

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 085

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Area: *Leòdhas (Lewis): Seisiadar*

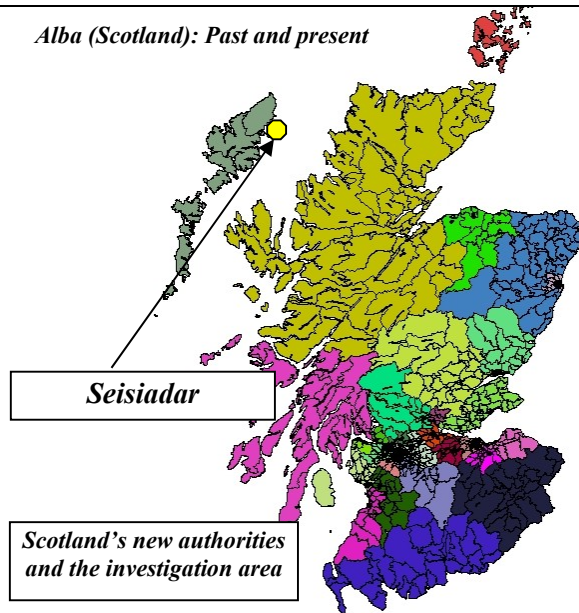
(Name of enumeration location used on census forms: Sheshader)

Number of households: 40      Population present at census night: 268

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking *Gàidhlig*: 99.6 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Ross & Cromarty	Stornoway	Stornoway	16	1 – 12

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



## State of *Gàidhlig* in 1891:

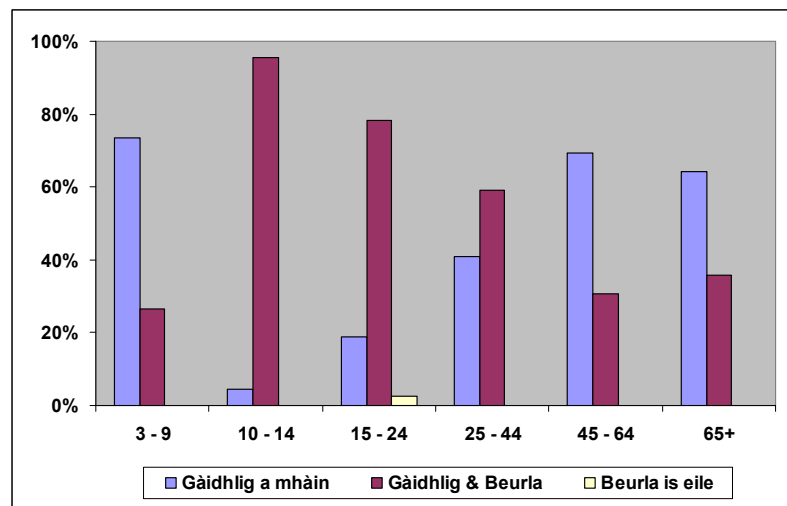
All except one of the inhabitants spoke the traditional language. Almost one half of the usually resident population did not speak English at all. Bilingual persons were mainly confined to the age group between 10 and 44 years. Males were more likely than women to be able to converse also in the official language.

The only reported English monoglot (by census terms) was a 15-year-old girl. This daughter of a local fisherman, however, might probably have been able to speak the language but didn't. In any case it was a statistically irrelevant recording.

## Area description:

The crofting hamlet of *Seisiadar* (Sheshader) lies in the centre of the small *An Rubha* peninsula on the east coast of the island of *Leòdhas* (Lewis). As part of the northern Outer Hebrides the district was part of the county of *Ros is Cromba* (Ross & Cromarty) in 1891.

Most inhabitants mostly made their living by fishing activities supported of course by some crofting on their small pockets of land.



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>268</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>99.6 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>23</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>41</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>23</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>41</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>97.3 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>71</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>26</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>16</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>99.3 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>99.6 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100 %</b>

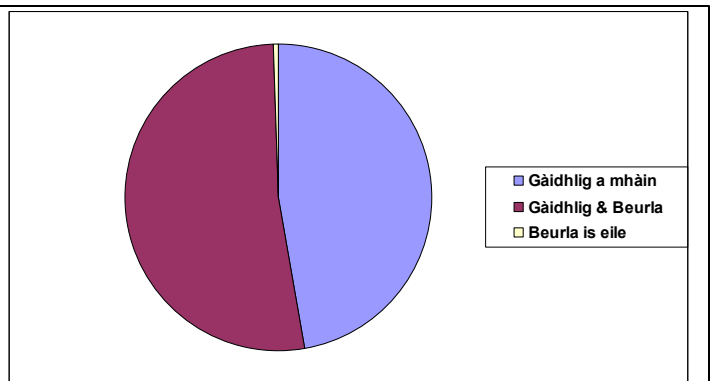
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Lochs, Barvas and Uig (all Ross & Cromarty).

<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 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](http://www.linguae-celticae.de/GLP_english.htm).

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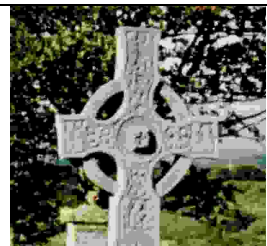
Area: *Leòdhas (Lewis): Seisiadar*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Seisiadar</i>	40	235	111	123	99.6 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					

No individual communities were identified within this enumeration district.

<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	30	190	85	104	99.5 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	8	37	22	15	100 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	0	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	2	8	4	4	100 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	36	216	104	111	99.5 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	0	0	0	0	-
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	2	14	4	10	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	2	5	3	2	100 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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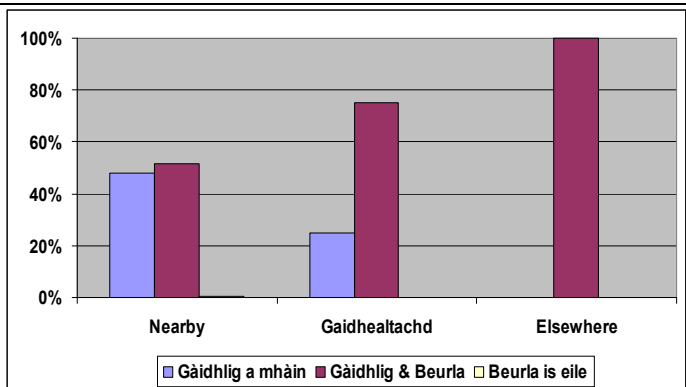
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Roughly 50% of locally born residents did not speak English. On the other hand, all usually resident persons with a birthplace outside the *Gaidhealtachd* were bilingual.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Stornoway or in the adjacent parishes of Barvas, Lochs and Uig (all Ross & Cromarty).

<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. There was just one person who was enumerated as “not speaking Gaelic”. This was the 15-year-old Isabella MacAulay daughter of a locally born fisherman. Whether this was an enumeration error could not be ascertained because she could not be traced in the 1901 census.
2. In original census report terms, the enumeration district in total had a population of 268 persons of all ages. 123 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 125 persons were reported as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. These figures led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 92.5 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this factsheet reveals that this percentage was a considerable under-estimate of 7.1 % caused by the inclusion of under-three olds in the official population base.