

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 075

Page 1 of 4

Area: *Leòdhas (Lewis): Dail bho Dheas, Àird Dhail & Gabhsunn*

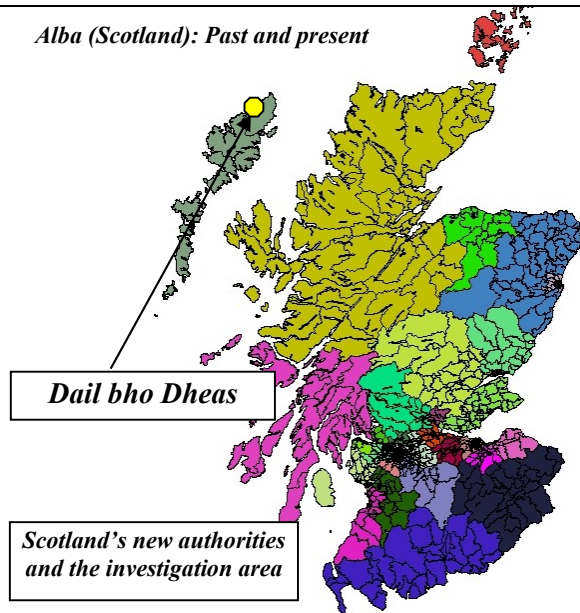
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: South Dell, Aird Dell & Galson)

Number of households: 69 Population present at census night: 315

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 98.6 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Ross & Cromarty	Barvas	Barvas	6	1 – 13

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

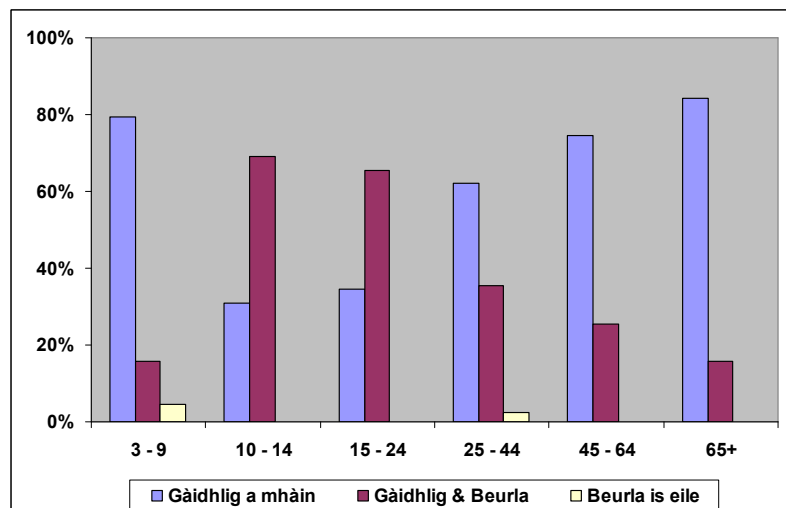
The usually resident population was overwhelmingly Gàidhlig-speaking. In fact, the majority of all inhabitants did not speak English at all. There were only four persons enumerated with “no Gaelic”. All had Lowland backgrounds and lived on the farm of *Gabhsunn* (Galson).

Gàidhlig speakers with some knowledge of English were found mainly in the age group between 10 and 24 which had got in contact with the compulsory “English only” school system in those days.

Area description:

The district concerned lies in the parish of *Barabhas* (Barvas) on the island of *Leòdhas* (Lewis) in the Outer Hebrides. The settlements involved were the crofting townships of *Dail bho Dheas* (South Dell) and *Àird Dhail* (Aird Dell) as well as the farm dwelling at *Gabhsunn* (Galson).

Most residents were of course engaged in crofting activities and some fishing.



Age profile: Share of population speaking (1) Gàidhlig, (2) Gàidhlig & English, or (3) no Gàidhlig at all

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 075

Page 2 of 4

Area: *Leòdhas (Lewis); Dail bho Dheas, Àird Dhail & Gabhsunn*

	Population enumerated				Usually resident population (3+)			
	Total	Aged 0-2	Deaf & dumb	Visitors etc. ³	Total ⁴	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	315	36	0	2	277	167	106	98.6 %
3-4	12		0	0	12	10	1	91.7 %
5-9	32		0	0	32	25	6	96.9 %
10-14	29		0	0	29	9	20	100 %
15-24	53		0	1	52	18	34	100 %
25-44	82		0	0	82	51	29	97.6 %
45-64	51		0	0	51	38	13	100 %
65+	20		0	1	19	16	3	100 %
Gender								
Female	172	15	0	2	155	110	42	98.1 %
Male	143	21	0	0	122	57	64	99.2 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	295	36	0	2	257	160	95	99.2 %
In neighbouring parish¹	9	0	0	0	9	7	2	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	6	0	0	0	6	0	6	100 %
Other places	5	0	0	0	5	0	3	60.0 %

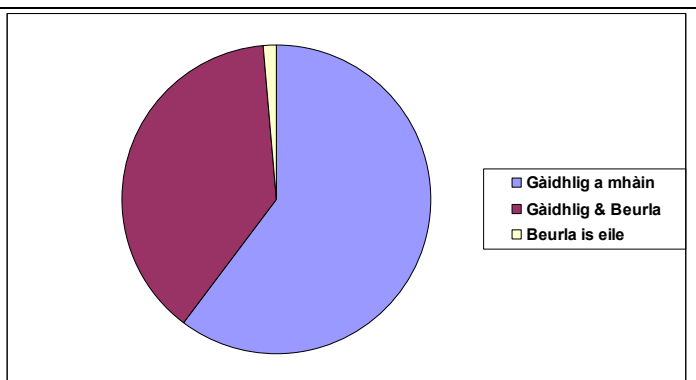
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Stornoway and Uig (both Ross & Cromarty).

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 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.

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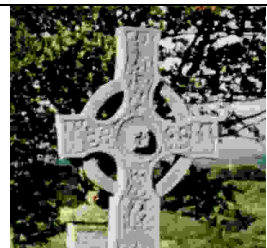
No. 075

Page 3 of 4

Area: *Leòdhas (Lewis): Dail bho Dheas, Àird Dhail & Gabhsunn*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Dail bho Dheas & Gabhsunn</i>	69	277	167	106	98.6 %
Individual communities					
<i>Dail bho Dheas</i> (South Dell)	58	230	148	82	100 %
<i>Àird Dhail</i> (Aird Dell)	7	24	18	6	100 %
<i>Gabhsunn</i> (Galson)	4	23	1	18	82.6 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	34	173	104	69	100 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	5	17	10	7	100 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	2	17	1	12	76.5 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	0	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	28	70	52	18	100 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	55	243	158	82	98.8 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	3	8	2	6	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	1	3	0	3	100 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	3	14	4	9	92.9 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	7	9	3	6	100 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 075

Page 4 of 4

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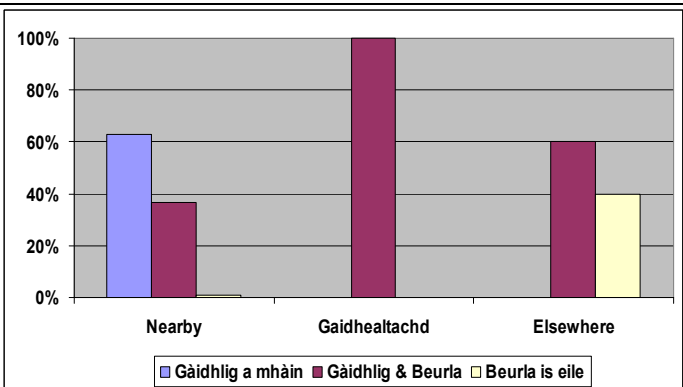
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The majority of locally born inhabitants did not speak English. Those with a birthplace in the wider *Gaidhealtachd*, however, were all bilingual. The two English monolingual adults came originally from Dumfriesshire.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Barvas or in the adjacent parishes of Stornoway and Uig (both Ross & Cromarty).

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. The census revealed just four persons who were not speaking *Gàidhlig*. All were residents of *Gabhsunn* (Galson). This group consisted of the local farmer (born in Dumfriesshire), two of his daughters (aged 6 and 4 years) and the wife of the local teacher. The latter originated also from Dumfriesshire.
2. In original census report terms, the enumeration district in total had a population of 486 persons of all ages. Just 188 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 259 persons were reported as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. These figures led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 92.0 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this factsheet reveals that this percentage was an under-estimate of 6.6 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.