

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 083

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**Area:** *Ratharsair (Isle of Raasay): Suidhisnis, An Clachan, Feàrn, Gleann, Creachan, Taigh Ratharsaigh, Òsgaig, Baile a'Chùirn, Baile Meadhanach, Na Bràighean & Glàm*

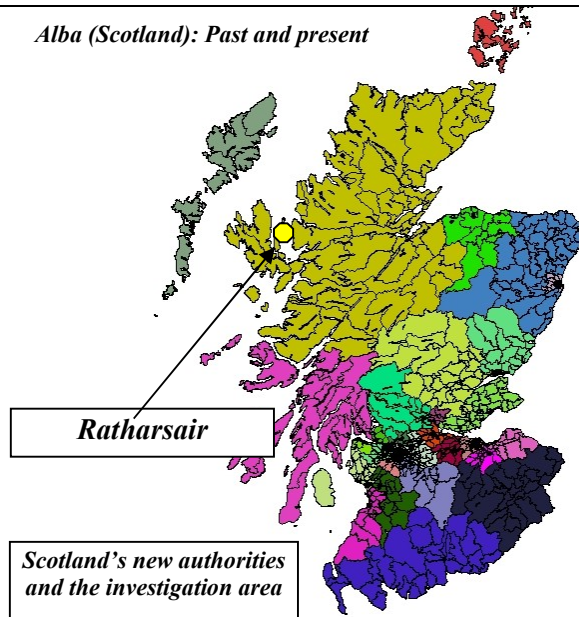
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Suisnish, Clachan, Fearne. Glen, Creach, Raasay House, South Oskaig, North Oskaig, Holoman, Balachuirn, Balmeanach, Braes & Glame)

**Number of households:** 57      **Population present at census night:** 268

**Share of resident population (aged three years +) speaking Gàidhlig:** 89.5 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness	Portree	Raasay	1	1 - 15

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

Most communities in this part of the island were overwhelmingly Gàidhlig speaking – especially those with a crofting background. Notable exceptions were of course the residents of Raasay House and their associated servants at the time.

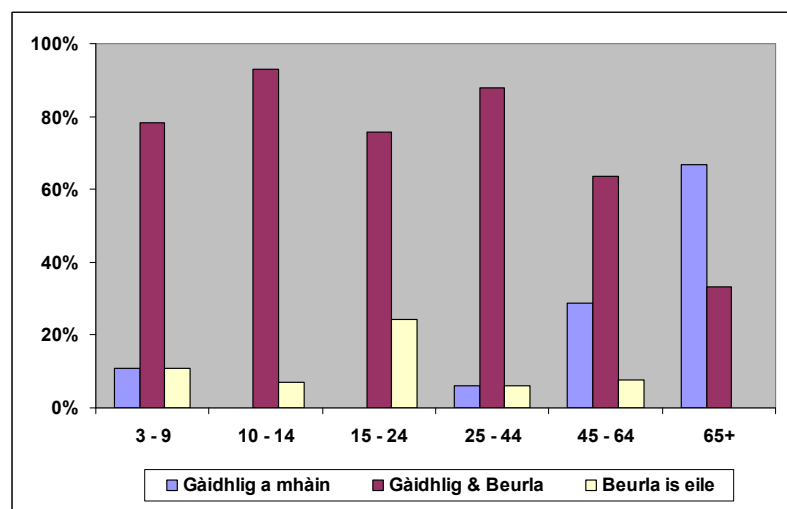
Roughly a quarter of all Gàidhlig speakers did not speak English. These Gàidhlig monolingual persons were mostly found among the older generation. The “English only” speakers were (apart from a dubious census return\*) mostly born outside the island.

\* Please see comments on page 4.

## Area description:

This factsheet is concerned with the situation of Gàidhlig in the southern part of the island of Ratharsair (Raasay). Lying to the east of *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye) it was also part of the county of Inbhirnis (Inverness) in 1891.

Most residents were supported by crofting and fishing activities. A further important employer, however, was the owner of Raasay House.



**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>	268	20	0	1	247	33	188	89.5 %
<b>3-4</b>	13		0	0	13	4	6	76.9 %
<b>5-9</b>	51		0	0	51	3	44	92.2 %
<b>10-14</b>	28		0	0	28	0	26	92.9 %
<b>15-24</b>	41		0	0	41	0	31	75.6 %
<b>25-44</b>	50		0	0	50	3	44	94.0 %
<b>45-64</b>	52		0	0	52	15	33	92.3 %
<b>65+</b>	13		0	1	12	8	4	100 %
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	154	11	0	0	143	20	107	88.8 %
<b>Male</b>	114	9	0	1	104	13	81	90.4 %
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	206	18	0	1	187	27	151	95.2 %
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	5	0	0	0	5	3	2	100 %
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	37	1	0	0	36	3	26	80.6 %
<b>Other places</b>	20	1	0	0	19	0	9	47.4 %

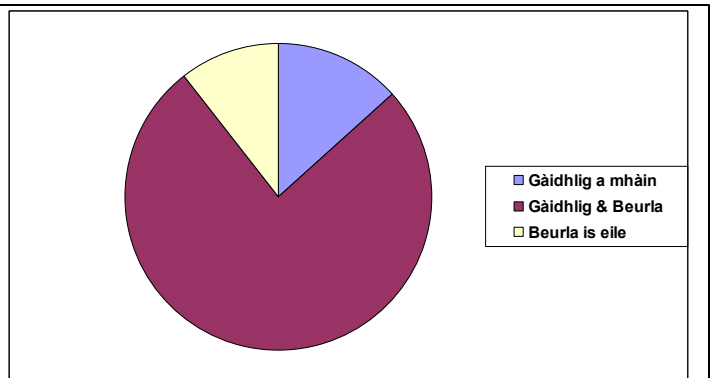
## Notes:

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

<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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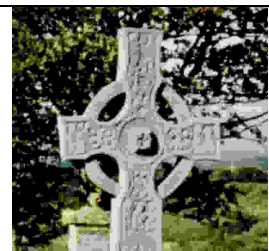
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	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b><i>Ratharsair a Deas</i></b>	<b>57</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>89.5 %</b>
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Suidhisnis</i> (Suishnish)	11	45	8	36	97.8 %
<i>An Clachan</i> (Clachan)	16	60	5	46	85.0 %
<i>Feàrn, Gleann &amp; Creachan</i> (Fearne, Glen & Creach; includes Raasay House)	4	28	1	11	42.9 %
<i>Òsgaig a Deas</i> (South Oskaig)	7	29	3	26	100 %
<i>Òsgaig a Tuath</i> (North Oskaig)	7	25	9	16	100 %
<i>Baile a'Chùirn</i> (Balachuirn)	7	29	5	24	100 %
<i>Baile Meadhanach</i> (Balmeanach)	2	17	0	17	100 %
<i>Na Bràighean &amp; Glàm</i> (Braes & Glame)	3	14	2	12	100 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
<b>Both parents Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>95.1 %</b>
<b>Single parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>98.1 %</b>
<b>One parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>72.7 %</b>
<b>No Gàidhlig speaking parent</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5.9 %</b>
<b>Households with no children (0-14)</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>98.4 %</b>
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
<b>Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>62.1 %</b>
<b>Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Living on private means</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10.0 %</b>
<b>Manager, coachman, cook, etc.</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>92.2 %</b>
<b>Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>98.5 %</b>
<b>Remaining occupations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>

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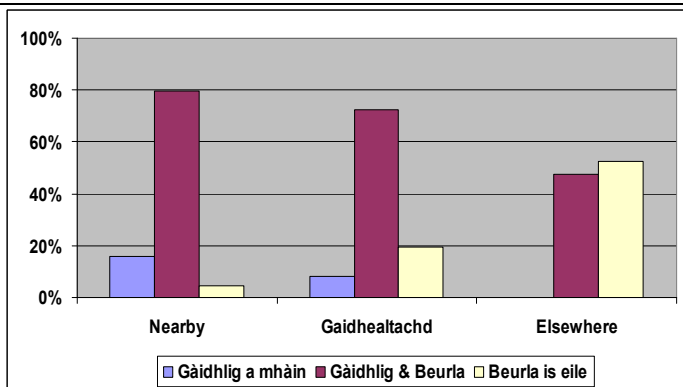
**Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:**

With a few exceptions all persons with birthplaces within the *Gaidhealtachd* were Gàidhlig speakers. Monolingual Gàidhlig speakers were mostly born locally. Among those born elsewhere English monolinguals were in the majority.

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Born in the parishes of Portree, Bracadale, Duirinish, Strath or Snizort (all in Inverness-shire).

<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 26 inhabitants were enumerated with no “G” or “G&E” marked on their registration sheets. Among them was a crofter’s family at *Feàrn* with 8 blank entries in the language column. This return, however, might have been a registration error as all family members were recorded in the 1901 census as either “G” or “G&E” speakers.
2. A second important entry of non-Gàidhlig speakers was of course produced by the inhabitants of Raasay House where nine out of ten members of the household apparently ignored the local language around them. In this category also falls the family of the local gamekeeper and the head gardener with six additional “English only” returns.
3. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 268 persons of all ages. 191 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 34 were counted as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. This led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 84.0 %. This figure was an under-estimate of 5.5 % compared with the more realistic figures considering only the usually resident population.