

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 081

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Area: *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach (Isle of Skye): Mol, Sgonnsar, Coille Mhòr, Ceann Loch Sligeachain, Bualasgail, Sligeachan & An t-Allt Dearg*

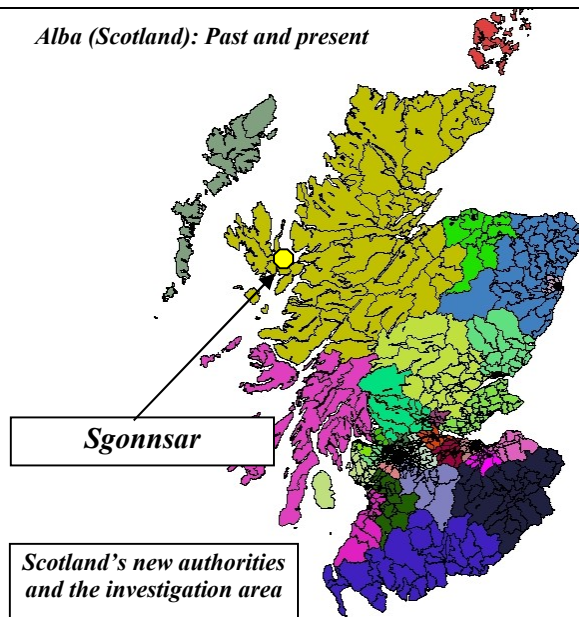
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Moll, Sconser, Colliemore, Kinloch Sligachan, Bualsgil, Sligachan & Aultdearg)

Number of households: 53 **Population present at census night:** 244

Share of resident population (aged three years +) speaking Gàidhlig: 94.2 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness	Portree Bracadale	Portree Bracadale	1 4	1 – 11 9 – 11

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

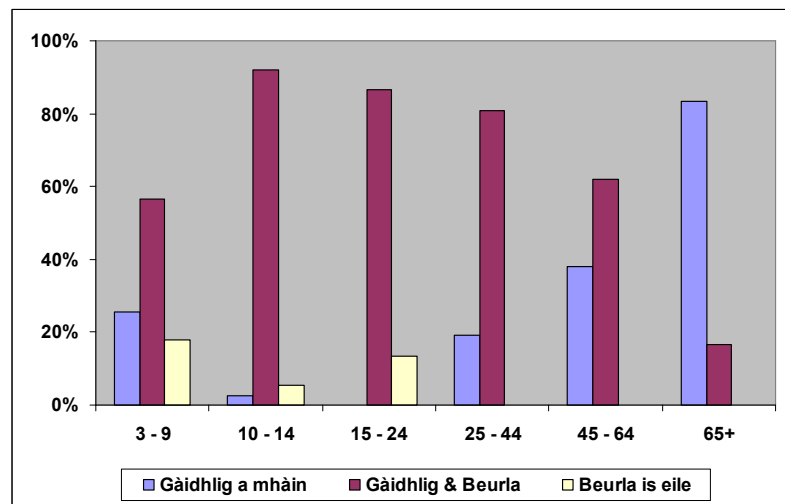
Besides people living at Sligachan Hotel almost all residents spoke Gàidhlig. Most of them were of course bilingual. Significant numbers of Gàidhlig monolingual persons, however, were found only at very young age and among the elderly generation. Among crofting households everyone was returned as Gàidhlig speaking.

The strength of the language was rather similar in every individual community apart from Sligeachan (Sligachan).

Area description:

The district described is situated in the less populous centre of *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye) encompassing a few crofting settlements, gamekeeper's houses and the famous Sligachan Hotel. Administratively the whole island was of course part of the county of *Inbhirnis* (Inverness) in 1891.

Besides the servants at the hotel and a handful of gamekeepers and shepherds most residents were occupied with crofting at the time.



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	244	17	0	4	223	53	157	94.2 %
3-4	7		0	0	7	4	1	71.4 %
5-9	32		0	0	32	6	21	84.4 %
10-14	37		0	0	37	1	34	94.6 %
15-24	31		0	1	30	0	26	86.7 %
25-44	60		0	3	57	11	46	100 %
45-64	42		0	0	42	16	26	100 %
65+	18		0	0	18	15	3	100 %
Gender								
Female	130	5	0	1	124	35	84	96.0 %
Male	114	12	0	3	99	18	73	91.9 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	180	15	0	1	164	44	116	97.6 %
In neighbouring parish¹	32	1	0	0	31	7	24	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	20	1	0	0	19	2	16	94.7 %
Other places	12	0	0	3	9	0	1	11.1 %

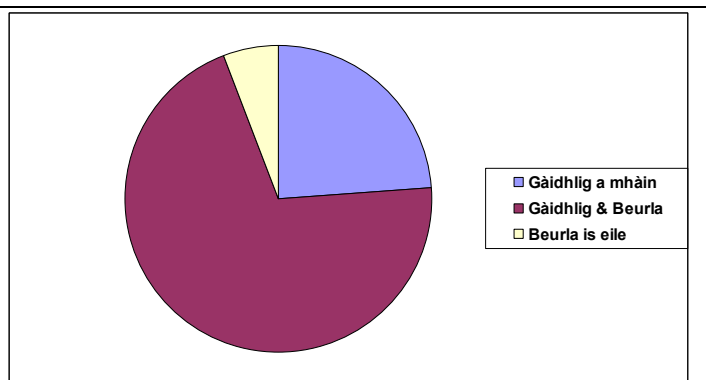
Notes:

¹ Civil parishes of Snizort, Duirinish, Strath or Bracadale (all Inverness-shire).

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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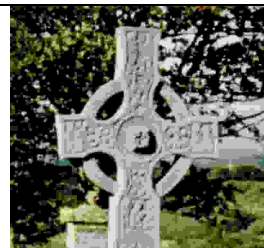
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	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Sgonnsar & Sligeachan</i>	53	223	53	157	94.2 %
Individual communities					
<i>Mol & Sgonnsar</i> (Moll & Sconser)	5	18	2	14	88.9 %
<i>Coille Mhòr</i> (Colliemore)	44	171	48	122	99.4 %
<i>Sligeachan</i> (Sligachan)	2	23	0	13	56.5 %
<i>An t-Allt Dearg & Bualasgail</i> (Aultdearg & Bualsgil)	2	11	3	8	100 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	18	99	17	79	97.0 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	15	66	22	44	100 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	1	16	0	6	37.5 %
Households with no children (0-14)	19	42	14	28	100 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	34	128	41	87	100 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	4	21	3	18	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	3	27	0	16	59.3 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	1	6	0	4	66.7 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	3	14	0	14	100 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	8	27	9	18	100 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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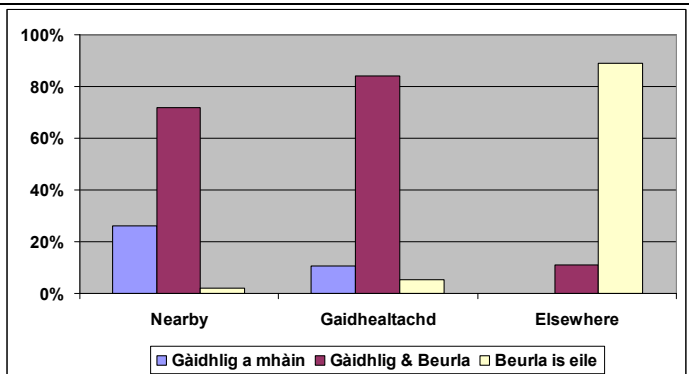
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Almost all persons born locally or in the wider *Gaidhealtachd* spoke Gàidhlig. The vast majority of English monolinguals originated from the Lowlands or England.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Portree or in the adjacent parishes of Bracadale, Duirinish, Strath or Snizort (all in Inverness-shire).

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. Thirteen usually resident persons were enumerated which did not speak *Gàidhlig*. At *Sgonnsar* the five- and seven-year-old sons of a piper had blank spaces in the language column of their registration sheets. In addition, the four-year-old son of the schoolmaster at *Coille Mhòr* (Colliemore) was registered as not speaking *Gàidhlig*. However, in 1901 he was found to be speaking *Gàidhlig* as well as English.
2. The remaining “English only” returns in this district were all registered at *Sligachan Hotel*. Apparently, the hotel keeper and his servants were a community apart from the local population.
3. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 244 persons of all ages. 160 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 58 were counted as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. This led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 89.3 %. This figure was an under-estimate of 5.1 % compared with the more realistic figures considering only the usually resident population.