

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 174

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Area: *Bràighean Loch Abair (Braes of Lochaber): Monadh Easaidh, Inbhir Làir, Loch Trèig, An Coire Odhar, An Fhearsaid, Creag Ghuanach, Tulaich, A'Mhuaigh, Mùrbhlagan*

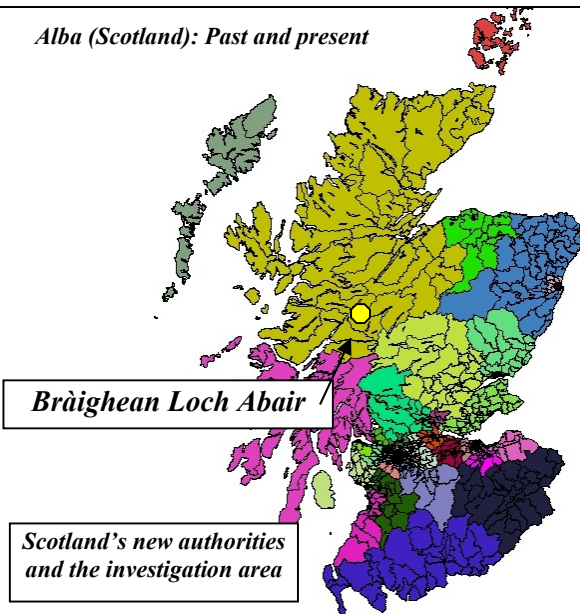
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Monessie, Inverlair, Lochtreig, Corrou, Craiganach, Moy, Tulloch, Roughburn, Creagbeg, Torgulbin)

Number of households: 52 **Population present at census night:** 437

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 90.4 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness-shire	Kilmonivaig	Lochaber	5	1 - 3
			6	1 - 5
			7	1 - 5
			16	1 - 10

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

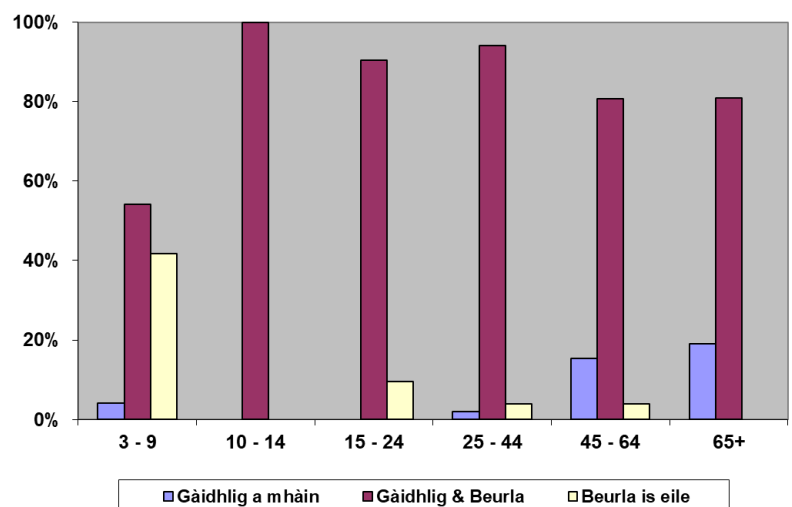
Most of the locally born and raised inhabitants still spoke Gàidhlig. Even a few of them did not speak English, mostly at an older age. Around *Tulaich* (Tulloch) and *Mùrbhlagan* (Murlaggan) all local people spoke Gàidhlig.

The relatively high proportion of English monoglots in the census was superficially high because of the building of the West Highland Line. In the original census reports 266 railway workers alone were enumerated along the line and their records incorporated in the published report.

Area description:

The region under investigation comprises the mountainous country around the upper part of the *Gleann Spiathan* (Glen Spean) and the vast wilderness further south. This was almost exclusively in the hands of wealthy landlords at the time.

Accordingly, most of the inhabitants were engaged in one way or another with gamekeeping, shepherding, or simply servicing their lairds. In the once populous lands near *Loch Trèig* and *A'Mhuaigh* (Moy) only a handful of gamekeepers remained after the "Highland Clearances".



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	437	15	0	266	156	10	131	90.4 %
3-4	15	0	0	2	13	1	5	46.2 %
5-9	13	0	0	2	11	0	8	72.7 %
10-14	22	0	0	9	13	0	13	100.0 %
15-24	88	0	0	67	21	0	19	90.5 %
25-44	159	0	0	108	51	1	48	96.1 %
45-64	96	0	0	70	26	4	21	96.2 %
65+	29	0	0	8	21	4	17	100.0 %
Gender								
Female	109	2	0	26	81	10	62	88.9 %
Male	328	13	0	240	75	0	69	92.0 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	129	8	0	11	110	9	93	92.7 %
In neighbouring parish¹	34	3	0	14	17	0	16	94.1 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	112	1	0	87	24	1	20	87.5 %
Other places	162	3	0	154	5	0	2	40.0 %

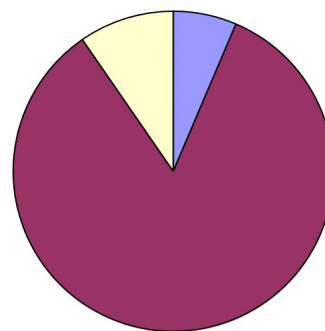
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Kilmallie, Glenelg, Laggan, Boleskine & Abertarff, Urquhart & Glenmoriston (all Inverness-shire), Glenshiel (Ross & Cromarty) or Fortingall (Perthshire).

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.

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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Bràighean Loch Abair</i>	52	156	10	131	90.4 %
Individual communities					
<i>Monadh Easaidh & Inbhir Làir (Monessie & Inverlair)</i>	15	41	5	26	75.6 %
<i>Loch Trèig & An Coire Odhar (Loch Treig & Corroun)</i>	19	41	1	35	87.8 %
<i>Tulaich & An Fhearsaid (Tulloch & Fersit)</i>	9	34	1	33	100.0 %
<i>Mùrbhlagan (Murlaggan)</i>	9	40	3	37	100.0 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	14	75	3	64	89.3 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	2	5	0	2	40.0 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	5	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	31	7	7	65	94.7 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	12	53	5	44	92.5 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	19	77	4	62	85.7 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	1	8	0	8	100.0 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	19	17	0	17	100.0 %
Remaining occupations	1	1	1	0	100.0 %

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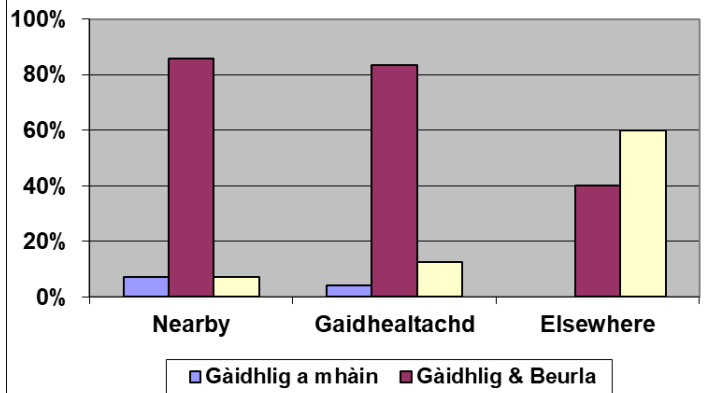
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was spoken by almost every inhabitant except for those born far away.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Kilmonivaig or in the adjacent parishes of Kilmallie, Glenelg, Laggan, Boleskine & Abertarff, Urquhart & Glenmoriston (all Inverness-shire), Glenshiel (Ross & Cromarty) or Fortingall (Perthshire).

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 254 bilingual inhabitants and 15 monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers out of a total population (present at census night) of 437 persons (96.2%). The usually resident population of 156 persons, however, consisted of 141 Gàidhlig-speakers (90.4%) including ten inhabitants “with no English”.
2. At the time of the census extensive works were underway to build the West Highland Line to *An Gearasdan* (Fort William). In the original census reports 266 railway workers were enumerated along the line in this region and their records incorporated in the published report. This led to very distorted percentages of Gàidhlig-speakers for this area. The resident-based statistics presented here provide a much more accurate picture.
3. Just 15 inhabitants were recorded who did not speak Gàidhlig. Two thirds of these “English only” returns came from children younger than 10 years of age alone. A closer look at the families involved shows that most parents originally came from English or Lowland backgrounds. This was so especially so in the registration district of *Monadh Easaidh & Inbhir Làir* (Monessie & Inverlair).