

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 139

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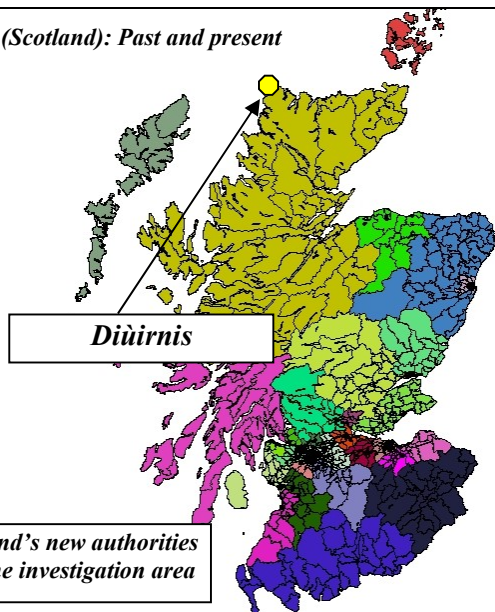
Area: *Diùirnis (Durness): Baile na Cille, Achaidhean, An Glib, Baile Mhùirlaich & Diùirnis*
(Names of enumeration locations used on official census forms: Achins, Glebe, The Manse, Balnakeil, Balvorlich & Durine)

Number of households: 49 Population present at census night: 254

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 90.3 %

| County | Civil parish | Registration district | Enumeration district number | Census form pages |
|------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Sutherland | Durness | Durness | 3 | 1 – 13 |

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

The communities in question were thoroughly Gàidhlig-speaking apart from a small group of “Lowland” households near the farm of *Baile na Cille* (Balnakeil) and the family of the local minister.

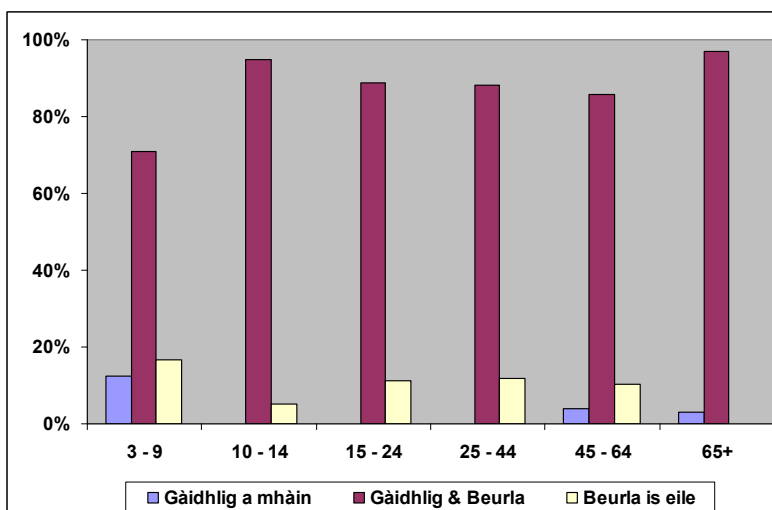
Besides a handful of monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers most usually resident persons was bilingual at least on the census sheets.

Almost universally Gàidhlig-speaking were the crofting hamlets of *Achaidhean* (Achins), *Baile Mhùirlaich* (Balvorlich) and *Diùirinis* (Durness) itself.

Area description:

This factsheet is concerned with some small communities on the north-western coast of the Scottish mainland. The whole area east of *Am Parbh* (Cape Wrath) was part of the county of *Cataibh* (Sutherland).

The tiny communities around the hamlet of *Diùirinis* (Durness) were mostly occupied with crofting. A notable exception was the farm at *Baile na Cille* (Balnakeil) which was in the hands of Lowlanders at the time.



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

Area: *Diùirnis (Durness): Baile na Cille, Achaidhean, An Glib, Baile Mhùirlaich & Diùirnis*

| | Population enumerated | | | | Usually resident population (3+) | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | Total | Aged 0-2 | Deaf & dumb | Visitors etc. ³ | Total ⁴ | Gàidhlig | Gàidhlig & English | Gàidhlig speakers (%) |
| Age | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 254 | 11 | 0 | 6 | 237 | 6 | 208 | 90.3 % |
| 3-4 | 9 | | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 66.7 % |
| 5-9 | 15 | | 0 | 0 | 15 | 1 | 13 | 93.3 % |
| 10-14 | 19 | | 0 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 18 | 94.7 % |
| 15-24 | 54 | | 0 | 0 | 54 | 0 | 48 | 88.9 % |
| 25-44 | 61 | | 0 | 2 | 59 | 0 | 52 | 88.1 % |
| 45-64 | 52 | | 0 | 3 | 49 | 2 | 42 | 89.8 % |
| 65+ | 33 | | 0 | 1 | 32 | 1 | 31 | 100 % |
| Gender | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 122 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 117 | 3 | 100 | 88.0 % |
| Male | 132 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 120 | 3 | 108 | 92.5 % |
| Place of birth | | | | | | | | |
| Born in parish | 200 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 189 | 4 | 173 | 93.7 % |
| In neighbouring parish¹ | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 1 | 11 | 100 % |
| Gaidhealtachd elsewhere² | 15 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 14 | 0 | 12 | 85.7 % |
| Other places | 27 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 22 | 1 | 12 | 59.1 % |

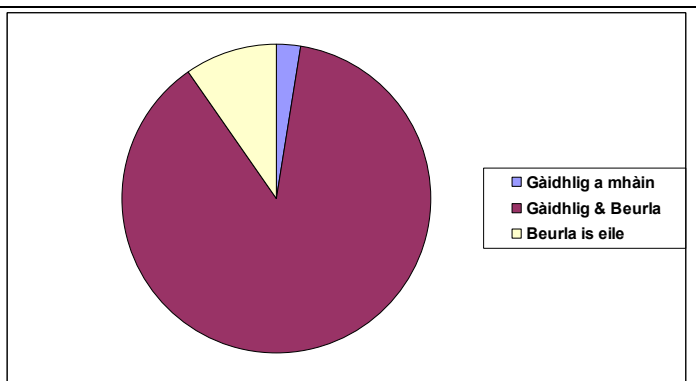
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Tongue, Eddrachillis, Farr and Lairg (all Sutherland).

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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| | House-holds | Usually resident population (3+) | | | |
|--|-------------|----------------------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Total | Gàidhlig | Gàidhlig & English | Gàidhlig speakers (%) |
| <i>Diùirnis & Baile na Cille</i> | 49 | 237 | 6 | 208 | 90.3 % |
| | | | | | |
| Individual communities | | | | | |
| <i>Achaidhean</i> (Achins) | 6 | 32 | 1 | 31 | 100 % |
| <i>An Glib</i> (Glebe) | 2 | 18 | 0 | 10 | 55.6 % |
| <i>Baile na Cille</i> (Balnakeil) | 4 | 26 | 0 | 13 | 50.0 % |
| <i>Baile Mhùirlaich</i> (Balvorlich) | 7 | 26 | 0 | 26 | 100 % |
| <i>Diùirnis</i> (Durness) | 30 | 135 | 5 | 128 | 98.5 % |
| | | | | | |
| Language of parents | | | | | |
| Both parents Gàidhlig speaking | 13 | 74 | 4 | 70 | 100 % |
| Single parent Gàidhlig speaking | 4 | 18 | 1 | 17 | 100 % |
| One parent Gàidhlig speaking | 4 | 30 | 0 | 16 | 53.3 % |
| No Gàidhlig speaking parent | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Households with no children (0-14) | 27 | 108 | 1 | 105 | 98.1 % |
| | | | | | |
| Occupation of head of household | | | | | |
| Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc. | 24 | 122 | 5 | 115 | 98.4 % |
| Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar | 2 | 14 | 1 | 13 | 100 % |
| Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc. | 2 | 17 | 0 | 10 | 58.8 % |
| Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc. | 7 | 33 | 0 | 27 | 81.8 % |
| Living on private means | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| Manager, coachman, cook, etc. | 4 | 13 | 0 | 6 | 46.2 % |
| Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc. | 8 | 34 | 0 | 33 | 97.1 % |
| Remaining occupations | 2 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 100 % |

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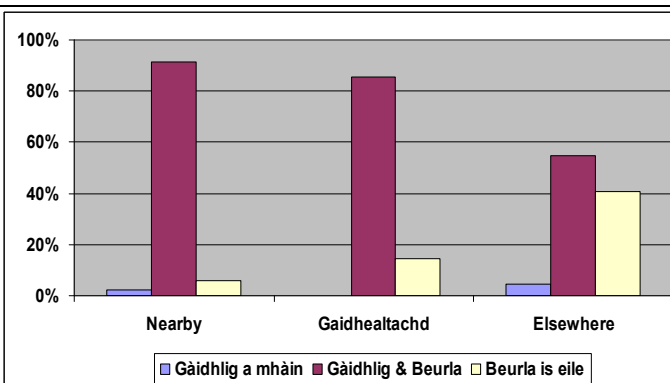
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Most English monoglot inhabitants had a birthplace outside the *Gaidhealtachd*. Inhabitants born nearby were almost exclusively Gàidhlig-speaking.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Durness or in the adjacent parishes of Tongue, Eddrachillis, Farr and Lairg (all Sutherland).

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. Only six inhabitants spoke Gàidhlig but not English. Three of them were small children and the remaining monoglot speakers were part of the older generation.
2. In total 23 persons of the usually resident population spoke no Gàidhlig. 21 of these English monoglots were found in four households at *An Glib* (Glebe) and *Baile na Cille* (Balnakeil). Household heads involved were the parish minister, a farm manager (born in Carstairs, Lanark), a farmer (born in Kilmarnock) and a miller (born in Prestonpans). Outside these families Gàidhlig was spoken almost universally.
3. Official census figures reported 212 bilingual inhabitants and 8 monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers out of a total population of 254 persons (86.6 %). The usually resident population on the other hand consisted of 214 Gàidhlig-speakers (90.3 %) including six persons “with no Gaelic”.