

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 124

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Area: *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach (Isle of Skye): Ruig, Tobht, Lòn Feàrna, Lethallt, Grèalainn, Breacaidh, Cùl nan Cnoc, Gàrros & Bhaltos*

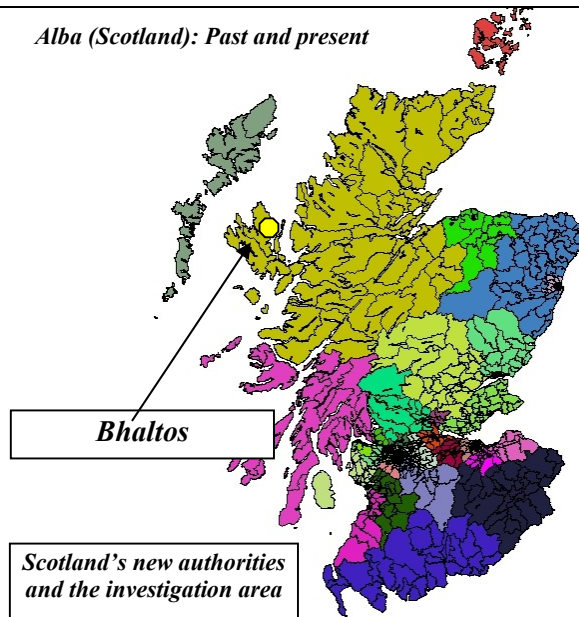
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Rigg, Tote, Lonfearn, Lealt, Grealin, Breacky, Culnaknock, Garros, Raisburgh & Valtos)

Number of households: 69 **Population present at census night:** 359

Share of resident population (aged three years +) speaking Gàidhlig: 99.7 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness	Snizort Kilmuir	Stenscholl	1	1
			2	1 - 8
			3	1 - 10

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

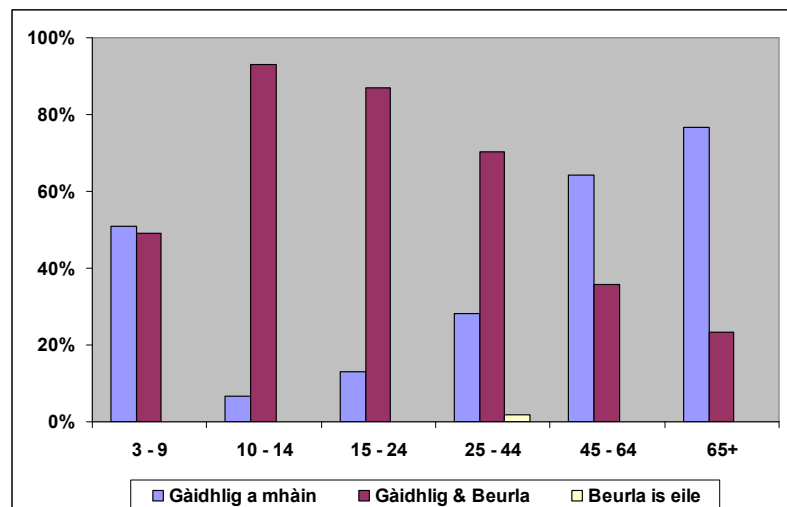
Apart from a woman in *Bhaltos* (Valtos) who was counted as not speaking Gàidhlig the whole community spoke the language in this northerly part of the island. A significant proportion of the usually resident population still did not speak English with monolingual Gàidhlig speakers dominant among the very young and the generation beyond the age of 44.

Quite revealing is the fact that the proportion of monolingual Gàidhlig speakers was almost independent of birthplace whether in the *Gaidhealtachd* or not. Such was the strength of the language in this district and the pressures to learn it seemed to be very high indeed in this period.

Area description:

The communities described are situated on the north-easterly coast of the peninsula of *Trondairnis* (Trotternish) on *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye). The island was part of the vast county of *Inbhirnis* (Inverness).

All settlements between *Tobht* (Tote) and *Bhaltos* (Valtos) were traditional crofting townships with a few inhabitants active in pursuing inshore fishing on the rocky coast.



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	359	22	0	11	326	125	200	99.7 %
3-4	14		0	0	14	14	0	100 %
5-9	41		0	2	39	13	26	100 %
10-14	48		0	4	44	3	41	100 %
15-24	70		0	1	69	9	60	100 %
25-44	59		0	2	57	16	40	98.2 %
45-64	74		0	1	73	47	26	100 %
65+	31		0	1	30	23	7	100 %
Gender								
Female	192	12	0	4	176	88	87	99.4 %
Male	167	10	0	7	150	37	113	100 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	335	22	0	11	302	117	184	99.7 %
In neighbouring parish¹	7	0	0	0	7	2	5	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	12	0	0	0	12	4	8	100 %
Other places	5	0	0	0	5	2	3	100 %

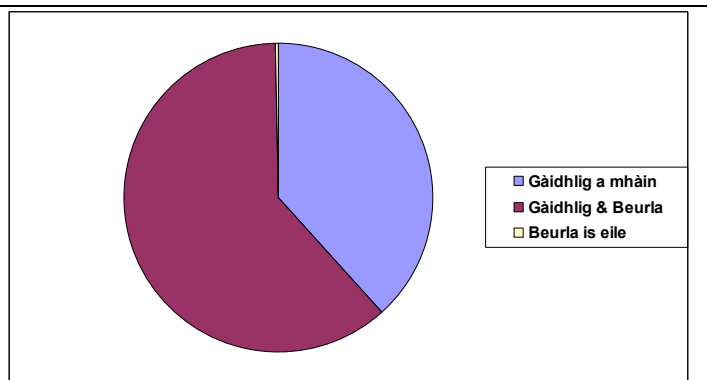
Notes:

¹ Parish of Snizort (Inverness).

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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	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Lethallt, Cùl nan Cnoc & Bhaltos</i>	69	326	125	200	99.7 %
Individual communities					
<i>Ruig & Tobht</i> (Rigg & Tote)	2	14	3	11	100 %
<i>Lòn Feàrna & Lethallt</i> (Lonfearn & Lealt)	10	59	15	44	100 %
<i>Grèalainn</i> (Grealin)	7	37	11	26	100 %
<i>Breacaidh</i> (Breacky)	9	43	22	21	100 %
<i>Cùl nan Cnoc</i> (Culnaknock)	17	84	34	50	100 %
<i>Gàrros</i> (Garros)	6	19	10	9	100 %
<i>Bhaltos</i> (Valtos)	18	70	30	39	98.6 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	28	172	68	104	100 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	12	65	14	51	100 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	0	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	29	89	43	45	98.9 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	50	264	97	166	99.6 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	3	11	5	6	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	1	7	1	6	100 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	1	3	0	3	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	1	6	0	6	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	13	35	22	13	100 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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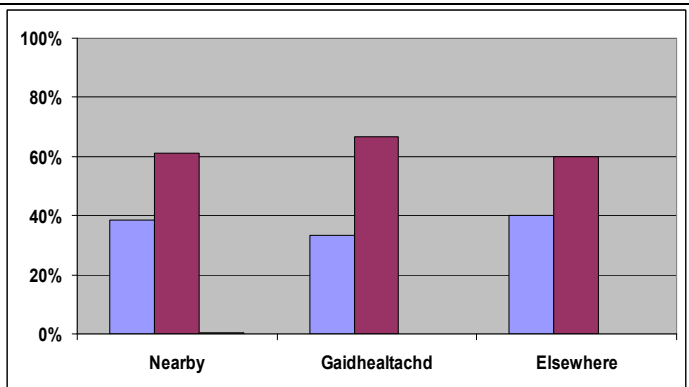
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The proportion of monolingual Gàidhlig speakers was almost independent of birthplace whether in the *Gaidhealtachd* or not.

Notes:

¹ Born in the parishes of Kilmuir or Snizort (both Inverness).

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. Just one woman was enumerated as not speaking Gàidhlig. However, the 28-year-old Catherine Martin was accompanied by two Gàidhlig monolingual household members: her father and her 23 year old sister. Accordingly, even this “English only” return can only be described as doubtful.
2. In original census report terms, the district had a population of 359 persons of all ages. 209 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 134 were counted as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. This led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 95.5 %. This figure was an under-estimate of 4.2 % compared with the more realistic figures considering only the usually resident population.