

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 165

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**Area:** *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach (Isle of Skye): An Trùmpan, Fàsach, Bràighe Fàsaich, Dùn Hàllain, Halastra, Càrnach & Pàirc Hàllain*

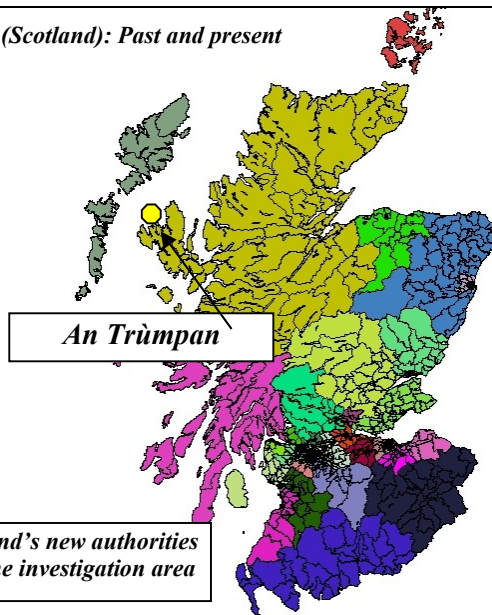
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Fasach, Brae Fasach, Dunhallin, Halistra, Trumpan, Hallin Park, Carnach)

**Number of households:** 64    **Population present at census night:** 287

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig:** 99.3 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
<i>Inverness-shire</i>	<i>Duirinish</i>	Waternish	2	1 – 14

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

*Gàidhlig* was almost exclusively spoken by the usually resident population. Most crofters even did not speak English at all. Often only the household head spoke it – therefore more women than men remained monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers.

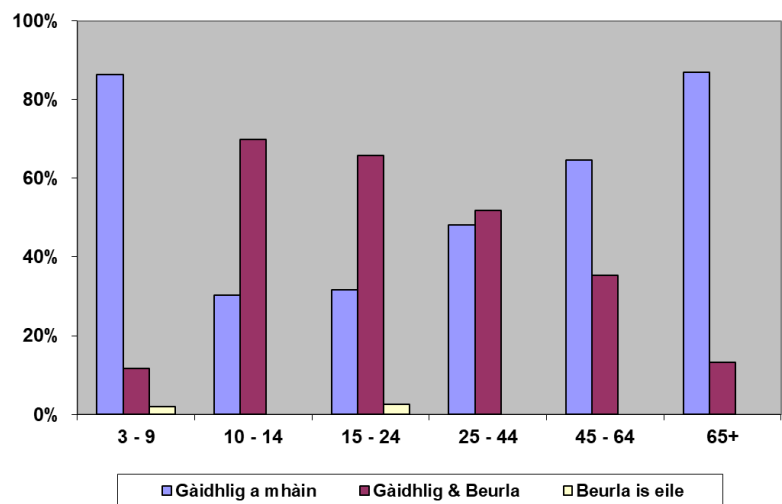
Bilingual persons were mostly found among those aged between 15 and 44 – a result of the school system at the time.

All communities were reported as almost totally *Gàidhlig* speaking. Just two ladies aged 24 and 3 years were not recorded as speaking the local language.

## Area description:

The communities investigated are situated on the *Bhàtarnais* (Waternish) peninsula in the north-western part of *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye). Basically, these were all genuinely crofting townships with a very strong *Gàidhlig* tradition. They comprised all settlements on the west of the peninsula right to *Aird Mhòr* (Ardmore Point) to the north.

The main occupations of the inhabitants were of course concerned with crofting activities and some coastal fishing.



**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>287</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>99.3 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>93.3 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>97.4 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>98.6 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99.6 %</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>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>83.3 %</b>

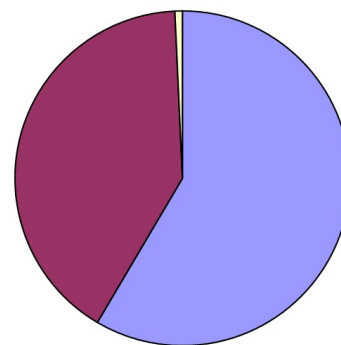
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Bracadale or Portree (both Inverness-shire).

<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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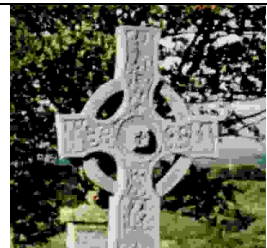
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>An Trùmpan &amp; Halastra</i>	64	277	162	113	99.3 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Fàsach &amp; Bràighe Fàsaich</i> (Fasach & Braefasach)	4	25	12	13	100.0 %
<i>Dùn Hàllain</i> (Dunhallin)	26	97	60	36	99.0 %
<i>Halastra</i> (Halistra)	13	47	23	23	97.9 %
<i>An Trùmpan</i> (Trumpan)	3	17	9	8	100.0 %
<i>Càrnach</i> (Carnach)	5	27	16	11	100.0 %
<i>Pàirc Hàllain</i> (Hallin Park)	13	64	42	22	100.0 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	24	136	83	52	99.3 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	15	84	42	41	98.8 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	0	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	25	57	37	20	100.0 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	38	180	109	71	100.0 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	3	12	11	1	100.0 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	2	19	3	15	94.7 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	5	19	7	11	94.7 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	5	29	14	15	100.0 %
Remaining occupations	11	18	18	0	100.0 %

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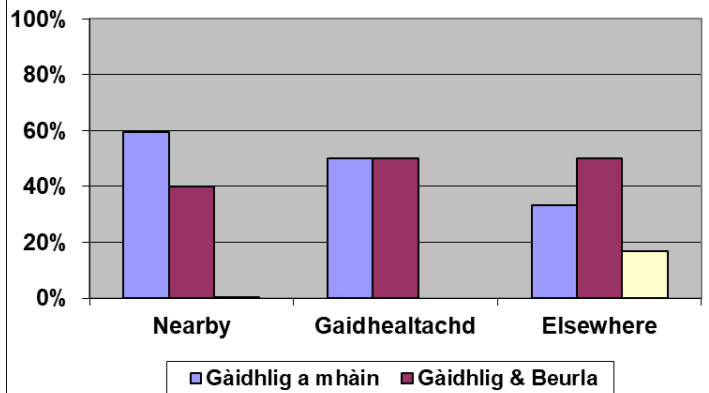
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was spoken unilaterally by all locals whether born locally or not. Please note the two exceptions in the remarks below.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Duirinish or in the adjacent parishes of Bracadale or Portree (both Inverness-shire).

<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 113 bilingual inhabitants and 167 monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers out of a total population of 287 persons (97.6%). The usually resident population of 277 persons, however, consisted of 275 Gàidhlig-speakers (99.3%) including 162 inhabitants “with no English”.
2. Just two examples were found of inhabitants who reportedly did not speak Gàidhlig, both in *Halastra* (Halistra). The 24-year-old cousin of the local church minister was one of them. She was born in Persie in Forfarshire (or Angus). The second young lady “with no Gaelic” was three years old and had a blank entry in the column for “Gaelic or G. & E.” on the census form. It is not clear whether she could speak any language at all. She was the youngest child in a family of a “west coast missionary”, whose children were all born in some other places of the Highlands.