

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

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Area: *Eadra Chaolais (Eddrachillis): Sgobhairigh, Sgobhairigh Mhòr, Am Bad Call, Caolas Sròim, An Tarbert, An Fhionndail, An Fheannag Mhòr, Drochaid Lusart & Achadh Fairidh*

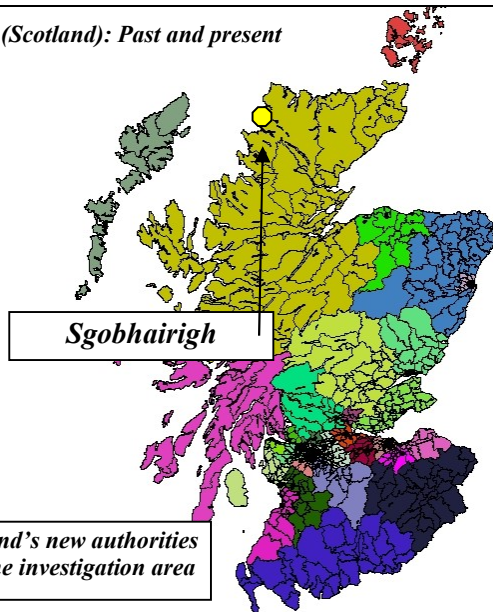
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Scourie, Scouriemore, Badcall, Kylestrome, Tarbet, Foindle, Fanagmore, Laxford Bridge, Lochmore, Achfary)

Number of households: 108 **Population present at census night:** 479

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 86.2 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Sutherland	Eddrachillis	Scourie	1	1 – 2
			2	1 – 11
			3	1 - 9

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

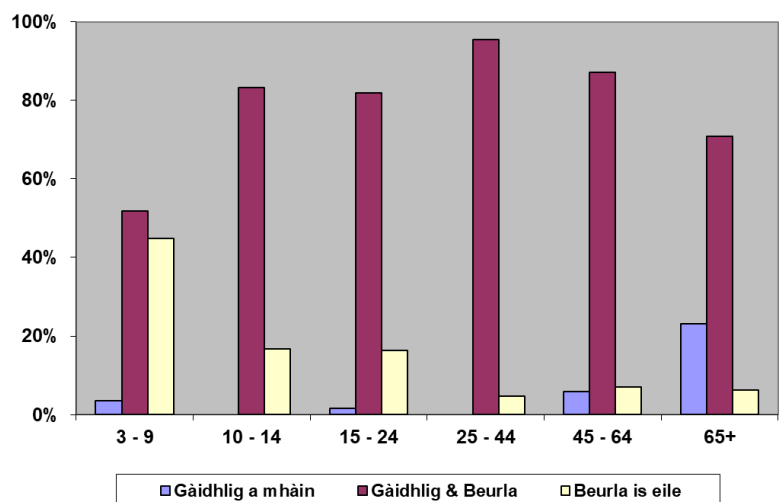
A very large part of the population was Gàidhlig-speaking. Especially so in small crofting/fishing settlements like *An Tairbeart* (Tarbet) where almost everyone spoke the local tongue.

Examples of English monolinguals were mostly provided by notables as doctors, schoolteachers, gamekeepers managers of salmon fishing, and the like. These persons were almost all born outside the *Gaidhealtachd*. The only exception were children between 3 and 4 years of age which had often a blank entry in the language column on the census form.

Area description:

This investigation is concerned with a very thinly populated part of Sutherland's west coast: the parish of *Eadra Chaolais* (Eddrachillis), which literally means 'between the sealochs'. The vast "empty" hinterland had been left to shepherds and gamekeepers after the so-called "Highland Clearances".

The only valuable resource for locals was gained from the sea. Around the sheltered bays of this rocky coast tiny fishing villages like *Sgobhairigh* (Scourie) or even smaller settlements provided some means to earn a living.



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	479	29	0	24	426	23	344	86.2 %
3-4	21	0	0	1	20	0	6	30.0 %
5-9	39	0	0	1	38	2	24	68.4 %
10-14	50	0	0	2	48	0	40	83.3 %
15-24	68	0	0	7	61	1	50	83.6 %
25-44	118	0	0	10	108	0	103	95.4 %
45-64	89	0	0	3	86	5	75	93.0 %
65+	65	0	0	0	65	15	46	93.8 %
Gender								
Female	257	19	0	6	232	16	183	85.8 %
Male	222	10	0	18	194	7	161	86.6 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	356	29	0	6	321	13	272	88.8 %
In neighbouring parish¹	40	0	0	3	37	8	29	100.0 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	42	0	0	3	39	2	36	97.4 %
Other places	41	0	0	12	29	0	7	24.1 %

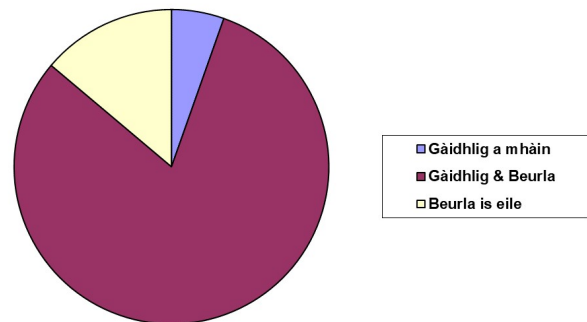
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Assynt, Durness, or 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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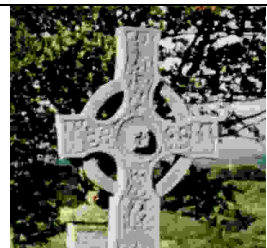
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Sgobhairigh & Drochaid Lusart</i>	108	426	23	344	86.2 %
Individual communities					
<i>Caolas Sròim</i> (Kylestrome)	11	36	3	29	88.9 %
<i>Am Bad Call</i> (Badcall)	15	66	9	42	77.3 %
<i>Sgobhairigh Mhòr</i> (Scouriemore)	17	54	2	40	77.8 %
<i>Sgobhairigh</i> (Scourie)	35	158	1	134	85.4 %
<i>An Tairbeart & An Fhionndail</i> (Tarbet & Foindle)	19	76	8	65	96.1 %
<i>Drochaid Lusart & Achadh Fairidh</i> (Laxford Bridge & Achfary)	11	36	0	34	94.4 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	31	166	6	137	86.1 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	11	47	2	41	91.5 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	3	11	0	0	0.0 %
Households with no children (0-14)	63	202	15	166	89.6 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	57	245	17	213	93.9 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	11	53	1	41	79.2 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	5	23	0	9	39.1 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	4	9	0	2	22.2 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	6	16	0	14	87.5 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	15	46	3	34	80.4 %
Remaining occupations	10	34	2	31	97.1 %

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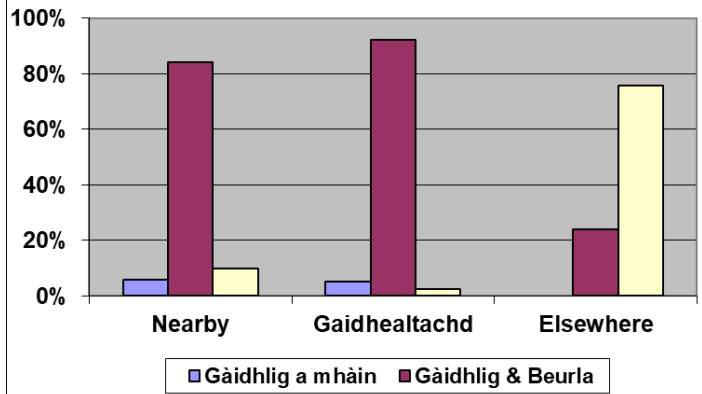
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was spoken almost universally by those born nearby or in the wider *Gaidhealtachd*. “Immigrants” from further afield were mostly ignorant of the local tongue.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Eddrachillis or in the adjacent parishes of Assynt, Durness, or 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. Official census figures reported 361 bilingual inhabitants and 19 monolingual *Gàidhlig*-speakers out of a total population of 482 persons (78.8%). The usually resident population of 426 persons, however, consisted of 367 *Gàidhlig*-speakers (86.2%) including 23 inhabitants “with no English”.
2. Of the 59 recorded blank entries on the census forms there were 26 children between 3 and 9 of age. It is now impossible to fathom why this occurred because in the 1901 census this result on such a scale was not repeated – not in the “new” 3-9 results nor in the 13 to 19 age groups.
3. The remaining 33 “no Gaelic” enumerations came almost exclusively from families of incomers who were born somewhere in the Lowlands or even further afield. Typical professions were gamekeepers, practitioners, schoolteachers, estate managers as well as merchants and minis