

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 086

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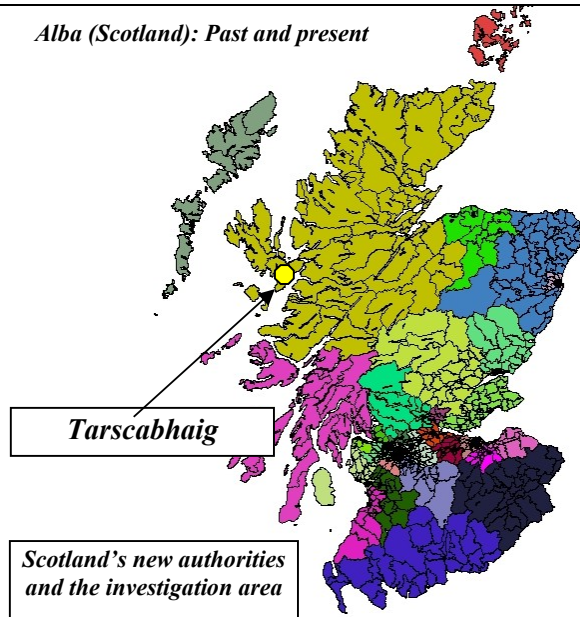
**Area:** *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach (Isle of Skye): Tarscabhaig & Achadh na Cloiche*  
 (Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Tarskavaig & Stonefield)

**Number of households:** 56      **Population present at census night:** 252

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

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness	Sleat	Sleat	4	1 - 12

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



### State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

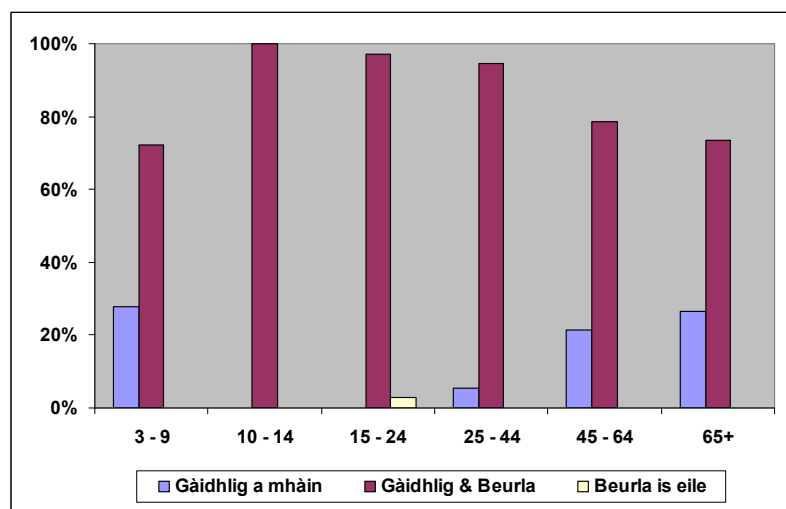
The district was a very strong part of the *Gaidhealtachd*. Apart from a single (doubtful) “English only” return all usually resident persons spoke the traditional language at the time. A few people even did not speak English mainly among the very young and the very old. Almost all these monolingual persons were female.

The language was equally strong in *Tarscabhaig* (Tarskavaig) and *Achadh na Cloiche* (Stonefield) setting aside the above-mentioned teacher’s sister in *Tarscabhaig*.

### Area description:

This factsheet describes the state of *Gàidhlig* in two crofting hamlets in the southern peninsula of *Slèite* (Sleat) on the island of *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye). As such the area was administered as part of the county of *Inbhirnis* (Inverness) in 1891.

Almost the whole population of both settlements were dependent on 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): Tarscabhaig & Achadh na Cloiche*

	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>252</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>99.6 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>28</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>28</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>35</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>97.1 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>56</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>42</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>34</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>99.2 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>80.0 %</b>

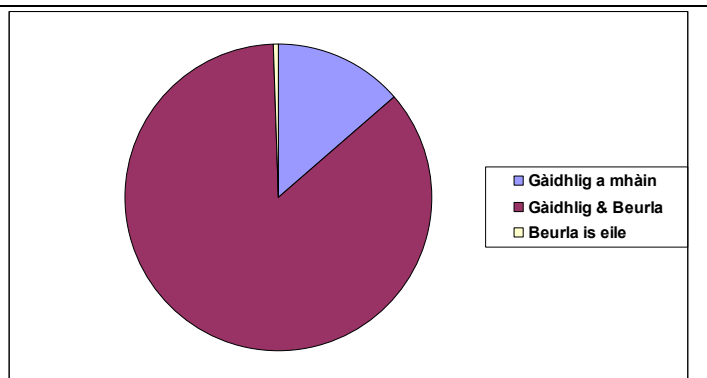
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Civil parish of Strath (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 & 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](http://www.linguae-celticae.de/GLP_english.htm).

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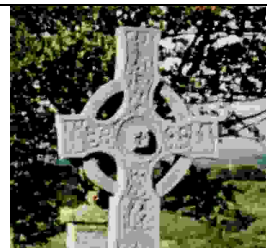
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Area: *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach (Isle of Skye): Tarscabhaig & Achadh na Cloiche*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	<i>Gàidhlig</i>	<i>Gàidhlig</i> & English	<i>Gàidhlig</i> speakers (%)
<i>Tarscabhaig &amp; Achadh na Cloiche</i>	56	228	31	196	99.6 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Tarscabhaig</i> (Tarskavaig)	47	189	22	166	99.5 %
<i>Achadh na Cloiche</i> (Stonefield)	9	39	9	30	100 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking	16	95	11	84	100 %
Single parent <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking	13	62	6	56	100 %
One parent <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking parent	0	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	27	71	14	56	98.6 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	52	222	28	194	100 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	0	0	0	0	-
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	1	2	0	1	50.0 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	3	4	3	1	100 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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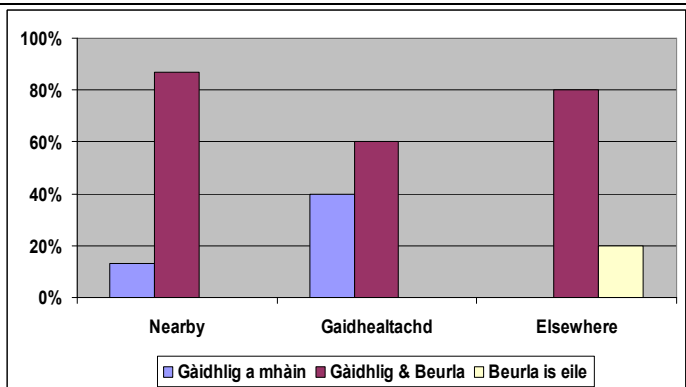
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Almost 50% of all residents born in the wider *Gaidhealtachd* did not speak English. The only “English only” return did not have a birthplace indicated on her registration sheet.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born in the parishes of Sleat or Strath (both 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. One usually resident person in the community did not speak *Gàidhlig* or rather had no entry in the language column of the respective registration sheet. She was the sister (and housekeeper) of the local elementary teacher at *Tarscabhaig*. The latter, however, was returned as bilingual. Being born in the district of *Na Lochan* (Lochs) on the island of *Leòdhas* (Lewis) this was no surprise. Therefore, even this theoretical “English only” return can only be described as doubtful.
2. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 252 persons of all ages. 202 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 44 were counted as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. This led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 97.6 %. Even this high figure was an under-estimate of 3.0 % compared with the more realistic figures considering only the usually resident population.