

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 084

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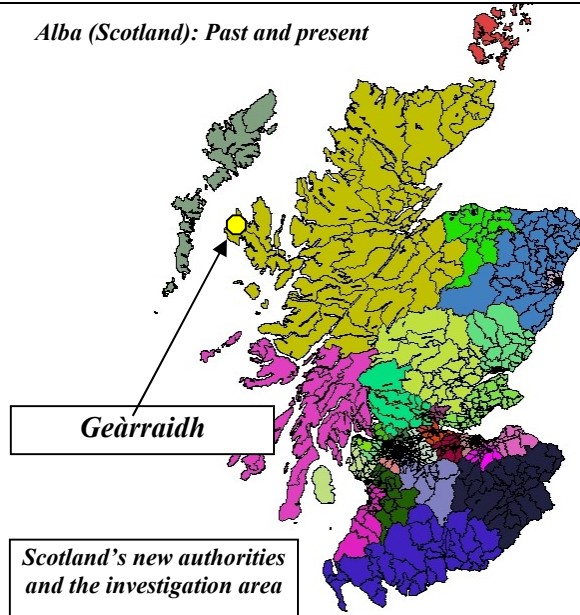
Area: *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach (Isle of Skye): Na Gilean, Geàrraidh, An Cnoc Breac & Ùnais*
 (Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Gillen, Geary, Knockbreck & Unish)

Number of households: 62 **Population present at census night:** 301

Share of resident population (aged three years +) speaking Gàidhlig: **98.2 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness	Duirinish	Waternish	1	1 - 12

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

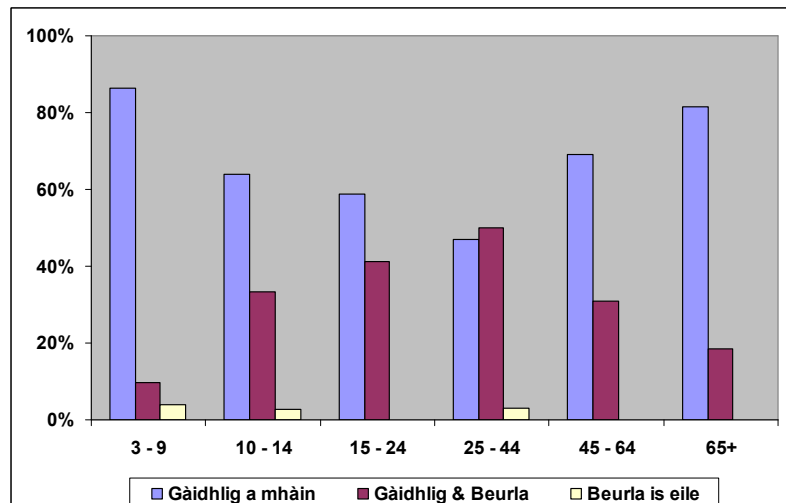
Apart from the teacher's family Gàidhlig was almost exclusively spoken by the usually resident population. Most crofters even did not speak English at all. Bilingual persons were mostly found among those aged between 15 and 44.

All communities were reported as almost totally Gàidhlig speaking except *An Cnoc Breac* (Knockbreck) where the local school was situated. Four out the five English monolingual persons found in the district were born in the Lowlands – including of course the teacher and his wife.

Area description:

The communities investigated are situated on the *Bhàtarnais* (Waternish) peninsula in the north-western part of *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye). Basically, these were all genuinely crofting townships with a very strong Gàidhlig tradition. They comprised all settlements on the east of the peninsula right to *Rubha Bhàtarnais* (Waternish Point) to the north.

The main occupations of the inhabitants were of course concerned with crofting activities.



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

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Area: *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach (Isle of Skye): Na Gilean, Geàrrraidh, An Cnoc Breac & Ùnais*

	Population enumerated				Usually resident population (3+)			
	Total	Aged 0-2	Deaf & dumb	Visitors etc. ³	Total ⁴	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	301	18	0	0	283	186	92	98.2 %
3-4	14		0	0	14	13	0	92.9 %
5-9	37		0	0	37	31	5	97.3 %
10-14	36		0	0	36	23	12	97.2 %
15-24	51		0	0	51	30	21	100 %
25-44	66		0	0	66	31	33	97.0 %
45-64	52		0	0	52	36	16	100 %
65+	27		0	0	27	22	5	100 %
Gender								
Female	157	9	0	0	148	107	38	98.0 %
Male	144	9	0	0	135	79	54	98.5 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	285	18	0	0	267	180	86	99.6 %
In neighbouring parish¹	7	0	0	0	7	4	3	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Other places	9	0	0	0	9	2	3	55.6 %

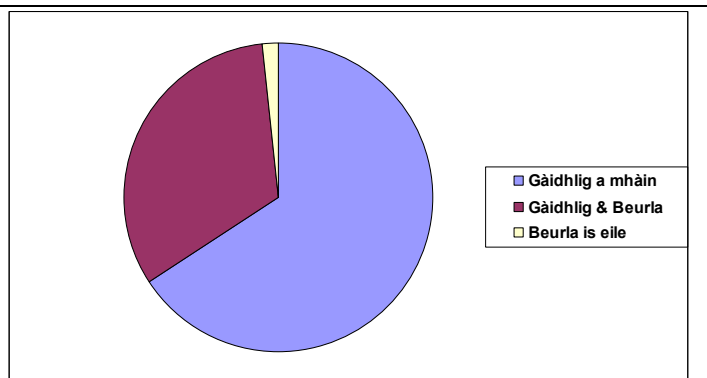
Notes:

¹ Civil parishes of Snizort or Bracadale (both 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 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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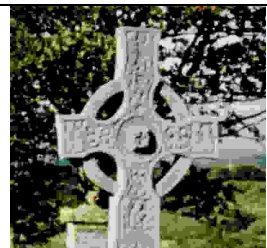
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Area: *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach (Isle of Skye): Na Gilean, Geàrraidh, An Cnoc Breac & Ùnais*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Gèarraidh & An Cnoc Breac	62	283	186	92	98.2 %
Individual communities					
<i>Na Gilean</i> (Gillen)	14	56	44	12	100 %
<i>Geàrraidh</i> (Geary)	37	185	111	72	98.9 %
<i>An Cnoc Breac</i> (Knockbreck)	10	34	23	8	91.2 %
<i>Ùnais</i> (Unish)	1	8	8	0	100 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	20	124	98	25	99.2 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	16	80	43	35	97.5 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	0	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	26	79	45	32	97.5 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	49	240	158	79	98.8 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	2	6	2	4	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	1	2	0	0	0.0 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	3	16	10	6	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	1	8	8	0	100 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	6	11	8	3	100 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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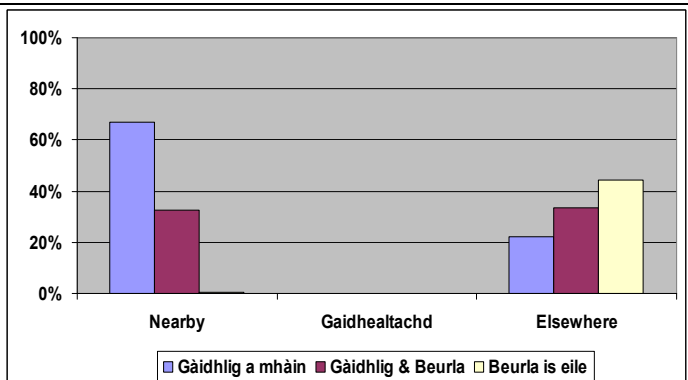
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Most locally born persons spoke only Gàidhlig. Interestingly speakers of the traditional language were even counted among the few people born outside the *Gaidhealtachd*. No person was enumerated with a birthplace in the wider *Gaidhealtachd*.

Notes:

¹ Born in the parishes of Bracadale, Duirinish 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. Five inhabitants were enumerated which did not speak Gàidhlig. Of course, the schoolmaster and his wife spoke only English. They were born in the Lowlands. In addition, two children (aged 6 and 10) from Haddingtonshire lived with their crofting grandfather in *Geàrraidh* (Geary). This small group was completed by a three-year-old girl in *An Cnoc Breac* (Knockbreck) who did not have a “G” or “G&E” marked on her registration sheet.
2. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 301 persons of all ages. 93 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 191 were counted as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. This led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 94.4 %. This figure was an under-estimate of 3.8 % compared with the more realistic figures considering only the usually resident population.