* (Clashmore) living side by side with the higher society of *Sgiobal* (Skibo) with its castle and extensive private grounds.

Accordingly, the occupations of most residents were either connected with the estate or with their status of crofters living on poor soils in the “backyard” of the castle.



**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>204</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>65.6 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13.6 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>47.1 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>32</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>75.0 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>45</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>62.2 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>48</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>87.5 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>94.4 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>66.7 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>64.3 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>78.5 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>78.3 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>91.7 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5.7 %</b>

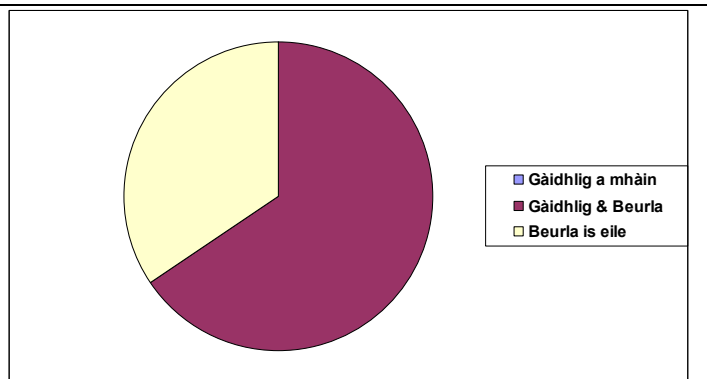
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Creich, Lairg, Rogart and Golspie (all Sutherland).

<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 & 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 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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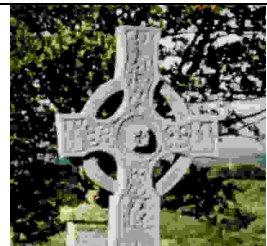
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	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>An Clais Mòr &amp; Sgiobal</i>	51	186	0	122	65.6 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Àsdal</i> (Astle)	10	33	0	32	97.0 %
<i>Druim Àsdail &amp; Eibhleag</i> (Drimastle & Evelix)	2	12	0	9	75.0 %
<i>An Clais Mòr</i> (Clashmore)	20	66	0	46	69.7 %
<i>Sgiobal &amp; Ofarsgiobail</i> (Skibo & Overskibo)	12	48	0	17	35.4 %
<i>Clais Mucach</i> (Clashmugach)	7	27	0	18	66.7 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	7	40	0	28	70.0 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	2	12	0	6	50.0 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	2	8	0	3	37.5 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	5	32	0	4	12.5 %
Households with no children (0-14)	35	94	0	81	86.2 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	17	57	0	50	87.7 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	3	8	0	1	12.5 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	1	1	0	0	0.0 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	9	43	0	26	60.5 %
Living on private means	6	13	0	11	84.6 %
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	8	47	0	17	40.5 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	7	23	0	17	77.3 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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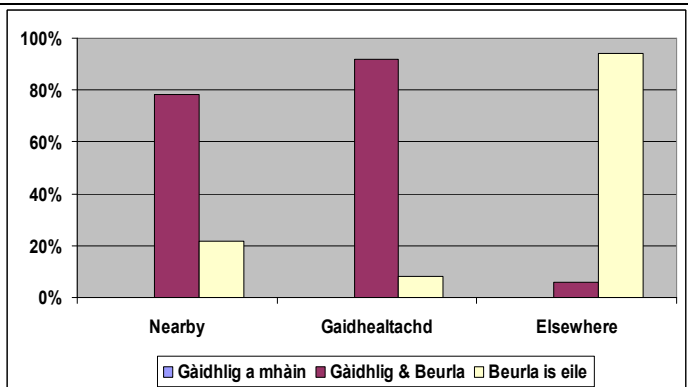
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

A significant majority of locally born residents spoke Gàidhlig. On the other hand, almost no-one born outside the *Gaidhealtachd* spoke the local language, too.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Dornoch or in the adjacent parishes of Creich, Lairg, Rogart and Golspie (all Sutherland).

<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. No person was enumerated who did not speak English whether alone or in addition to *Gàidhlig*.
2. Official census figures reported 124 bilingual (“Gaelic and English”) inhabitants out of a total population of 204 persons (60.8 %). The usually resident population consisted of 122 *Gàidhlig*-speakers (65.6 %). A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this factsheet reveals that this percentage was an under-estimate of 4.8 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.