

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 167

Page 1 of 4

Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Baile Liabost, Inbhir & Liabost Uarach*

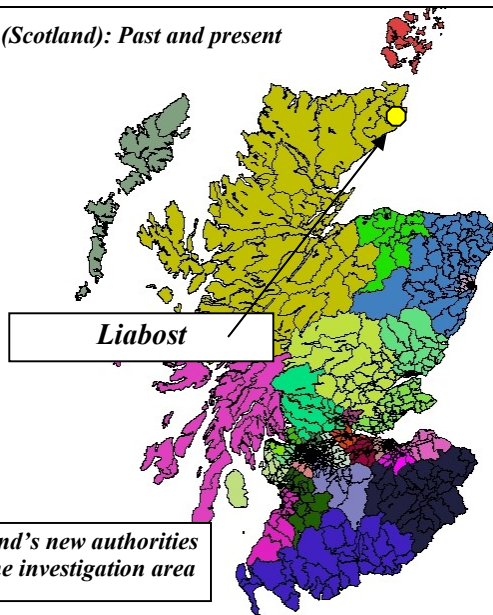
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Achnacraig, Shore, Inver, Kyle, Upper Lybster, Sheanbeg, Norland, Parkside, Hillhead, Shelligoe, Clashbury, Village)

Number of households: 255 Population present at census night: 1.063

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 27.4 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
<i>Caithness</i>	<i>Latheron</i>	Latheron	5 6	1 – 19 1 - 39

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

The census data for this area clearly reveal that Gàidhlig ceased to be a relevant means of communication some fifty years before.

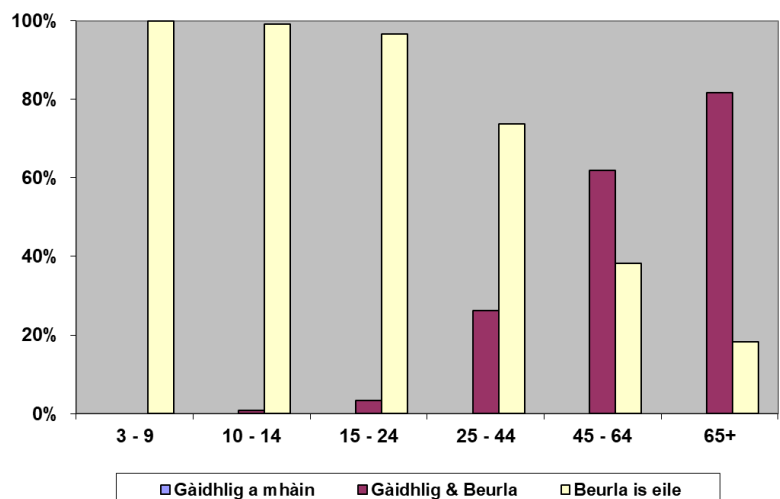
The vast majority of those older than 45 years of age still spoke Gàidhlig in the village and the adjacent crofting communities. However, the younger generations had no knowledge whatsoever (see figure below). The language was slightly stronger in the more rural parts of *Liabost Uarach* (Upper Lybster) with around 40 % of speakers.

Area description:

The fishing village of *Liabost* (Lybster) and the neighbouring crofting hamlets of the estate of *Liabost Uarach* (Upper Lybster) are object of this study. These settlements are situated in the south-eastern corner of the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness) on Scotland's rocky North Sea coast.

The whole area at the time was part of one local estate. Main economic factors were fishing and crofting in 1891.

Please see the remark regarding the use of placenames in Caithness on page 4 of this factsheet!



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

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 167

Page 2 of 4

Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Baile Liabost, Inbhir & Liabost Uarach*

	Population enumerated				Usually resident population (3+)			
	Total	Aged 0-2	Deaf & dumb	Visitors etc. ³	Total ⁴	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	1.063	81	0	25	957	0	262	27.4 %
3-4	53	0	0	1	52	0	0	0.0 %
5-9	148	0	0	3	145	0	0	0.0 %
10-14	119	0	0	3	116	0	1	0.9 %
15-24	147	0	0	1	146	0	5	3.4 %
25-44	207	0	0	9	198	0	52	26.3 %
45-64	208	0	0	1	207	0	128	61.8 %
65+	100	0	0	7	93	0	76	81.7 %
Gender								
Female	586	34	0	11	541	0	154	28.5 %
Male	477	47	0	14	416	0	108	26.0 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	925	80	0	15	830	0	237	28.6 %
In neighbouring parish¹	38	0	0	1	37	0	7	18.9 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	19	0	0	4	15	0	11	73.3 %
Other places	81	1	0	5	75	0	7	9.3 %

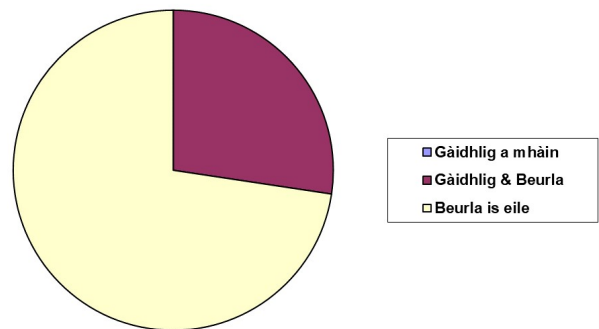
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten or Wick (all Caithness).

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 & Beurla, 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.

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 167

Page 3 of 4

Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Baile Liabost, Inbhir & Liabost Uarach*

	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Baile Liabost & Liabost Uarach</i>	255	957	0	262	27.4 %
Individual communities					
<i>Achadh na Creige, Inbhir & Caol</i> (Achnacraig, Inver & Kyle)	15	68	0	17	25.0 %
<i>Liabost Uarach</i> (Upper Lybster)	65	222	0	89	40.1 %
<i>Baile Liabost</i> (Lybster Village)	175	667	0	156	23.4 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	36	197	0	75	38.1 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	28	99	0	34	34.3 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	16	82	0	16	19.5 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	49	261	0	5	1.9 %
Households with no children (0-14)	126	318	0	132	41.5 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	119	496	0	159	32.1 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	2	5	0	0	0.0 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	8	29	0	6	20.7 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	59	233	0	47	20.2 %
Living on private means	2	3	0	0	0.0 %
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	8	38	0	0	0.0 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	46	132	0	42	31.8 %
Remaining occupations	11	21	0	8	38.1 %

© Text and statistics: Copyright Kurt C. Duwe. All rights reserved except private and non-commercial use. Any other use has to be cleared by the author Kurt C. Duwe, Jägerstr. 120a, 21079 Hamburg, Germany (duwe@linguae-celticae.de) and it may also fall under restrictions of the Crown Copyright of census data. Statistics have been derived from 1891 census returns published by the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS). The use of this material here is permitted under Licence No. C02W0003665. Crown Copyright of census data is acknowledged. The digital boundaries shown on the Scotland map are courtesy of Ordnance Survey as part of the Geography Products provided by GROS. Additional individual profiles may be downloaded from a special page on the Linguae Celticae website: http://www.linguae-celticae.de/GLP_english.htm



Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 167

Page 4 of 4

Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Baile Liabost, Inbhir & Liabost Uarach*

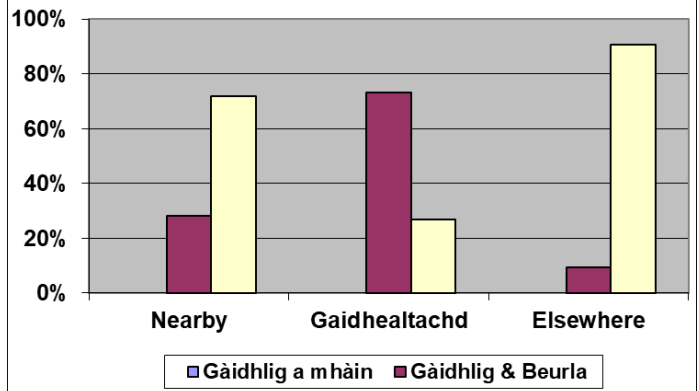
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was spoken by older people born either nearby or in the wider *Gaidhealtachd*. Language knowledge of those inhabitants born further away was negligible.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Latheron or in the adjacent parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten or Wick (all Caithness).

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 271 bilingual inhabitants and no monolingual *Gàidhlig*-speakers out of a total population of 1.063 persons (25.5%). The usually resident population of 957 persons, however, consisted of 262 bilingual *Gàidhlig*-speakers (27.4%).
2. A large proportion of *Gàidhlig*-speakers was born in the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness). This underlines the fact that the language was not alien in an area which many characterize as a “Lowland” county today.
3. There are many names of settlements in Caithness – even in the west of the county – where no distinct *Gàidhlig* placenames have been ascertained or documented. This does not mean that there were no *Gàidhlig* descriptions by the local inhabitants. Often some parts of names suggest at least a partially *Gàidhlig* topographic description like “ach-“, “dun-“, “brae-“, “knock-“, or “bal-“. However, the names used on Ordnance Survey maps are used in these factsheets.