

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 149

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**Area: *Asainn (Assynt): Ailbhinn, Crom Allt, An Cnocan, Leathad Mòr, Leathad Beag, Allt nan Cealgach***

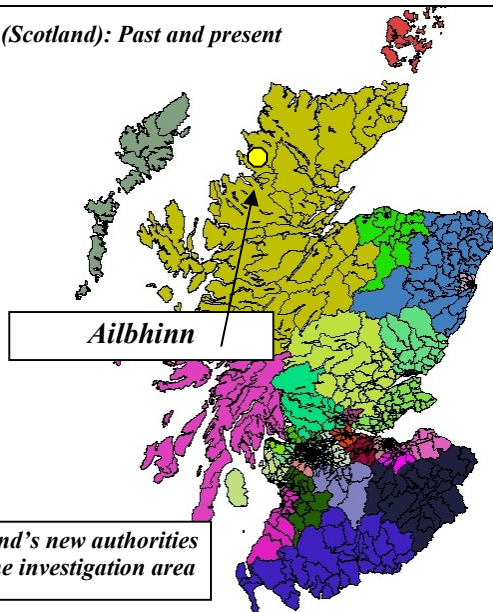
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Knockan, Cromalt, Elphine, Ledmore, Ledbeg, Bracklach, Lyne, Altnacealgach)

**Number of households: 51      Population present at census night: 222**

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 96.6 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Sutherland	Assynt	Kirkton (Assynt)	1	1 – 6
			2	1 – 10

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

The *Gàidhlig* language was universally spoken by young and old alike in this southern part of *Asainn* (Assynt).

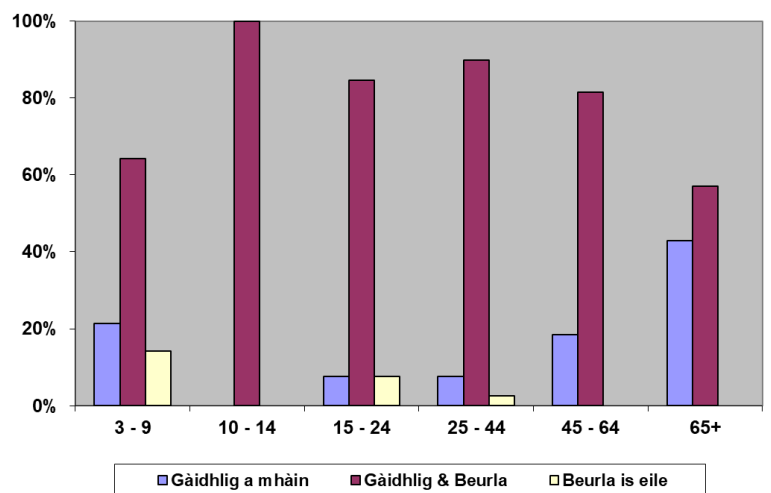
Around a third spoke *Gàidhlig*, only. Due to the “English only” education policy since 1872 the school-aged and middle-aged population in 1891 knew English of course.

Just a handful of “almost alien” inhabitants knew no *Gàidhlig*. In this place these were related to a gamekeeper’s family and to the schoolteacher.

## Area description:

The region described is a remote inland area in the south of the parish of *Asainn* (Assynt) in the old county of *Cataibh* (Sutherland). As such the inhabitants of the hamlets *Ailbhinn* (Elphin) and *An Cnocan* (Knockan) were mainly occupied with the traditional crofting activities.

Some additional activities were related to gamekeeping of local landlords and the trade on the important crossroads between *Luirg* (Lairg), *Ulapul* (Ullapool) and *Loch an Inbhir* (Lochinver).



**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. <sup>3</sup>	Total <sup>4</sup>	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b>Age</b>								
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>96.6 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>81.0 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>92.3 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>97.4 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>97.3 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>95.6 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>82.6 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>62.5 %</b>

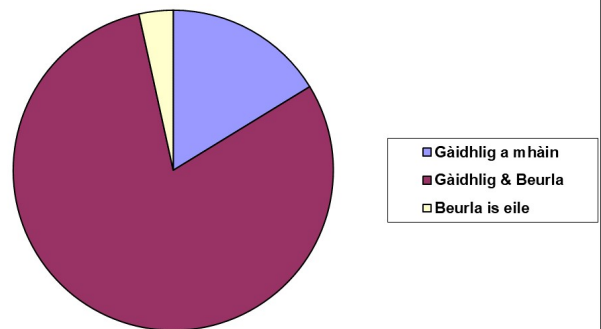
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Lochbroom, Kincardine (both Ross & Cromarty), Eddrachillis or Creich (both Sutherland).

<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 & Beurla, or (3) Beurla is eile

## 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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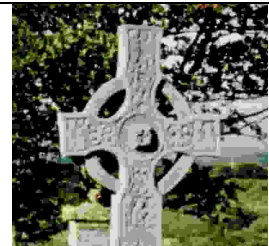
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Asainn: Ailbhinn &amp; Allt nan Cealgach</i>	51	203	33	163	96.6 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>An Cnocan &amp; Crom Allt (Knockan &amp; Cromalt)</i>	21	77	11	66	100.0 %
<i>Ailbhinn (Elphin)</i>	26	105	22	80	97.1 %
<i>Allt nan Cealgach &amp; Leathad Mòr (Altnacealgach &amp; Ledmore)</i>	4	21	0	17	81.0 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
<b>Both parents Gàidhlig speaking</b>	16	92	14	73	94.6 %
<b>Single parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	8	33	2	31	100.0 %
<b>One parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	0	0	0	0	-
<b>No Gàidhlig speaking parent</b>	0	0	0	0	-
<b>Households with no children (0-14)</b>	27	78	17	59	97.4 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
<b>Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.</b>	37	152	31	121	100.0 %
<b>Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar</b>	3	16	1	11	75.0 %
<b>Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.</b>	3	10	1	6	70.0 %
<b>Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.</b>	2	10	0	10	100.0 %
<b>Living on private means</b>	0	0	0	0	-
<b>Manager, coachman, cook, etc.</b>	0	0	0	0	-
<b>Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.</b>	3	9	0	9	100.0 %
<b>Remaining occupations</b>	3	6	0	6	100.0 %

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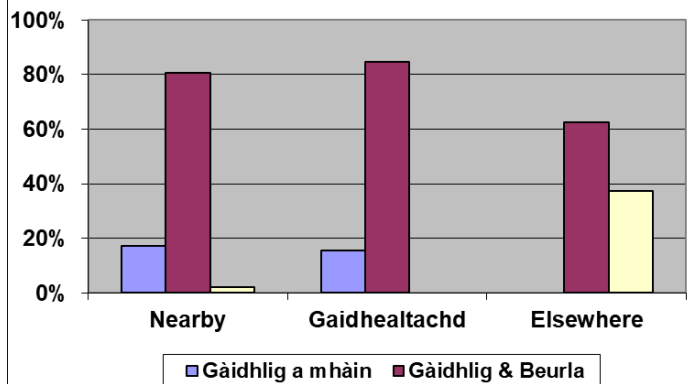
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language universally spoken except the odd profession like schoolteacher or gamekeeper.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Assynt or in the adjacent parishes of Lochbroom, Kincardine (both Ross & Cromarty), Creich and Eddrachillis (both Sutherland).

<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. Official census figures reported 165 bilingual inhabitants and 42 monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers out of a total population of 222 persons (93.2 %). The usually resident population of 203 individuals, however, consisted according to census return forms of 196 Gàidhlig-speakers (96.6 %) including 33 inhabitants “with no English”.
2. Most of the tiny monolingual English-speaking community was made up of three members of a shepherd’s family in *Leathad Mòr* (Ledmore), and (as might be expected) the public schoolteacher and his nephew in *Ailbhinn* (Elphin). The latter two originally came from Lanarkshire in the Lowlands.