

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 112

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Area: *Taobh Siar Rois (Wester Ross): Sildeag & Balgaidh*

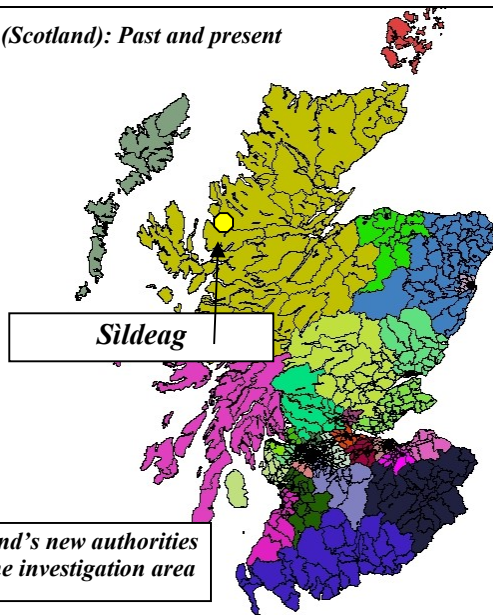
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Ardmore, Badanvugie, Balgy, Camuslean, Badcaul, Camustearn, Shildaig)

Number of households: 61 Population present at census night: 190

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 97.4 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Ross & Cromarty	Applecross	Shildaig	4	1 - 13

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

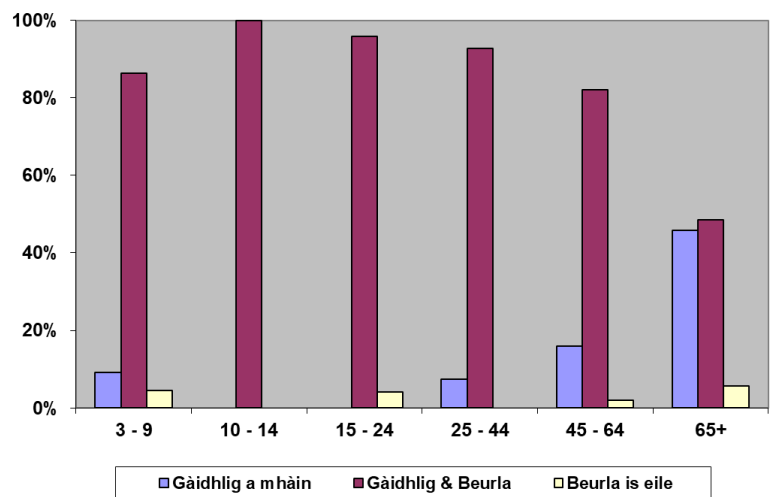
The inhabitants of the tiny fishing village *Sildeag* (Shildaig) and its surrounding crofting hamlets were very strongly Gàidhlig-speaking. Only a few residents were ignorant of the local tongue. The latter group consisted typically of minister's wives and schoolteachers.

The very young (under school-age) and the older generations beyond 65 years of age were very often "Gaelic only" speakers.

Area description:

The district is situated on the southern shores of *Loch Toirbheartan* (Loch Torridon) on the western coast of the Scottish mainland.

The village *Sildeag* (Shildaig) itself is a small fishing port founded in 1800. Besides fishing the main occupation of residents was the traditional crofting system of small holdings and common grazing.



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

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Area: *Taobh Siar Rois (Wester Ross): Sildeag & Balgaidh*

	Population enumerated				Usually resident population (3+)			
	Total	Aged 0-2	Deaf & dumb	Visitors etc. ³	Total ⁴	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	203	4	2	7	190	29	156	97.4 %
3-4	8	0	0	0	8	2	5	85.7 %
5-9	15	0	1	0	14	0	14	100.0 %
10-14	19	0	1	0	18	0	18	100.0 %
15-24	25	0	0	1	24	0	23	95.8 %
25-44	45	0	0	4	41	3	38	100.0 %
45-64	53	0	0	2	50	8	41	98.0 %
65+	35	0	0	0	35	16	17	94.3 %
Gender								
Female	111	1	0	2	108	19	85	96.3 %
Male	92	3	2	5	82	10	71	98.8 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	161	4	2	3	152	29	122	98.6 %
In neighbouring parish¹	17	0	0	0	17	0	17	100.0 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	17	0	0	2	15	0	15	100.0 %
Other places	8	0	0	2	6	0	2	33.3 %

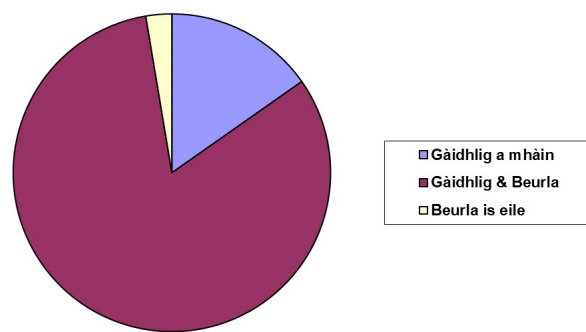
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Lochcarron and Gairloch.

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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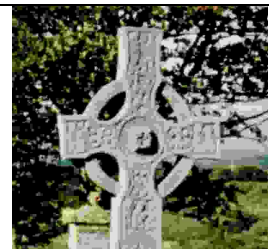
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Area: *Taobh Siar Rois (Wester Ross): Sildeag & Balgaidh*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	<i>Gàidhlig</i>	<i>Gàidhlig</i> & English	<i>Gàidhlig</i> speakers (%)
<i>Sildeag & Balgaidh</i>	61	190	29	156	97.4 %
Individual communities					
<i>Balgaidh</i> (Balgy)	22	69	17	49	95.7 %
<i>Sildeag</i> (Shieldaig)	39	121	12	107	98.3 %
Language of parents					
Both parents <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking	14	69	3	65	98.6 %
Single parent <i>Gàidhlig</i> speaking	7	27	5	22	100.0 %
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)	40	94	21	69	95.7 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	26	93	15	76	97.8 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	2	13	0	13	100.0 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	8	19	2	14	84.2 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	3	11	0	11	100.0 %
Living on private means	7	12	3	9	100.0 %
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	2	8	1	7	100.0 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	4	14	3	11	100.0 %
Remaining occupations	9	20	5	15	100.0 %

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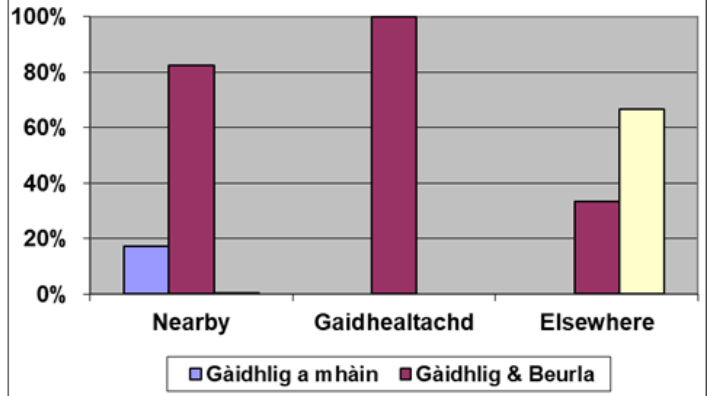
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was universally spoken by people both born locally or migrated from other parts of the *Gaidhealtachd*. English monoglots were confined to clergy and schoolteachers.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Applecross or in the adjacent parishes of Gairloch or Lochcarron.

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. Official census figures reported 152 bilingual inhabitants and 29 monolingual *Gàidhlig*-speakers out of a total population of 201 persons (90.0 %). The usually resident population of 189 persons, however, consisted of 181 *Gàidhlig*-speakers (95.8%) including 29 inhabitants “with no English”.
2. The five residents “with no Gaelic” were made up by a “former pupil teacher” born in Perthshire, a schoolmaster and his sister from Huntly (Aberdeenshire), and the minister’s wife (born in Glasgow) with one of her servants.