

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 104

Page 1 of 4

**Area:** *Glenn Seile (Glenshiel): Àird an t-Sabhail, An Tobhtaig, Druideag, Achadh an Taigh Àird Mòr, Achadh an Taigh Àird Beag, Leitir an Fheàrna, Leacachan & Ràtagan*

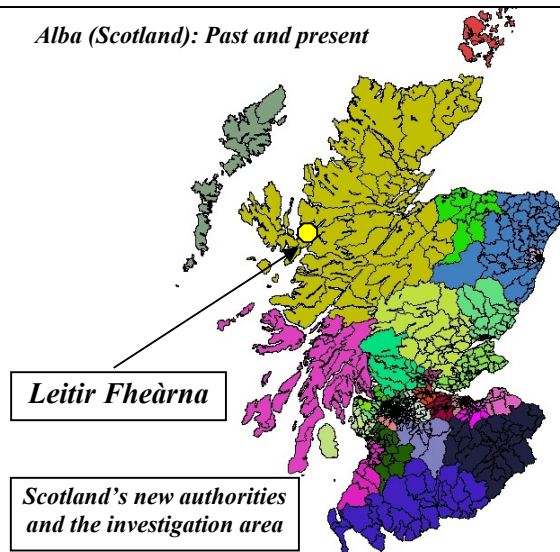
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Ardintoul, Totaig, Druidaig, Achnaturd Wester, Achnaturd Easter, Letterfearn, Leckachan Western, Leakachan Easter, Ratagan)

**Number of households:** 46      **Population present at census night:** 176

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig:** 96.3 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Ross & Cromarty	Glenshiel	Glenshiel	2	1 - 2 (part)
			1	1 - 8

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

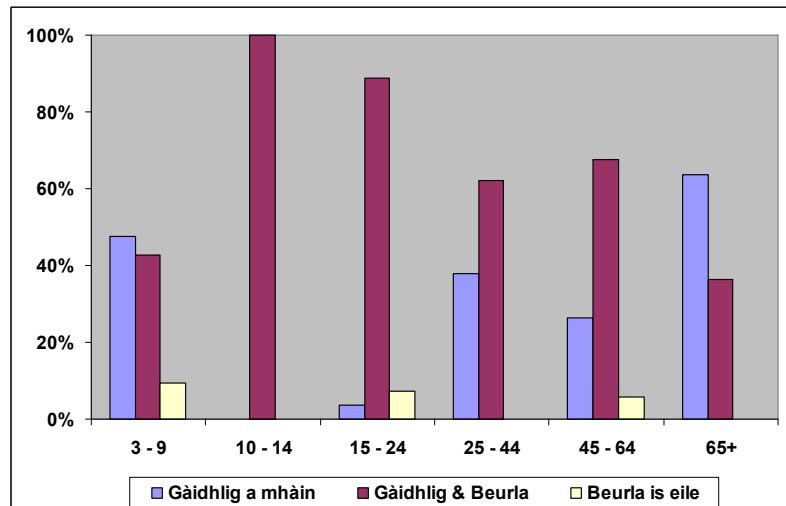
Almost everyone in this district spoke Gàidhlig in 1891. Around a third of Gàidhlig speakers still did not speak English. Those monolingual persons were of course confined to the generations beyond or before school age. The most prominent non-Gàidhlig speakers of course lived in the household of the local schoolteacher. Ignorance of the local tongue was a high priority in education policy at the time.

All small settlements were staunchly Gàidhlig speaking with perhaps *Leitir an Fheàrna* (Letterfearn) boasting the biggest share of non-English speakers.

## Area description:

The district is situated at the west-coast of the Highlands and incorporates the townships between *Ràtagan* (Ratagan) and *Àird an t-Sabhail* (Ardintoul) on the south shore of *Loch Dhubhthaich* (Loch Duich). As such the area was part of the western seabord of the ancient county of *Ros is Cromba* (Ross & Cromarty). The main village was the crofting township of *Leitir an Fheàrna* (Letterfearn).

Besides a few crofters, people were mostly engaged as shepherds and gamekeepers.



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

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Page 2 of 4

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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>	176	10	0	3	163	51	106	96.3 %
<b>3-4</b>	6		0	0	6	5	0	83.3 %
<b>5-9</b>	15		0	0	15	5	9	93.3 %
<b>10-14</b>	14		0	0	14	0	14	100 %
<b>15-24</b>	27		0	0	27	1	24	92.6 %
<b>25-44</b>	45		0	0	45	17	28	100 %
<b>45-64</b>	36		0	1	34	9	23	94.1 %
<b>65+</b>	24		0	2	22	14	8	100 %
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	85	6	0	1	78	29	46	96.2 %
<b>Male</b>	91	4	0	2	85	22	60	96.5 %
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	120	9	0	1	110	41	69	100 %
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	19	0	0	1	18	5	13	100 %
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	31	1	0	0	30	5	22	90.0 %
<b>Other places</b>	6	0	0	1	5	0	2	40.0 %

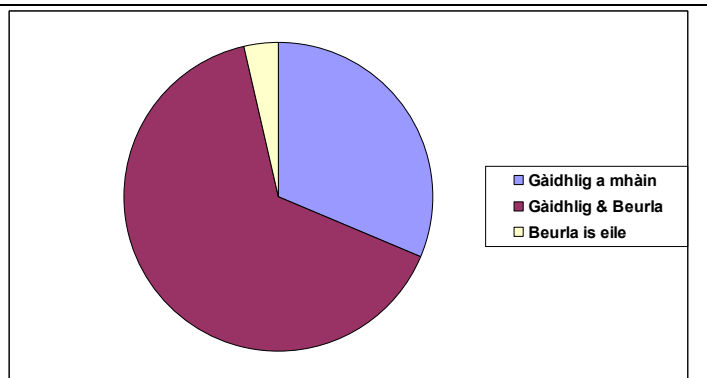
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Parishes of Kintail and Urray (both Ross & Cromarty) or Glenelg, Urquhart & Glenmoriston, Kilmorack or Kilmonivaig (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 & 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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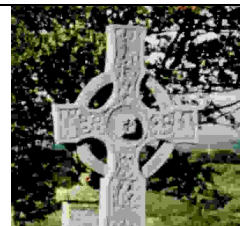
No. 104

Page 3 of 4

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	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Leitir an Fheàrna &amp; An Tobhtaig</i>	46	163	51	106	96.3 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Àird an t-Sabhail</i> (Ardintoul)	5	19	6	12	94.7 %
<i>An Tobhtaig &amp; Druideag</i> (Totaig & Druidaig)	5	18	3	13	88.9 %
<i>Leitir an Fheàrna</i> (Letterfearn)	27	98	37	58	96.9 %
<i>Leacachan &amp; Achadh an Taigh Àird</i> (Leackachan & Achaturd)	7	21	5	16	100 %
<i>Ràtagan</i> (Ratagan)	2	7	0	7	100 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
<b>Both parents Gàidhlig speaking</b>	11	60	21	38	98.3 %
<b>Single parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	6	22	4	18	100 %
<b>One parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	1	5	0	3	60.0 %
<b>No Gàidhlig speaking parent</b>	0	0	0	0	-
<b>Households with no children (0-14)</b>	28	76	26	47	96.1 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
<b>Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.</b>	26	100	35	65	100 %
<b>Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar</b>	2	10	1	7	80.0 %
<b>Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.</b>	2	6	0	3	50.0 %
<b>Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.</b>	6	18	3	15	100 %
<b>Living on private means</b>	0	0	0	0	-
<b>Manager, coachman, cook, etc.</b>	2	8	1	7	100 %
<b>Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.</b>	8	21	11	9	95.2 %
<b>Remaining occupations</b>	0	0	0	0	-

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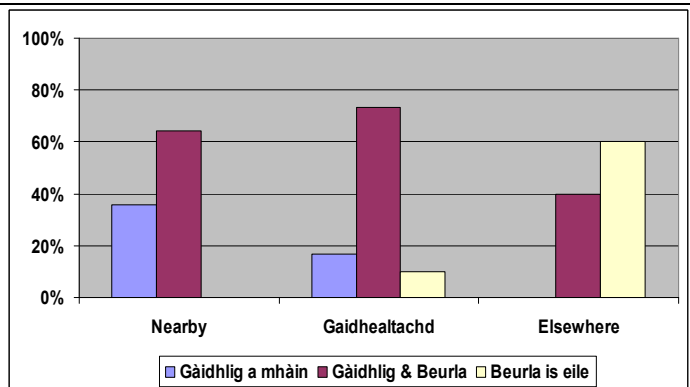
### Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

All residents born nearby spoke the traditional language. More than a third of those locals did not speak English. On the other hand, most of those few residents born outside the *Gaidhealtachd* did not speak Gàidhlig at all.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Glenshiel or in the adjacent parishes of Kintail and Urray (both Ross & Cromarty) or Glenelg, Urquhart & Glenmoriston, Kilmorack or Kilmonivaig (all 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. There were six persons in the usually resident population who were reported as not speaking Gàidhlig. This included a 5-year-old boy in *Àird an t-Sabhail* (Ardintoul), a 24-year-old gamekeeper's wife and her three year old son in *Druideag* (Druidraig) as well as, last but not least, the local schoolmaster, his daughter and sister in *Leitir an Fheàrna* (Letterfearn).
2. In original census report terms, the whole community in total had a population of 176 persons of all ages. 108 enumerated inhabitants spoke "Gaelic and English" and 53 persons were reported as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. These figures led to an "official" share of Gàidhlig speakers of 91.5 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this factsheet reveals that this percentage was a significant under-estimate of 4.8 % caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.