

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 171

Page 1 of 4

Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Latharan a'Phuill, Shantry, Drymount, Landhallow, Leodebest, Braehungie*

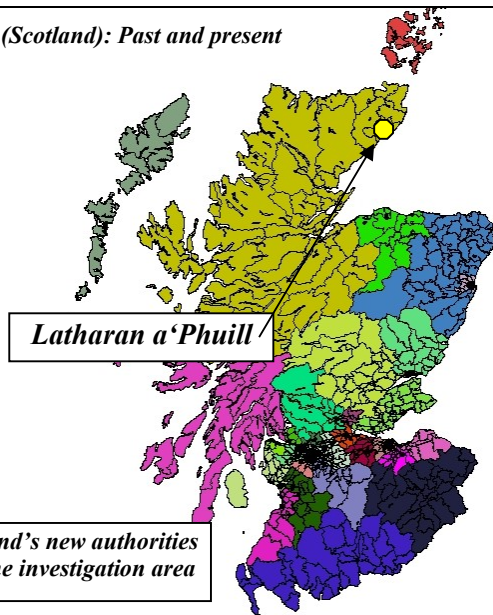
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Janetstown, Shantry, Tutinloch, Drymount, Landhallow, Leodibuist, Newlands of Leodibuist, Craignahacluish, Guidibost, Braehungie, Latheron Poorhouse)

Number of households: 79 Population present at census night: 317

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 52.5 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
<i>Caithness</i>	<i>Latheron</i>	Latheron	12	1 - 21

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

In this part of *Gallaibh* (Caithness) a substantial part of the inhabitants still spoke Gàidhlig – but mainly in the older generation. Effective inter-generational language transmission, however, seems to have seized in the 1860s in this district.

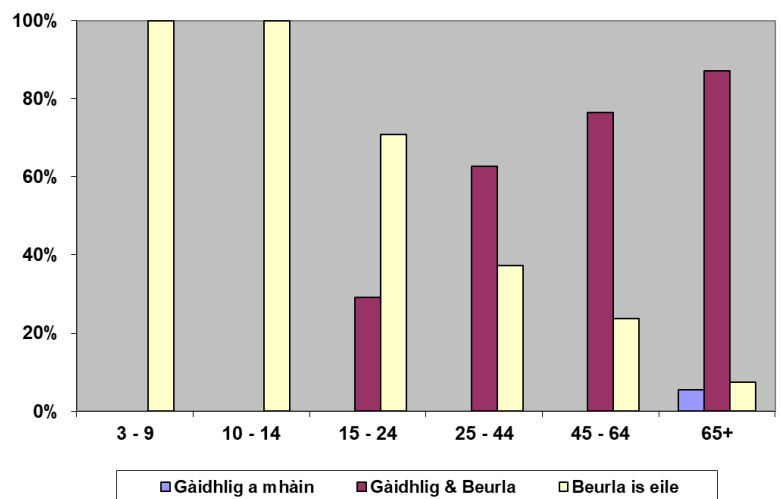
The language was strongest in the crofting families in the hinterland. The share of speakers was especially high in tiny crofting communities like Leodebest and Braehungie with a share of more than 60 % of the population. In the town itself, however, Gàidhlig was by far already a minority issue.

Area description:

The investigation area covers mainly the fishing village of *Latharan a'Phuill* (Latheronwheel) on the east coast of *Gallaibh* (Caithness) – Scotland's northernmost mainland county. In addition, a narrow landstrip of crofting land leading northwards was also part of this enumeration district.

Main occupations of the inhabitants in the village itself were related to the local fishing fleet. The scattered communities further inland were active in crofting and/or worked for the laird of the time.

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

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No. 171

Page 2 of 4

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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	317	11	0	9	297	3	153	52.5 %
3-4	7	0	0	0	7	0	0	0.0 %
5-9	30	0	0	1	29	0	0	0.0 %
10-14	28	0	0	0	28	0	0	0.0 %
15-24	49	0	0	1	48	0	14	29.2 %
25-44	61	0	0	2	59	0	37	62.7 %
45-64	76	0	0	4	72	0	55	76.4 %
65+	55	0	0	1	54	3	47	92.6 %
Gender								
Female	173	4	0	5	164	2	85	53.0 %
Male	144	7	0	4	133	1	68	51.9 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	260	10	0	5	245	2	139	57.6 %
In neighbouring parish¹	19	0	0	2	17	1	4	29.4 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	3	0	0	0	3	0	2	66.7 %
Other places	35	1	0	2	32	0	8	25.0 %

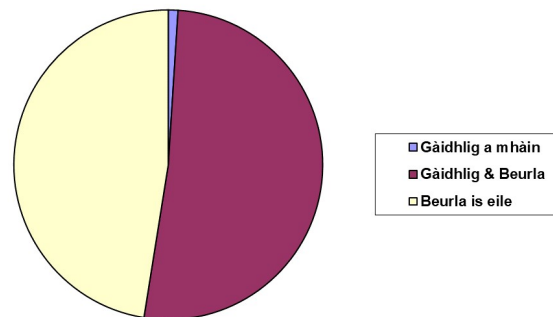
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Halkirk, Wick (both Caithness) or Kildonan (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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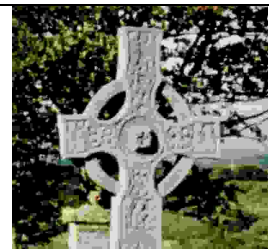
No. 171

Page 3 of 4

Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Latharan a'Phuill, Shantry, Drymount, Landhallow, Leodebest, Braehungie*

	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Latharan a'Phuill</i> (Latheronwheel)	79	297	3	153	52.5 %
Individual communities					
<i>Latheran a'Phuill</i> (Latheronwheel)	31	134	0	57	42.5 %
<i>Shantry & Drymount</i> (Shantry & Drymount)	7	33	0	12	36.4 %
<i>Landhallow & Leodebest</i> (Landhallow & Leodebest)	29	84	0	52	61.9 %
<i>Braehungie</i> (Braehungie)	12	46	3	32	76.1 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	14	89	0	36	40.4 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	6	20	0	10	50.0 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	6	32	0	11	34.4 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	2	12	0	0	0.0 %
Households with no children (0-14)	51	144	3	96	68.8 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	46	180	2	93	52.8 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	0	0	0	0	-
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	3	36	0	9	25.0 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	17	54	1	30	57.4 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	3	6	0	2	33.3 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	8	19	0	17	89.5 %
Remaining occupations	2	2	0	2	100.0 %

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Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

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Page 4 of 4

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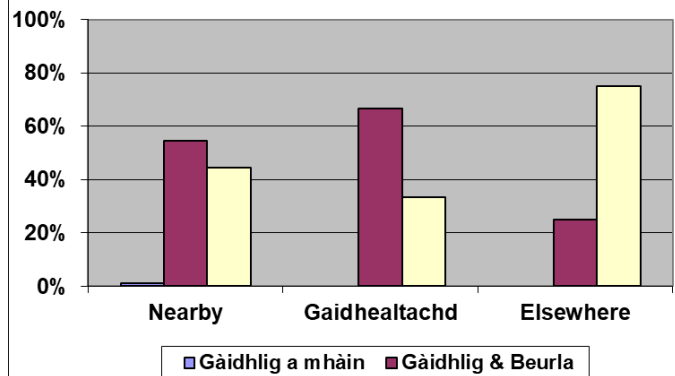
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was spoken by a majority of those born nearby or in the wider *Gaidhealtachd* as a whole.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Latheron or in the adjacent parishes of Halkirk, Wick (both Caithness) or Kildonan (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 153 bilingual inhabitants and four monolingual *Gàidhlig*-speakers out of a total population of 317 persons (48.6%). The usually resident population of 297 inhabitants, however, consisted of 156 *Gàidhlig*-speakers (52.5%) including three inhabitants “with no English”. The official figure therefore was a very high under-estimate of 3.9 % compared with the realistic figures considering only the usually resident population!
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 today many characterize as a “Lowland” county.
3. In 1891 the town of *Latheronwheel* was - at the laird’s request - named after his wife Janet. This was a common habit at the time. The whole area was part of a single estate.
4. The three elderly “Gaelic only” speakers did live in the crofting settlement of Braehungie.
5. 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.