

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 164

Page 1 of 4

**Area: Mòrar & Malaig (Morar & Mallaig): Malaig Bheag, Malaig, Glas nan Ceàrdach, Beòraid Bheag, Beòraid, Bracora, Brac na Daraich, Ceann Loch Mhòrair & An Tairbeart**

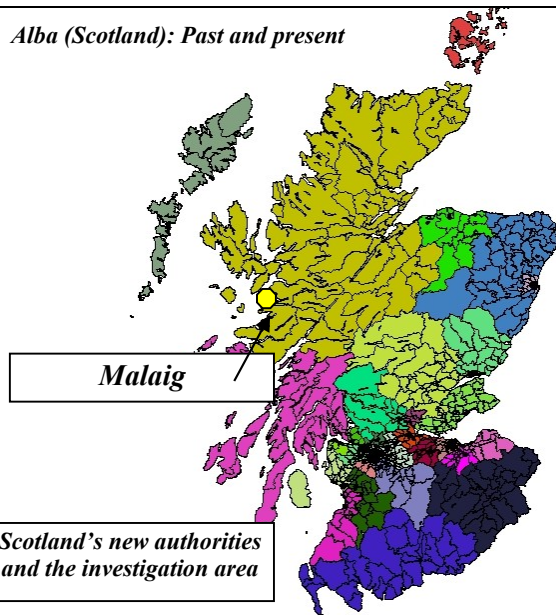
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Bracara, Brinacorry, Swordland, Mallaigveag, Mallaig, Glasnacardoch, Buarblach, Beoraidveag, Beoraid, Culnamuck, Kinlochmorar, Finiskaig, Ardnamarel, Kylis, Tarbet)

**Number of households: 83      Population present at census night: 444**

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 96.8 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness-shire	Glenelg	North Morar	1	1 – 16
			2	1 - 3

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

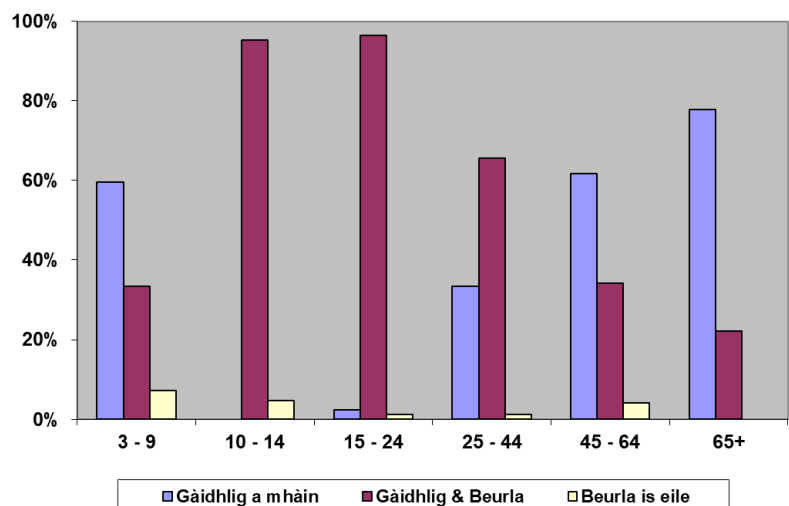
In this location the Gàidhlig language was used by all generations all the time. Only a few notables like teachers were ignorant of the local culture. Gàidhlig monoglots were in a majority among the very young and in the older generations (see figure below).

Around forty percent of the populace spoke Gàidhlig alone. This was especially the case in the fishing village of Malaig (Mallaig) itself and the few isolated settlements on the shores of Loch Mòrair and Loch Shubhairne (Lochhourn).

## Area description:

The investigation region is situated in a fjord-like landscape on the Scottish Westcoast - right across to the *Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye). The census in 1891 did show a picture of the communities before the railway arrived in the early 1900s.

Main occupation of the inhabitants was fishing to supplement the simple food obtained from the scattered crofts on the hillsides.



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

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No. 164

Page 2 of 4

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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>444</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>96.8 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>92.9 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>92.9 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>95.2 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>98.8 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>98.9 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>95.9 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>96.1 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>97.5 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>99.4 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>87.2 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28.6 %</b>

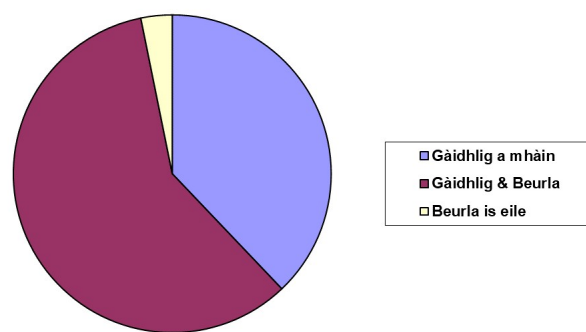
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Arisaig & Moidart, Kilmallie, Kilmonivaig (all Inverness-shire) and Glenshiel (Ross & Cromarty).

<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 & 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](http://www.linguae-celticae.de/GLP_english.htm).

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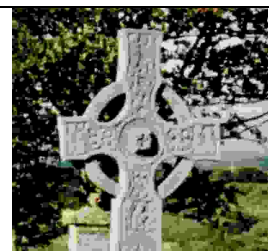
No. 164

Page 3 of 4

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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b>Mòrar &amp; Malaig</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>96.8 %</b>
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Malaig Bheag</i> (Mallaigveag)	7	36	14	22	100.0 %
<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig)	22	94	42	48	95.7 %
<i>Glas nan Ceàrdach &amp; Beòraid Bheag</i> (Glasnacardoch & Beoraidbeg)	12	65	20	44	98.5 %
<i>Beòraid</i> (Beoraid)	6	35	12	17	82.9 %
<i>Bracora &amp; Brac na Daraich</i> (Bracara & Bracorina)	12	69	19	48	97.1 %
<i>Suardal</i> (Swordland)	8	42	21	21	100.0 %
<i>Ceann Loch Mhòrair &amp; An Tairbeart</i> (Kinlochmorar & Tarbet)	16	68	27	41	100.0 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	38	235	91	144	100.0 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	15	75	30	45	100.0 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	2	15	0	5	33.3 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	0	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	28	84	34	47	96.4 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	55	310	114	192	98.7 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	5	24	8	10	75.0 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	5	16	4	9	81.3 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	6	30	10	20	100.0 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	6	22	13	9	100.0 %
Remaining occupations	6	7	6	1	100.0 %

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Page 4 of 4

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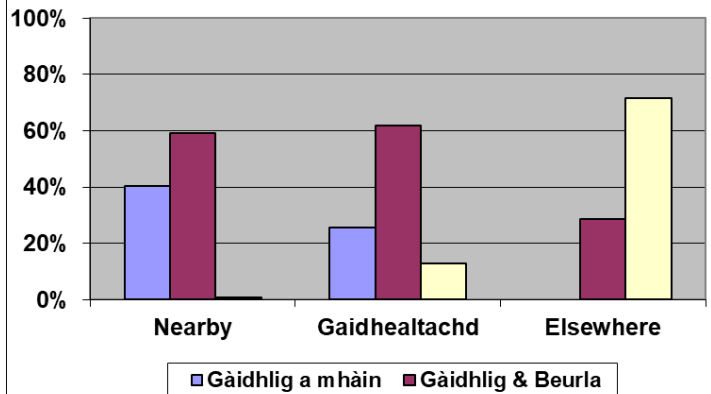
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was universally spoken by those born nearby. The monolingual English-speakers remained a tiny minority and, in most cases, originated from the Lowlands or even England (see remarks below).

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Glenelg or in the adjacent parishes of Arisaig & Moidart, Kilmallie, Kilmonivaig (all Inverness-shire) and Glenshiel (Ross & Cromarty).

<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 243 bilingual inhabitants and 162 monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers out of a total population of 444 persons (96.2%). The usually resident population of 409 persons, however, consisted of 396 Gàidhlig-speakers (96.8%) including 241 inhabitants “with no English”.
2. Just thirteen persons were recorded in 1891 “without Gaelic”. Here mostly “the usual suspects” did not speak the local language. For example, the housekeeper and schoolmistress in the schoolhouse in *Bràigh na Coire* (Brinacorry) near *Suardal* (Swordland). They both came from England. Her teacher colleague in *Glas nan Ceàrdach* (Glasnacardoch) was also monolingual. He came from Dumfriesshire. But the major supplement to the “English only” community came from a gamekeeper’s family in *Beòraid*: The household head was a Gàidhlig-speaker born in *Cunndainn* (Contin). But he happened to get married to a woman from *Cill Mhicheil* (Kirkmichael) who “had no Gaelic”. Subsequently her five children did not speak Gàidhlig at all.