

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

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Area: *Eilean Cholla (Isle of Coll): An Caolas, Crosapol, Port na Luing, Breac Achadh, Am Baile Àrd, Àirigh Leòid, Tobhta Raghnaill, Tobhta Mòr, Griomasairigh, Lòn Bàn, Goirtean, An t-Achadh, Cill Bhrìghde & Àirigh nan Gobhar*

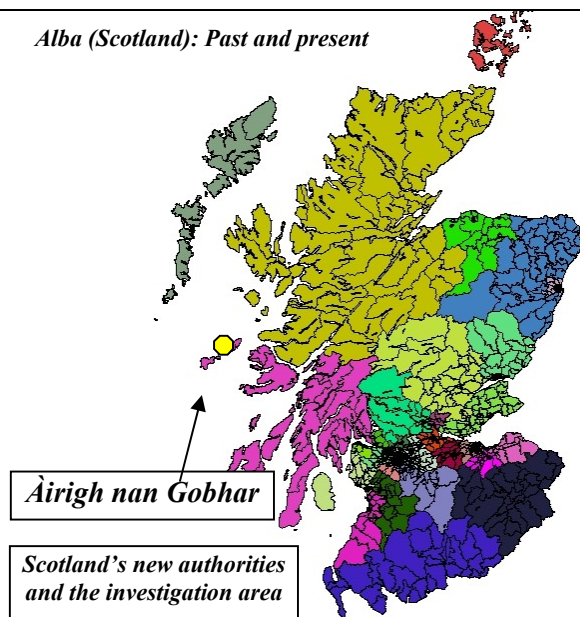
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Caolis, Crossipol, Portnaling, Breachacha, Ballard, Arileod, Totronald, Totamore, Grimisary, Lonbane, Seaview, Mossfield, Broadhill, Gortan, Acha, Frishland, Kilbride, Hyne, Arintluic & Arynagour)

Number of households: 58 Population present at census night: 253

Share of resident population (aged three years +) speaking Gàidhlig: 80.2 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Argyll	Coll	Coll	1 3	1 - 5 1 - 6

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

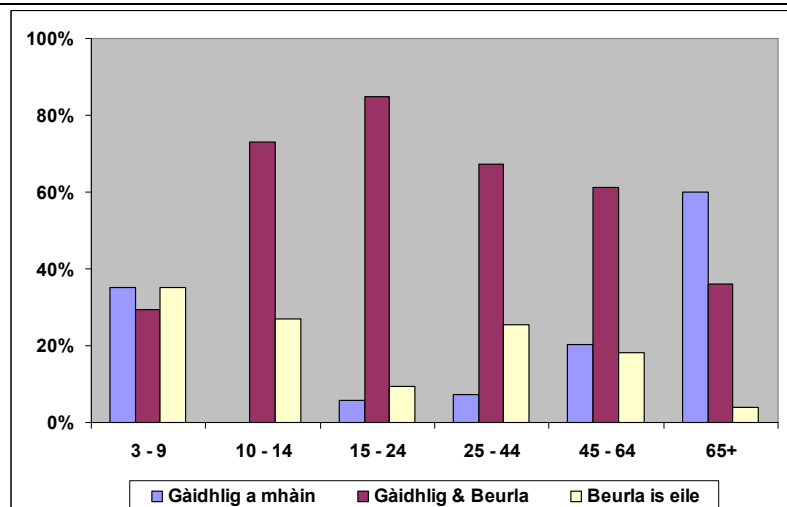
The language was spoken by almost everyone in the local population. A quarter of all Gàidhlig speakers was monolingual especially among the very young and the elderly generation. In contrast a significant English monolingual community occupied most of the higher social occupations – they were all “imported” by the local laird as farmers, factor, hotel keeper or school master.

In 1891 the island was very much divided linguistically into two separate social and cultural communities. The language of communication differed from farm to croft within short distance.

Area description:

The district covers roughly the south-western half of the island of Colla (Coll) which was part of the county of *Earra-Ghaidheal* (Argyll) at that time. The settlements include the “island capital” of *Àirigh nan Gobhar* (Arinagour).

The islanders were occupied with two significantly different agricultural practices. The locally born people were mainly crofters living on land with poorer soils whereas the more fertile countryside was farmed by a few Ayrshire farmers who had been “imported” by the island owner.



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. ³	Total ⁴	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	253	12	0	4	237	43	147	80.2 %
3-4	9		0	0	9	6	0	66.7 %
5-9	26		0	1	25	6	10	64.0 %
10-14	26		0	0	26	0	19	73.1 %
15-24	54		0	1	53	3	45	90.6 %
25-44	56		0	1	56	4	37	74.5 %
45-64	45		0	1	44	9	27	81.8 %
65+	25		0	0	25	15	9	96.0 %
Gender								
Female	128	8	0	1	119	23	70	78.2 %
Male	125	4	0	3	118	20	77	82.2 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	172	7	0	2	163	36	122	96.3 %
In neighbouring parish¹	12	0	0	0	12	4	8	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	15	2	0	1	12	3	9	100 %
Other places	54	3	0	1	50	1	8	18.0 %

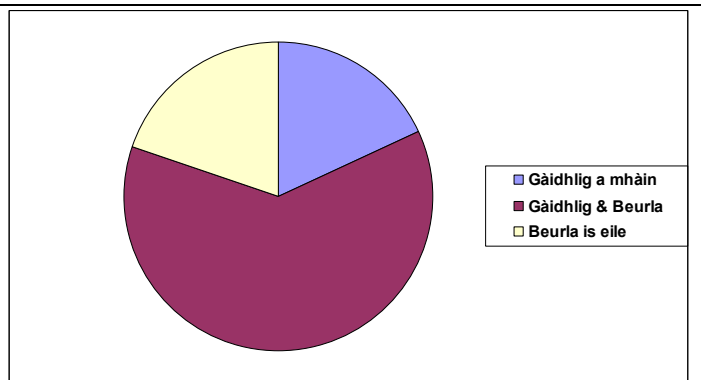
Notes:

¹ Parish of Tiree (Argyll).

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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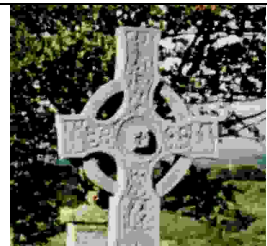
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Breac Achadh & Àirigh nan Gobhar</i>	58	237	43	147	80.2 %
Individual communities					
<i>Goirtean & An t-Achadh (Gortan & Acha)</i>	6	23	2	16	78.3 %
<i>Cill Bhrìghde & Friesland (Kilbride & Friesland)</i>	4	16	2	12	87.5 %
<i>Àirigh nan Gobhar (Arinagour)</i>	23	90	17	56	81.1 %
<i>An Caolas & Crosapol (Caolis & Crossipol)</i>	4	22	4	9	59.1 %
<i>Breac Achadh & Àirigh Leòid (Breacacha & Arileod)</i>	11	48	9	30	81.3 %
<i>Tobhta Raghnaill & Tobhta Mòr (Totronald & Lonbane)</i>	10	38	9	24	86.8 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	12	74	14	60	100 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	6	29	5	23	96.6 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	1	6	0	1	16.7 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	8	38	0	5	13.2 %
Households with no children (0-14)	31	90	24	58	91.1 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	14	68	13	50	92.6 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	3	12	0	11	91.7 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	7	23	1	11	52.2 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	9	38	12	26	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	7	27	1	15	59.3 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	17	68	16	33	72.1 %
Remaining occupations	1	1	0	1	100 %

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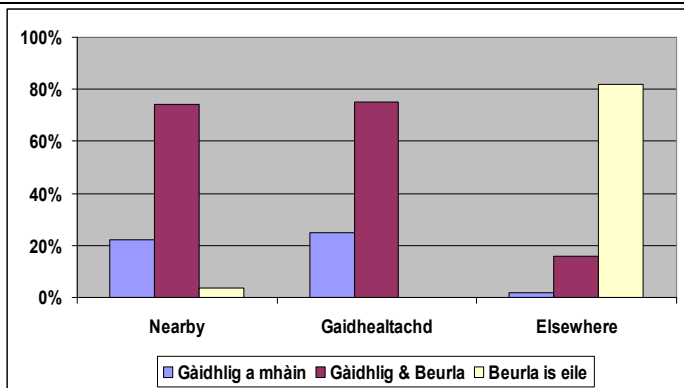
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Almost all persons with “no Gaelic” were born outside the *Gaidhealtachd*. Gàidhlig monolinguals made up more than a fifth of the remaining population irrespective of place of birth.

Notes:

¹ Born either on the Isle of Coll or in the parish of Tiree (both Argyll).

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. In total 47 persons in the usually resident population did not speak *Gàidhlig*. All but six had Lowland connections and were registered in a handful of families. Among the respective household heads were a few farmers from Ayrshire, the estate factor from Johnstone in Renfrewshire and the schoolmaster from Crieff in Perthshire.
2. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 253 persons of all ages. 149 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 44 were counted as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. This led to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 76.3 %. This figure was a small under-estimate of 3.9 % compared with the more realistic figures considering only the usually resident population.