

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 199

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Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): An Cnoc Glas, Forsaidh, Achalone & Assery*

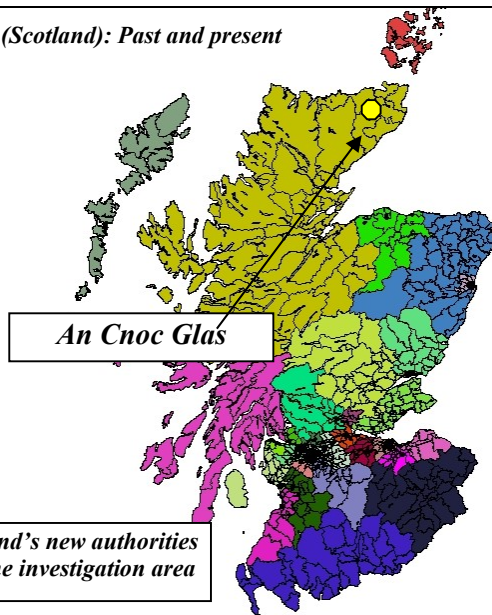
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Knockglass, Clashach Farm, Achagranach Farm, Achalone Farm, Forsie, Achater, Assery, Forsie Farm)

Number of households: **32** Population present at census night: **157**

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: **28.6 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Caithness	Halkirk	Halkirk	11	1 - 7

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

Gàidhlig was still widespread among the older people but no-one below the age of 15 was reported as Gàidhlig-speaking in 1891. Intergenerational language transmission seems to have seized effectively in the 1870s in this area. Nonetheless almost 30 % of the usually resident population was returned as speaking Gàidhlig as well as English.

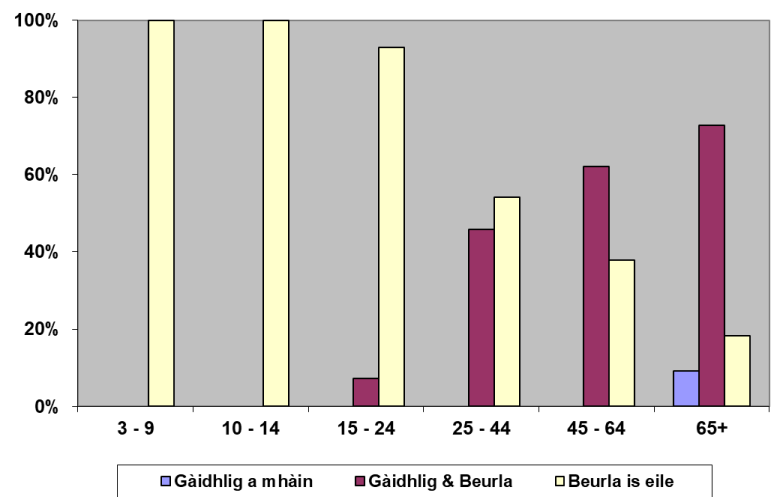
Gàidhlig was predominant also among the elderly who were born in the parish. This points to the fact that the language was not an “import” by migrants from the Highlands further west.

Area description:

This area comprises relatively fertile farmland south of the town of *Baile Theòrsa* (Thurso) in the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness). All settlements were part of the parish of *Hacraig* (Halkirk).

Main hamlet was the scattered community of *An Cnoc Glas* (Knockglass) where – as anywhere in this area – the major occupation was farming.

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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Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): An Cnoc Glas, Forsaidh, Achalona & Assery*

	Population enumerated				Usually resident population (3+)			
	Total	Aged 0-2	Deaf & dumb	Visitors etc. ³	Total ⁴	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	157	13	0	4	140	1	39	28.6 %
3-4	9	0	0	0	9	0	0	0.0 %
5-9	22	0	0	0	22	0	0	0.0 %
10-14	19	0	0	2	17	0	0	0.0 %
15-24	29	0	0	1	28	0	2	7.1 %
25-44	24	0	0	0	24	0	11	45.8 %
45-64	29	0	0	0	29	0	18	62.1 %
65+	12	0	0	1	11	1	8	81.8 %
Gender								
Female	83	7	0	2	74	0	24	32.4 %
Male	74	6	0	2	66	1	15	24.2 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	86	13	0	1	72	0	18	25.0 %
In neighbouring parish¹	49	0	0	3	46	1	18	41.3 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	100.0 %
Other places	20	0	0	0	20	0	1	5.0 %

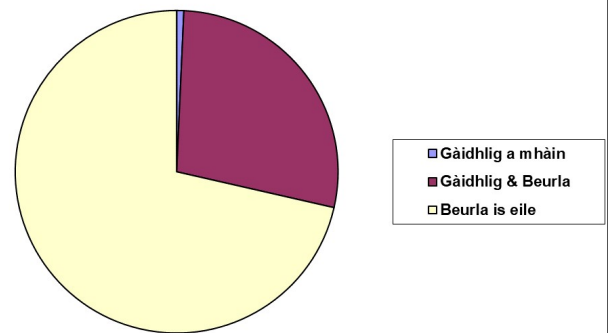
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Reay, Thurso, Bower, Watten, Latheron (all Caithness), Kildonan or Farr (both 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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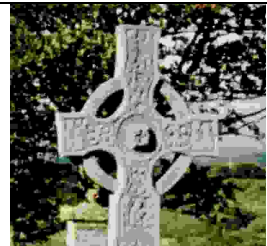
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Area: *Gallaibh (Caithness): An Cnoc Glas, Forsaidh, Achalone & Assery*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>An Cnoc Glas & Forsaidh</i>	32	140	1	39	28.6 %
Individual communities					
<i>An Cnoc Glas & Achalone</i> (Knockglass & Achalone)	11	45	0	14	31.1 %
<i>Forsaidh</i> (Forsie)	11	47	1	14	31.9 %
<i>Assery</i> (Assery)	10	48	0	11	22.9 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	4	18	0	8	44.4 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	1	2	0	1	50.0 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	5	26	0	6	23.1 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	8	60	0	2	3.3 %
Households with no children (0-14)	14	34	1	22	67.6 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	10	55	0	17	30.9 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	2	10	0	3	30.0 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	1	8	0	0	0.0 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	1	5	0	0	0.0 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	18	62	1	19	32.3 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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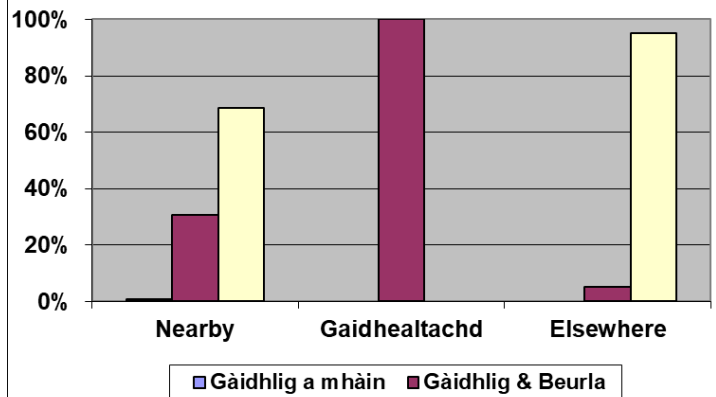
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was spoken by all incomers from the wider *Gaidhealtachd* and by a notable part of the inhabitants born locally or nearby.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Halkirk or in the adjacent parishes of Reay, Thurso, Bower, Watten, Latheron (all Caithness), Kildonan or Farr (both 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 41 bilingual inhabitants and one monolingual *Gàidhlig*-speaker out of a total population of 157 persons (26.8%). The usually resident population of 140 persons, however, consisted of 39 *Gàidhlig*-speakers (28.6%) including one inhabitant “with no English”.
2. A 71-year-old “pavement quarry labourer” in *Forsaidh* (Forsie) was recorded as not speaking English but only *Gàidhlig*. He was born in the neighbouring parish of *Meaghrath* (Reay).
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.