

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

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Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): Dùn Bheathadh, An Cnoc Glas, Bad na Gaoithe, An Tòrr Beag, Inbhir & An Tòrr Mòr*

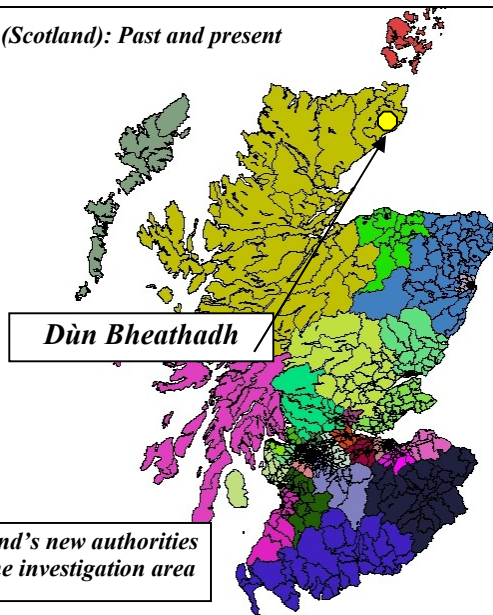
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Portormine, Bridgend, Village, Knockglass, Ballachly, Badnagie, Achavrole, Ballachnuick, Torbeg, Bulno; Inver, Tormore)

Number of households: 73 Population present at census night: 354

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 41.8 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
<i>Caithness</i>	<i>Latheron</i>	Latheron	15	1 - 15

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

The census data clearly reveal that Gàidhlig ceased to be a relevant means of communication in this fishing village 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).

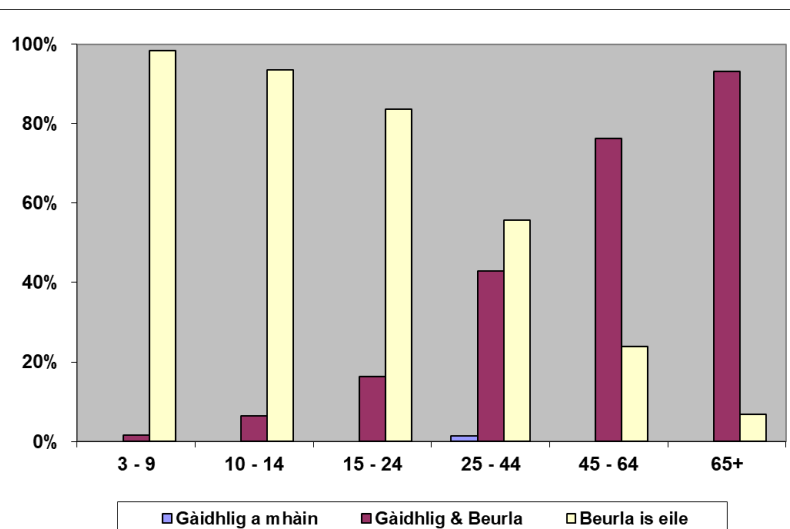
The language was strongest in the upper parts of the district. The crofting settlements of *Bad na Gaoithe* (Badnagie) and *An Tòrr Beag* (Torbeg) boasted around 60 % of speakers.

Area description:

The fishing village of *Dùn Bheathadh* (Dunbeath) and its neighbouring crofting hamlets 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 in the village and traditional crofting activities 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

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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	354	28	0	15	311	1	129	41.8 %
3-4	14	0	0	1	13	0	0	0.0 %
5-9	48	0	0	1	47	0	1	2.1 %
10-14	34	0	0	3	31	0	2	6.5 %
15-24	46	0	0	3	43	0	7	16.3 %
25-44	71	0	0	1	70	1	30	44.3 %
45-64	64	0	0	1	63	0	48	76.2 %
65+	49	0	0	5	44	0	41	93.2 %
Gender								
Female	188	16	0	7	165	1	76	0.0 %
Male	166	12	0	8	146	0	53	0.0 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	293	28	0	8	257	1	109	0.0 %
In neighbouring parish¹	18	0	0	0	18	0	13	0.0 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	6	0	0	1	5	0	5	0.0 %
Other places	37	0	0	6	31	0	2	0.0 %

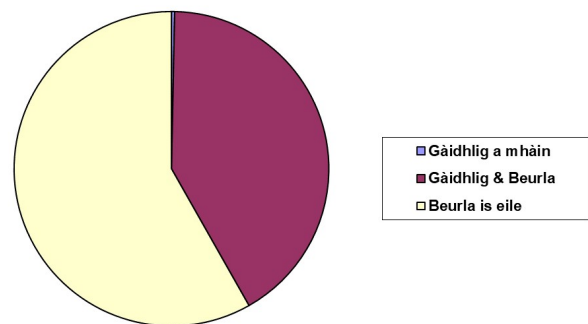
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Wick, Halkirk (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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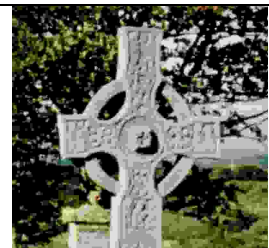
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Dùn Bheathadh</i>	73	311	1	129	41.8 %
Individual communities					
<i>Portormin & Ceann na Drochaid</i> (Portormin & Bridgend)	9	38	1	7	21.1 %
<i>Dùn Bheathadh</i> (Dunbeath)	10	60	0	16	26.7 %
<i>An Cnoc Glas & Ballachly</i> (Knockglass & Ballachly)	15	56	0	19	33.9 %
<i>Bad na Gaoithe</i> (Badnagie)	24	93	0	57	61.3 %
<i>An Tòrr Beag</i> (Torbeg)	10	31	0	23	74.2 %
<i>Inbhir & An Tòrr Mòr</i> (Inver & Tormore)	5	33	0	7	21.2 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	19	111	0	44	39.6 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	8	34	1	20	61.8 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	4	17	0	5	29.4 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	8	49	0	0	0.0 %
Households with no children (0-14)	34	100	0	60	60.0 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	41	183	0	86	47.0 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	0	0	0	0	-
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	1	5	0	0	0.0 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	17	76	0	29	38.2 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	1	8	0	0	0.0 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	8	25	0	8	32.0 %
Remaining occupations	5	14	1	6	50.0 %

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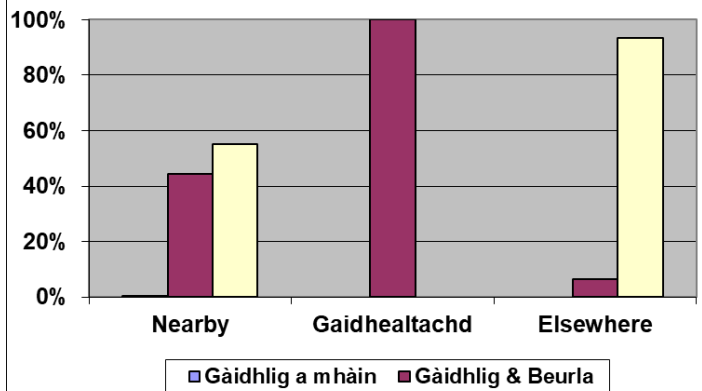
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was spoken mainly by the older generation born nearby and virtually all inhabitants born in the wider *Gaidhealtachd*.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Latheron or in the adjacent parishes of Wick, Halkirk (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 136 bilingual inhabitants and one monolingual *Gàidhlig*-speaker out of a total population of 355 persons (38.6%). The usually resident population of 311 inhabitants, however, consisted of 130 *Gàidhlig*-speakers (41.8%) including one monolingual *Gàidhlig*-speaker.
2. The solitary “Gaelic only” record was attributed to a 40-year-old “pauper” in Portormin.
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.