

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 092

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## Area: *Uibhist a Tuath (North Uist): Loch nam Madadh & Eilean Leireabhagh*

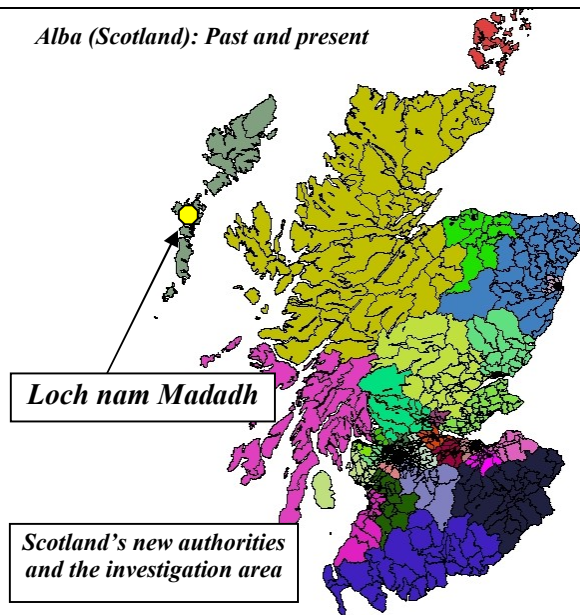
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: County Buildings, Lereva Island, Lochmaddy Hotel, Post Office, Caledonian Bank House, Oestrum House, HM Prison, Schoolhouse, Long Island Poorhouse, Spanish House, Rhinos House, Somerled Cottages)

**Number of households: 47      Population present at census night: 252**

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 93.8 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness-shire	North Uist	North Uist	15	1 – 11

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*

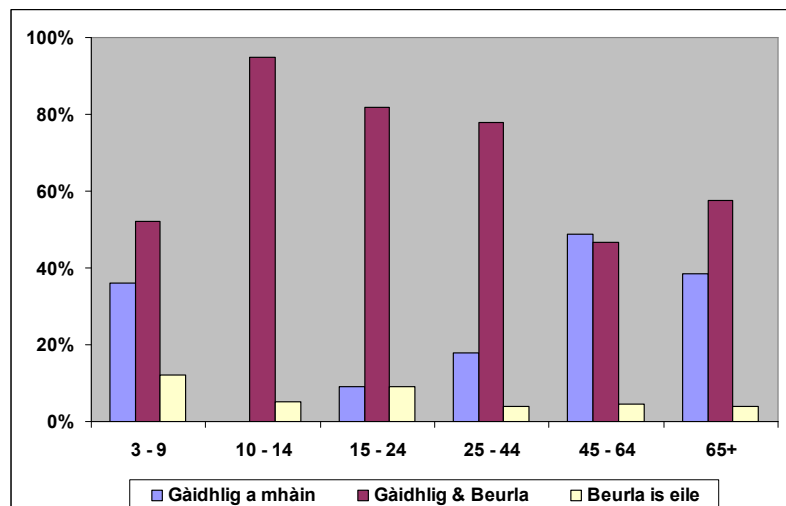


### State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

Apart from a few English-speaking incomers the whole community was entirely Gàidhlig-speaking. More than half of all speakers were still monolingual with a clear majority among pre-school children and residents older than 45 years. Language maintenance within Gàidhlig-speaking families was universally ensured.

### Area description:

The tiny hamlet of *Loch nam Madadh* (Lochmaddy) was and still is the major port of the Hebridean island of *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist). As such it was the location of H.M. Prison, the county buildings and the only bank and hotel on the island. Nonetheless Gàidhlig was still the major tongue in this community. A detached part of this enumeration district was the small islet of *Eilean Leireabhagh* (Lereva Island) with a handful of inhabitants.



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>252</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>93.8 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>77.8 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>93.8 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>94.7 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>90.9 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>96.0 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>95.6 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>96.2 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>93.8 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>93.8 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>98.6 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>97.1 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>52.4 %</b>

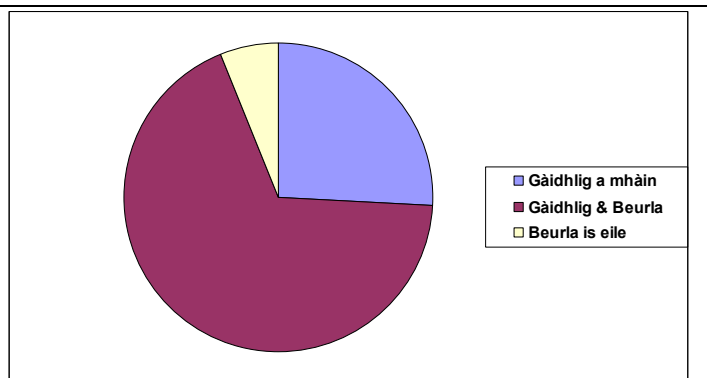
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of South Uist or Harris (all Inverness).

<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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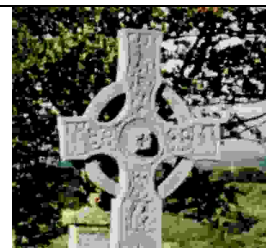
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Area: *Uibhist a Tuath (North Uist): Loch nam Madadh & Eilean Leireabhagh*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Loch nam Madadh &amp; Eilean L.</i>	47	209	54	142	93.8 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Loch nam Madadh (Lochmaddy)</i>	45	198	50	136	93.9 %
<i>Eilean Leireabhagh (Lereva Island)</i>	2	11	4	6	90.9 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	16	96	28	66	97.9 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	6	20	7	12	95.0 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	1	5	0	1	20.0 %
Households with no children (0-14)	24	88	19	63	93.2 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	12	43	21	20	95.3 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	3	14	4	10	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	11	65	5	50	84.6 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	6	31	10	21	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	3	16	1	15	100 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	10	35	12	22	97.1 %
Remaining occupations	2	5	1	4	100 %

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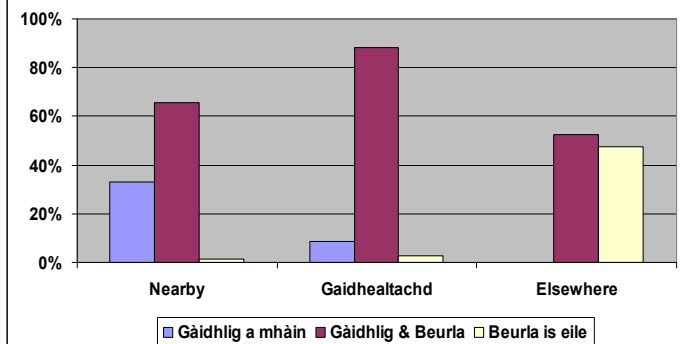
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The monolingual English speakers were largely confined to those born in the Lowlands or even further afield. Those who could not speak English were overwhelmingly born in the islands.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in North Uist or in the adjacent parishes of South Uist or Harris (all Inverness).

<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. Just 13 persons of the usually resident population were reported as not speaking *Gàidhlig*. Most prominent were household members of poorhouse governor (born himself in Kildrummy, Aberdeenshire) and of an advocate from England. Also, the postmaster (from Thurso, Caithness) and of course the public-school teacher (from Elgin, Morayshire) confessed to be unable to speak the language of their neighbours. In addition, there were two young children (aged 3 or 4 years) reported as not speaking *Gàidhlig*. During special checks in the census returns of 1901 both could be traced at different addresses. They were returned as “G&E” (speaking *Gàidhlig* and English) then.
2. In original census report terms, all communities in total had a population of 252 persons of all ages. In all 155 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 61 were counted as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. These figures led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 85.7 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this factsheet reveals that this percentage was a significant under-estimate of 8.1 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.