

Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Studies¹

Vol. 13: *Eilean Leòdhais: An Taobh Siar & Nis* (Isle of Lewis: Westside & Ness)

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Extended² 2nd Edition

March 2024

Executive Summary

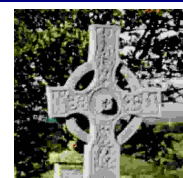
This publication is part of a series dealing with local communities which were predominantly Gaelic speaking at the end of the 19th century. Based mainly (but not exclusively) on local population census information the reports strive to examine the state of the language through the ages from 1881 until today. The most relevant information is gathered comprehensively for the smallest geographical unit possible and provided area by area – a very useful reference for people with interest in their own community. Furthermore, the impact of recent developments in education (namely teaching in Gaelic medium and Gaelic as a second language) is analysed for primary school catchments.

The area between Shawbost and Ness on the Atlantic side of Lewis is traditionally seen as a major stronghold of Gaelic. Since 1981, however, this situation has slowly declined despite some commendable educational activities focussing on the communities of Lionel and Borge. Ness as the northernmost part of Lewis remains a comparatively strong part of the “Gaelic-speaking heartland” but deterioration tendencies are clearly seen in Westside especially in Arnol and Bragar. Therefore, it will be extremely necessary to improve especially the educational provision in this part of Lewis.

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² Tables were extended with more census results of enumeration districts provided for 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911 and 1981.



Foreword to the First Edition

Since 1881 every decennial population census in Scotland included a question about the “Gaelic-speaking” population. Despite some difficulty in interpreting this data (what really means to tick a box being able to speak Gaelic) this long-term data set holds a wealth of sociological and historical information. The series highlights the circumstances in which people speaking this Celtic language have lived and still live today. In most cases this data has been used only either for very problem-specific socio-linguistic studies or they were the basis of regional or Scotland wide analysis. However, it proved very difficult for people who were interested in their own local area to have a comprehensive overview of the number and distribution of Gaelic-speaking people right on their doorstep. This series is planned to cover all regions of Scotland where Scottish Gaelic (*A’Ghàidhlig* to be correct in its own words) was still spoken by a substantial part of the population at the start of the 20th century. Accordingly, besides the main “Highland counties” of Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty, Inverness and Argyll the fringe areas of Bute (including the Isle of Arran), western Caithness, Nairn, North Dunbartonshire and more particularly Highland Perthshire will be covered. It is hoped that these small reports will be of interest not only to science people but also to those who have to cope with opinions like “Gaelic was never spoken here” in their own local community.

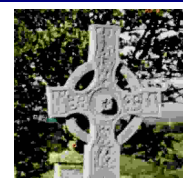
Foreword to the Second Edition

Almost two years have passed since the publication of the first volume of this series. In the meantime, a lot of “new” material has surfaced which merits to be publicised to a wider audience. In addition, two years are sometimes a very long time when looking at the actual state of a dynamic process: the re-animation of Scottish Gaelic in a number of places. Therefore, a second edition of the series is now being elaborated. Hopefully it will prove to be as popular as its predecessor.

Foreword to the Extended Second Edition

I am very glad to present an extended and actualized edition of the *Gàidhlig* Local Studies after more than two decades since the first publication. Of course, new data and information had been waiting to be incorporated in this compendium of language development in Scotland. Maybe rather unexpectedly, many additional figures from the past became available, too – especially from the 1881, 1911 and 1981 censuses. As always, I wish happy reading – a few surprises wait to be discovered!!!!

Important note: Although this text is written in the modern lingua franca for the purpose of maximum readership the object has to take its rightful place. Therefore, *Gàidhlig* placenames or expressions are preferred, and the so-called English version is mentioned in brackets where appropriate. For those unfamiliar with the language: Every Gaelic expression is written in *italics* and the other place names are mainly examples of anglicisation efforts of early cartographers.



Acknowledgements

The author is indebted to many organisations which have been very kind in providing information about the subject. I am very grateful for this active encouragement. Very special thanks go of course to the General Register Office for Scotland for the opportunity to use the census material in this study. The team at the Demographic Dissemination Branch has been very supportive. Crown Copyright on the census data is acknowledged gratefully. Very worthwhile was also the relentless assistance of Mrs. Melissa Barlow of the University of Texas and Mrs. Liz Mackie of the University of Aberdeen who both proved to be very successful in unearthing rare material of more than a century ago. And last but not least thank is also due to the many individuals with whom I spent endless hours of discussion witnessing true Highland hospitality. *Tapadh leibh a h-uile duine!*

Wedel, *An Dàmhar* 2003
Hamburg, *An t-Sultain* 2005
Hamburg, *Am Màirt* 2024

Kurt C. Duwe

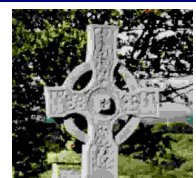
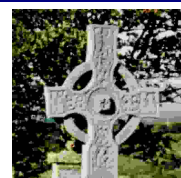


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1 Introduction

This volume is dedicated to the north-western part of *Leòdhas* (Lewis), and the investigations are thereby looking at the communities living within the boundaries of the ancient civil parish of *Barabhas* (Barvas). The settlement of the same name lies directly in the centre of the area between the small villages in *An Taobh Siar* (Westside) and *Nis* (Ness). *Gàidhlig* of course is still important as a community language in all townships from *Siabost* (Shawbost) to *Eòropaidh* (Eoropie). Sociologically the parish does not differ considerably from other parts of rural *Leòdhas*. It is predominantly Protestant and crofting still plays an important role in the life of many of the people. Despite ongoing depopulation trends roughly 3,200 islanders lived in this essentially rural environment in 2011.

With this background in mind the following short chapters will investigate the historical development of the use of *Gàidhlig* in the area from the end of the 19th century until today – mainly highlighted by references to and analysis of population census results in local detail. Information on additionally available studies of language use and especially educational provision to study *Gàidhlig* (or even being educated through the medium of the language) is used where considered as useful.

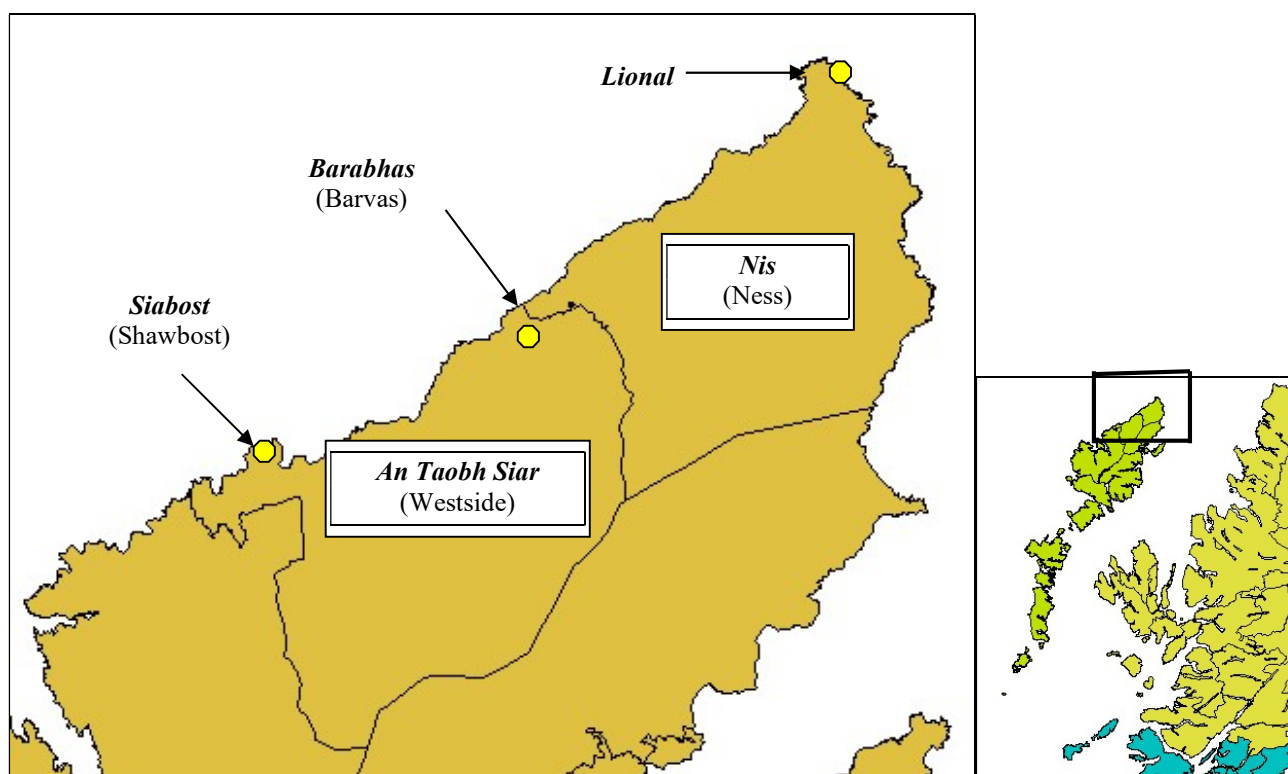
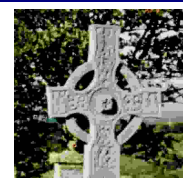


Fig. 1: Overview map of area under investigation⁴

⁴ Digital boundaries courtesy of Ordnance Survey as part of the Geography Products provided by GROS for the 2001 census.



2 The Historical Background

The parish of *Barabhas* (Barvas) has been traditionally considered as one of the most viable strongholds of *Gàidhlig* in Scotland. This was of course also true before census enumerators looked after the language preferences for the first time in 1881. The New Statistical Account of Scotland (1831-1845) reported about the state of the language in the parish in the early 19th century: “*The Gaelic is the only language and has been from time immemorial; and it is spoken, in the opinion of competent judges, with grammatical correctness and classical purity.*” A comparison of *Gàidhlig*-speaking intensity with the adjacent parish of *Uig* after this period is shown in figure 2. Nevertheless, even here a considerable decline has occurred in the census enumerations after 1981.

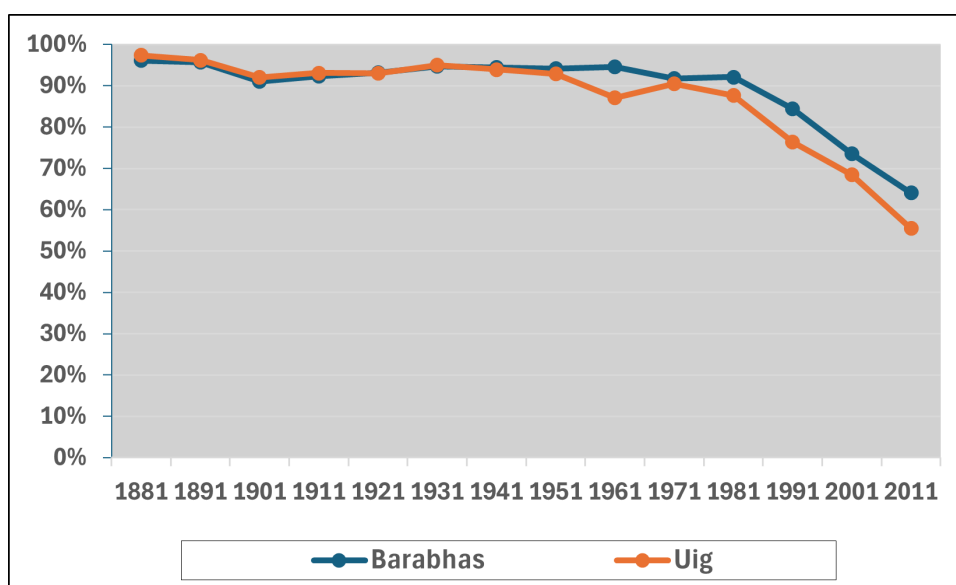


Fig. 2: *Gàidhlig*-speakers (3 years and over) as percentage of total population between 1881 and 2011 – civil parishes of *Barabhas* (Barvas) and neighbouring *Uig*⁵

2.1 From Victorian times until the Second World War (Census 1881-1931)

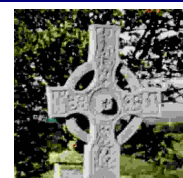
Generally, the population on the Atlantic coastline of *Leòdhais* was staunchly *Gàidhlig* speaking during this whole period. This was of course also true for the people living in the townships between *Siabost* (Shawbost) and *Lional* (Lionel) which constitute the civil parish of *Barabhas* (Barvas). The census enumeration exercise on “Gaelic-speakers” in 1891 saw by far the majority of inhabitants speaking only *Gàidhlig* (fig. 3). It has to be kept in mind that children below the age of 3 were usually not considered in the *Gàidhlig*-speaking population. Therefore, figures in table 1 of around 95 % of the total population mean in essence that virtually every locally born person spoke the language in this area until 1931.

<i>An Taobh Siar & Nis (Barabhas)</i>						
Subject \ Census	1881 ⁶	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
<i>Gàidhlig</i> -speakers (3 years +)	5,119	5,456	6,136	6,418	6,210	5,565
% of total population	96.1 %	95.7 %	91.1 %	92.3 %	93.2 %	94.7 %

Table 1: Number of *Gàidhlig*-speakers (3 years and over) in *An Taobh Siar & Nis* (Westside & Ness) and percentage of total population speaking *Gàidhlig* during 1881-1931

⁵ There was no census taken in 1941 because of World War II – values are therefore interpolated between 1931 and 1951.

⁶ Figures are exclusive of the district around *Siabost* (Shawbost) which was transferred from *Uig* to *Barabhas* in 1891.



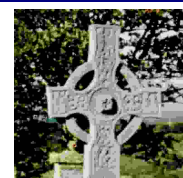
Before addressing the official enumeration district figures for 1881-1901 it is worthwhile to look more closely at the original 1891 census forms which provide interesting additional information. Generally, the census figures were still underestimating the real strength of the language because these statistics looked at the total population present at census night. The population figures included returns from occasional visitors and counted also children aged less than three years although their language preferences were not enumerated at all. Some “corrected” 1891 details about three communities in this part of the island are cited below ⁷ (Duwe, 2006):

1. **Bradhagair bho Dheas** (South Bragar): All usually resident persons were found to be Gàidhlig speaking in this crofting community in the south-west of the area in 1891 (the “official” percentage was 98.7 %). *“A large majority of inhabitants did not speak English at all. This fact was especially found in the older generation and among the very young. Also women were far more often monolingual speakers than men. In the small group of houses in Feabhaig just one person spoke English as well as Gàidhlig.”*
2. **Barabhas Uarach & Baile an Truiseil** (Upper Barvas & Ballantrushal): These crofting townships were as thoroughly Gàidhlig-speaking as any in the Outer Hebrides. According to census sources - with the exception of one child - the whole usually resident population spoke the traditional language (99.5 %). Around 40 % of the people did not even speak English. The “bilingual” part of the population was most prominent in the school age generation. In *Baile an Truiseil* (Ballantrushal) the monolingual inhabitants made up even one half of the population. *“There was just one person (a three-year-old boy) who was enumerated as “not speaking Gaelic”. In original census report terms, the enumeration district in total had a population of 320 persons of all ages. 168 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 122 persons were reported as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. These figures lead to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 90.6 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this factsheet reveals that this percentage was a considerable under-estimate of 9.1 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.”*
3. **Dail bho Dheas & Gabhsunn** (South Dell & Galson): The usually resident population was overwhelmingly Gàidhlig-speaking (98.6 %). In fact, the majority of all inhabitants did not speak English at all. Gàidhlig speakers with some knowledge of English were found mainly in the age group between 10 and 24. They had already got in contact with the compulsory “English only” school system in those days. On the other hand, just four persons were enumerated with “no Gaelic”. All had Lowland backgrounds and lived on the farm of *Gabhsunn* (Galson): *“This group consisted of the local farmer (born in Dumfriesshire), two of his daughters (aged 6 and 4 years) and the wife of the local teacher. The latter originated also from Dumfriesshire.”* - These figures lead to an “official” underestimation of Gàidhlig speakers by 6.6 %.

Detailed local information is available in census reports especially until 1901. The census reports and enumeration files provide a good impression of the geographical strength of the language in all parts of the area under scrutiny (see tables 2-3).

The area of **An Taobh Siar & Barabhas** (Westside & Barvas) occupies the western part of the parish and incorporates many crofting townships between *Siabost* (Shawbost) and *Borbh* (Borve). Keeping in mind the above-mentioned shortcomings of the overall percentages in census reports it is quite clear that Gàidhlig was spoken almost exclusively in all communities in this part of the island (table 2) during 1881-1901. In a large proportion of crofting townships Gàidhlig was the only language of the majority of residents. In 1891 for example almost no-one spoke English in places like *Siadar Iarach* (Lower Shader) or *Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh* (Fivepenny Borve). Until 1901 the number of Gàidhlig monolin-

⁷ After a period of 100 years information provided on the original census forms is publicly available. At the time of writing this is already the case for census returns of 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911.



gual persons fell significantly, however, through the influence of the compulsory school system which used English exclusively in the classroom. The language of the home remained *Gàidhlig* nonetheless.

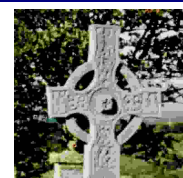
Number of persons and percentage of <i>Gàidhlig</i> -speakers in districts of <i>An Taobh Siar & Barabhas</i> – 1881 - 1911							
Area ⁸	All persons speaking <i>Gàidhlig</i> ⁹				Monolingual share of all <i>Gàidhlig</i> -speakers ¹⁰		
	1881	1891	1901	1911	1891	1901	1911
<i>Siabost bho Dheas</i> (Shawbost South)	286 98.3%	270 89.7 %	219 86.2 %	450 86.7%	90 33.3 %	66 30.1 %	161 35.8%
<i>Siabost Nuadh & Dail Beag</i> (New Shawbost & Dalbeg)	217 97.7 %	183 96.3 %	200 87.7 %		79 43.2 %	40 20.0 %	
<i>Siabost bho Thuath</i> (Shawbost North)	317 98.4 %	280 92.1 %	304 89.7 %	349 88.6%	96 34.3 %	70 20.6 %	104 29.8%
<i>Bradhagair bho Dheas & Fìbhig</i> (Bragar South & Feavie)	392 100 %	381 98.7 %	383 94.6 %	378 92.9%	264 68.4 %	342 89.3 %	159 42.1%
<i>Bradhagair bho Thuath</i> (Bragar North)	258 97.4 %	271 95.4 %	281 94.0 %	285 91.1%	127 46.9 %	55 19.6 %	67 23.5%
<i>Arnol</i> (Arnol)	271 100 %	294 91.9 %	320 92.2 %	313 93.4%	142 48.3 %	91 28.4 %	48 15.3%
<i>Brù</i> (Brue)	186 100 %	177 91.2 %	192 90.6 %	217 91.9%	41 23.2 %	36 18.8 %	67 30.9%
<i>Barabhas Iarach</i> (Lower Barvas)	397 99.7 %	318 94.4 %	311 92.3 %	269 94.7%	85 36.5 %	69 22.2 %	100 37.2%
<i>Barabhas Uarach & Pairc Bharabhais</i> (Upper Barvas & Barvas Park)	159 97.5 %	207 95.9 %	159 95.8 %	155 90.6%	70 33.8 %	36 22.6 %	46 29.7%
<i>Baile an Truiseil</i> (Ballantrushal)	128 97.0 %	138 86.8 %	167 92.8 %	153 92.7%	69 50.0 %	101 60.5 %	35 22.9%
<i>Siadar Uarach</i> (Upper Shader)	184 100 %	181 87.4 %	191 93.2 %	196 95.1%	93 51.4 %	127 66.5 %	41 20.9%
<i>Siadar Iarach</i> (Lower Shader)	224 94.5 %	239 100 %	242 92.4 %	279 91.8%	238 99.6 %	160 66.1 %	80 28.7%
<i>Borbh</i> (Borve)	61 95.3 %	92 100 %	85 85.9 %	177 90.3%	77 83.7 %	32 37.6 %	32 18.1%
<i>Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh</i> (Fivepenny Borve)	288 93.5 %	357 100 %	331 91.9 %	267 94.7%	352 98.6 %	176 53.2 %	94 35.2%

Table 2: Number of persons speaking *Gàidhlig* and all *Gàidhlig*-speakers as share of population in *An Taobh Siar & Barabhas* according to local census data from 1881 to 1911

⁸ Enumeration division or village.

⁹ Percentages of *Gàidhlig*-speakers above 50 % are marked by bold figures.

¹⁰ Percentages of monolingual *Gàidhlig*-speakers above 10 % are marked by bold figures.



Number of persons and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in districts of Nis – 1881 - 1911							
Area ¹¹	All persons speaking Gàidhlig ¹²				Monolingual share of all Gàidhlig-speakers ¹³		
	1881	1891	1901	1911	1891	1901	1911
<i>Dail bho Dheas & Gabhsunn</i> (South Dell & Galson)	366 92.9 %	281 88.4 %	341 93.9 %	344 94.2 %	174 61.9 %	246 72.1 %	132 38.4 %
<i>Dail bho Thuath</i> (North Dell)	179 100 %	166 97.0 %	135 90.0 %	141 94.0 %	85 51.2 %	60 44.4 %	50 35.5 %
<i>Cros</i> (Cross)	211 99.1 %	254 95.1 %	233 88.9 %	256 92.1 %	222 87.4 %	80 34.3 %	110 43.0 %
<i>Suainebost</i> (Swainbost)	312 92.6 %	313 97.8 %	309 92.8 %	353 93.6 %	281 89.8 %	125 40.5 %	147 41.6 %
<i>Tabost</i> (Habost)	303 92.4 %	377 97.2 %	382 89.9 %	378 94.5 %	352 93.4 %	165 43.2 %	118 31.2 %
<i>Lional & Adabroc</i> (Lionel & Adabroc)	403 92.0 %	410 97.9 %	374 92.6 %	419 93.7 %	400 97.6 %	329 81.4 %	153 36.5 %
<i>Port Nis</i> (Port of Ness)	153 85.0 %	188 96.4 %	180 93.3 %	198 95.7 %	161 85.6 %	142 78.9 %	66 33.3 %
<i>Sgiogartaidh</i> (Skigersta)	133 95.0 %	176 96.2 %	192 89.7 %	207 92.0 %	172 97.7 %	133 69.3 %	77 37.2 %
<i>Eoradail</i> (Eorodale)	6 100 %	69 94.5 %	106 94.6 %	101 96.2 %	66 95.7 %	56 52.8 %	39 38.6 %
<i>Còig Peighinnean Nis</i> (Fivepenny Ness)	203 100 %	196 100 %	166 90.7 %	162 96.4 %	154 78.6 %	123 74.1 %	67 41.4 %
<i>An Cnoc Àrd</i> (Knockard)	136 100 %	149 100 %	135 91.2 %	138 95.2 %	120 80.5 %	111 82.2 %	62 44.9 %
<i>Eòropaidh</i> (Eoropie)	265 97.4 %	222 96.1 %	205 84.7 %	244 85.9 %	156 70.3 %	155 75.6 %	98 40.2 %

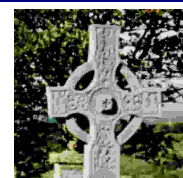
Table 3: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig and all Gàidhlig-speakers as share of population in Nis according to local census data from 1881 to 1911

The area of *Nis* (Ness) as the northernmost tip of *Leòdhas* (Lewis) was also a very strong Gàidhlig speaking district (table 3). Most of the crofter families did not use English at all – there was simply no need for it. In 1901 most residents in townships like *An Cnoc Àrd* (Knockard) or *Lional* (Lionel) were still monolingual speakers of Gàidhlig. Even after this period almost all pre-school children of the island (in the rural parts of *Leòdhas* in particular) were reported as speaking “Gaelic only” until the Second World War (see table 14).

¹¹ Enumeration division or village.

¹² Percentages of Gàidhlig-speakers above 50 % are marked by bold figures.

¹³ Percentages of monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers above 10 % are marked by bold figures.



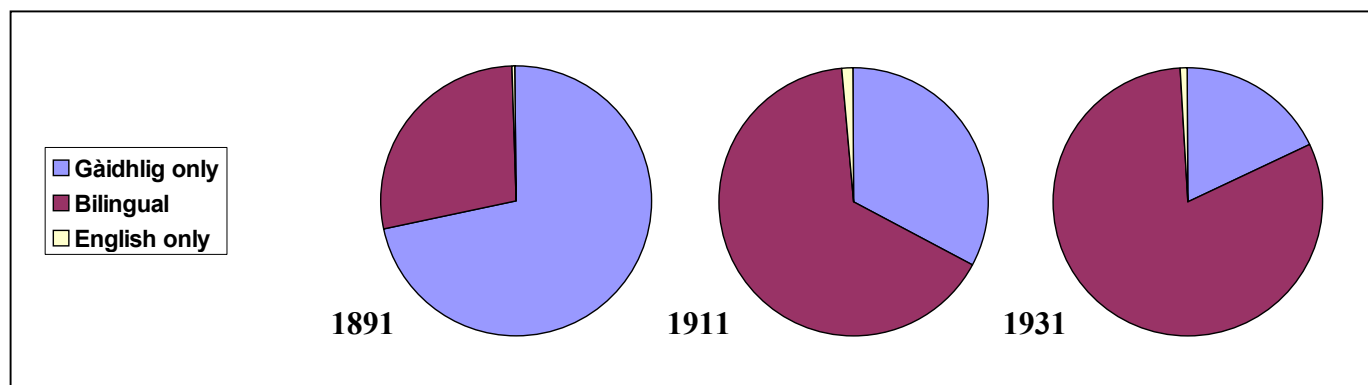


Fig. 3: Share of population speaking Gàidhlig and/or English in the study area according to census results in 1891, 1911 and 1931

Although Gàidhlig remained the everyday language in districts like *Barabhas* predictions of a fast and inevitable disappearance of Gàidhlig were commonplace in those days. Carl J. S. Marstrander commented in the foreword to the first book on the much-acclaimed field work of Carl Borgström in the 1930s: ... “*The Celtic family of languages is slowly but surely nearing its extinction. No national bombast nor Celtic Congresses can conceal this truth. The present survey of the Gaelic dialects of Scotland ... is intended, while there is yet time, to give posterity a clear and reliable first-hand account of the phonetic and morphological system of these dialects, based not on written or printed sources, but solely on the spoken, everyday language of the common people. We expect no great sympathy with our task in our own day. But we feel convinced that when all Celtic languages have become extinct, many grateful thoughts will go to those who, with such scanty support, laboured so unselfishly for years in the isles and highlands of Scotland to save at least some remnants of this neglected heritage*” (Borgström, 1940). Fortunately, despite the odds these languages are still with us today and the death bell has not rung for Gàidhlig as it had been predicted for centuries.

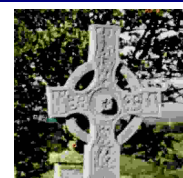
2.2 More Recent Developments (Census 1951–2011)

Like other rural parts of the Outer Hebrides no obvious decline in Gàidhlig-speaking was detected in north-western *Leòdhas* in the census enumerations until 1981 (table 4). At pre-school age even in 1951 and 1961 a significant number of children spoke no English until they entered school (see table 13 for information on rural *Leòdhas* in 1961).

<i>An Taobh Siar & Nis (Barabhas)</i>							
Subject \ Census	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Gàidhlig-speakers (3 years +)	4,809	4,099	3,660	3,598	3,024	2,281	2,037
Percentage of total population	94.1 %	94.6 %	91.8 %	92.1 %	84.4 %	72.8 %	64.2 %

Table 4: Number of Gàidhlig-speakers (3 years and over) in *An Taobh Siar & Nis* (Westside & Ness) and percentage of total population speaking Gàidhlig during 1951-2001

The report on Gàidhlig-speaking schoolchildren in Highland schools (Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1961) described the school district of *Barabhas* as a stronghold of the language: 513 of 538 primary school children were reported as first or preferred language speakers (95.4 %) in the school year 1957/58. Shortly afterwards the Ross & Cromarty Education Scheme started in the 1960s and encouraged the use of Gàidhlig especially as medium of instruction for mother tongue speakers. When the Bilingual Project (Murray & Morrison, 1984) in schools began in 1975 five out of seven primary schools in the area were involved from the start. Only *Bradhagair* and *Barabhas* (Barvas) had to wait until the second project phase (1978) to join the project.



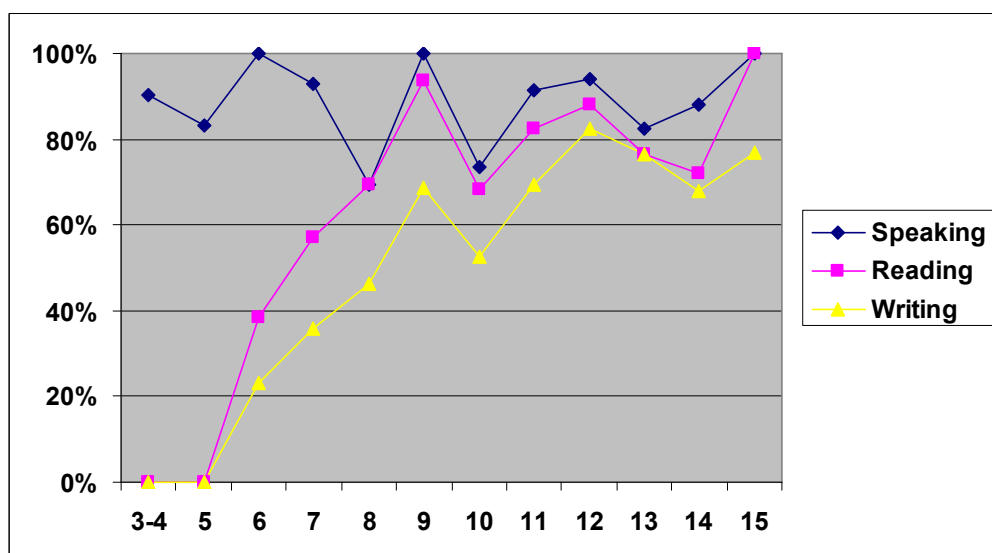


Fig. 4: Percentage of children able to speak, read or write *Gàidhlig* in different age groups in 1981 – *An Taobh Siar* (Westside)

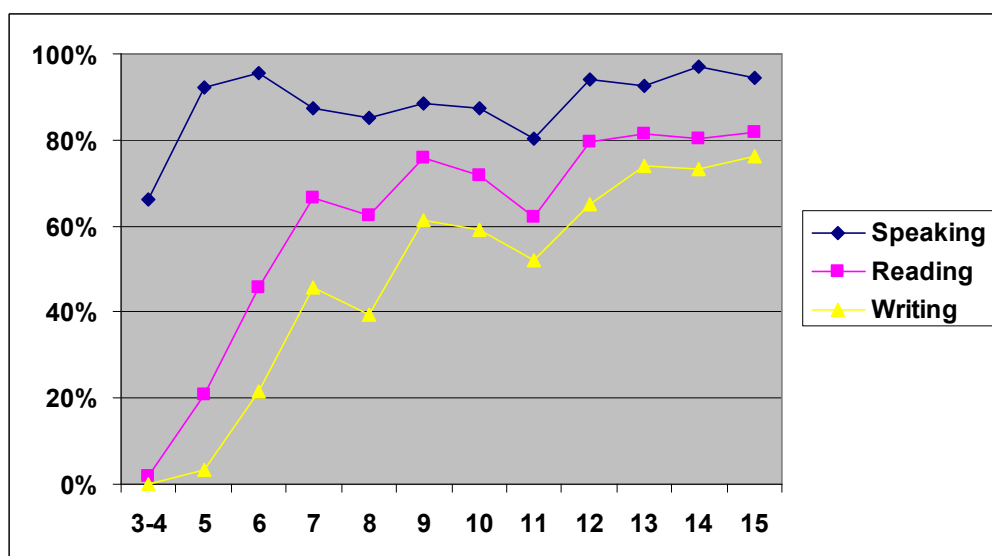
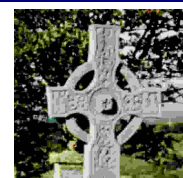


Fig. 5: Percentage of children able to speak, read or write *Gàidhlig* in different age groups in 1981 – *Nis* (Ness)

Obviously in those days pupils of *An Taobh Siar* and *Nis* received intensive instruction in *Gàidhlig* reading and writing during early primary years as figures 4 and 5 illustrate. Until 1981 the percentages of *Gàidhlig*-speakers remained more or less the same in all communities from *Siabost* to *Nis*. Almost all census output areas were over 90 % *Gàidhlig*-speaking (tables 16 and 18)¹⁴. However, this was to change considerably in the two later censuses. Also, the ability to speak the language in different age groups experienced a considerable decrease as figures 6 and 7 underline. There was a gradual decline in *Gàidhlig*-speaking in both areas especially in the pre-school and school aged generations between 1981 and 2001.

¹⁴ A map is provided in fig. 15 at the end of this publication showing the boundaries of individual output areas.



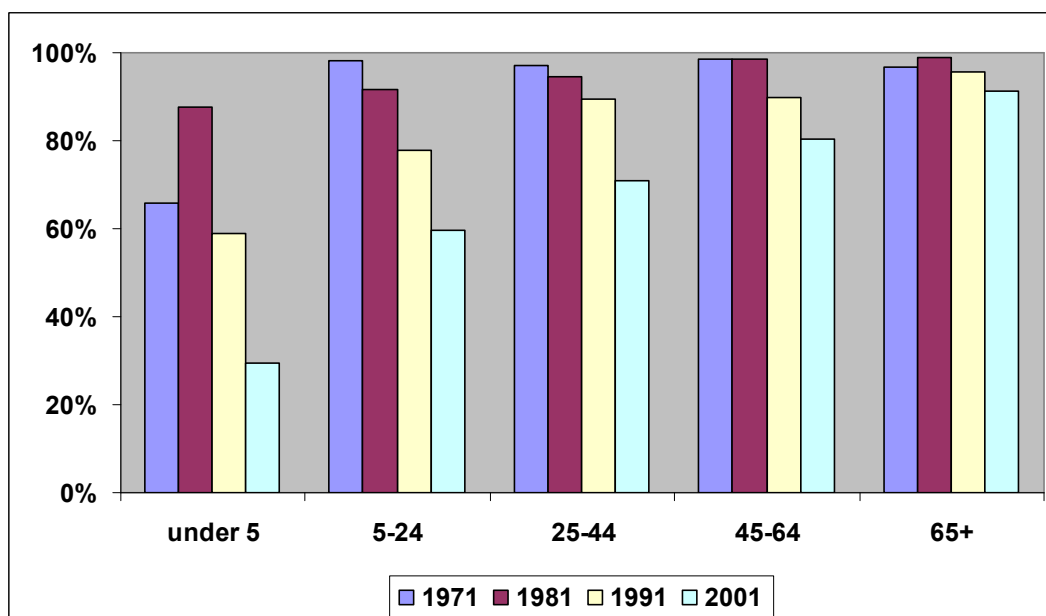


Fig. 6: Percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups between 1971 and 2001 – Area of An Taobh Siar (Westside)¹⁵

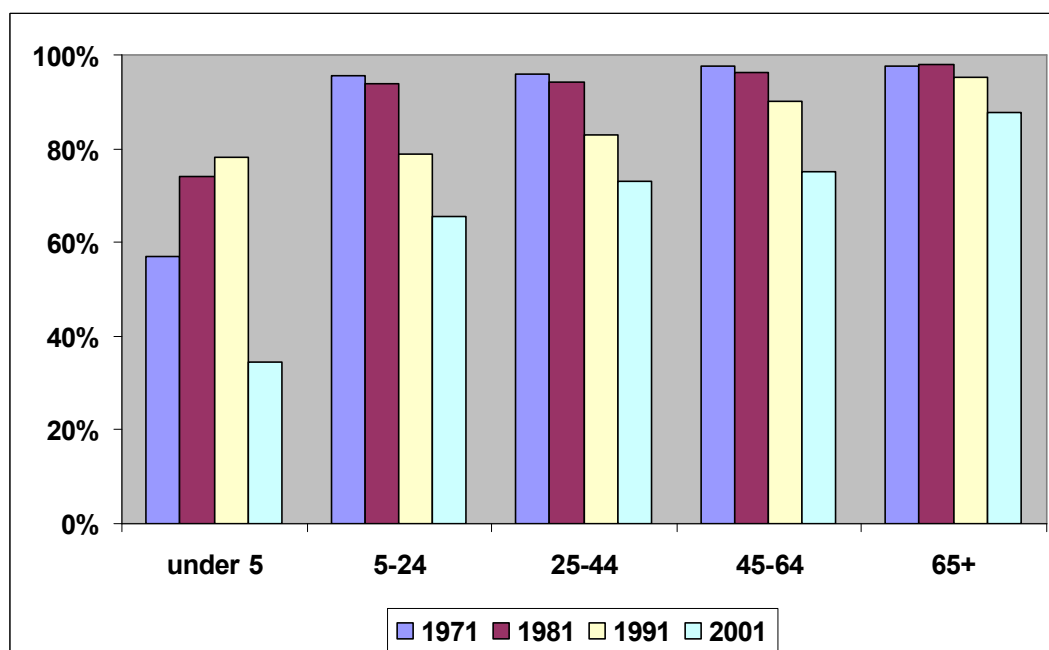
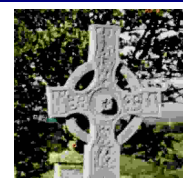


Fig. 7: Percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups between 1971 and 2001 – Area of Nis (Ness)

Educational improvements of the status of the language were slowly developing in the late 1980s. Most of these activities were centred on the communities from *Barabhas* northwards. On the other hand, the settlements of *Arnol*, *Bradhagair* and *Siabost* were slow to follow. For example, *cròileagan* were estab-

¹⁵ Under 5: Gàidhlig abilities in the age group 3-4 until 1991, in 2001 in all age groups 0-4.



lished in *Borogh* and *Nis* but not in *An Taobh Siar* at that time. GME was introduced in *Siabost* (1989), *Barabhas* (1990), *Airidhantuim* (1993) and *Lional* (1994) primary schools. In addition, *Lional* school was even designated officially a “Gaelic school” in 1998 by *Comhairle nan Eilean*¹⁶. The vast majority of pupils there went into GME and only a few children attended the so-called “mainstream” class.

No GMU, however, was opened in the primary schools of *Bradhagair* and *Cros* where the “bilingual” education prevailed. The official language policy of *Comhairle nan Eilean* was trying to ensure that *Gàidhlig*-speaking children should be literate in both Gaelic and English after primary school education. No special consideration, however, was taken to ensure that first language English speakers should be equally literate in Gaelic. The growing number of English-only children entering the so-called bilingual classrooms even threatened to jeopardise the *Gàidhlig* of the bilingual children. In 1981 for example 67.1 % of children aged between 3 and 15 were able to speak *Gàidhlig* in the islands; in 1991 this percentage plummeted to 49.7 %! Until 2001 the decrease somewhat slowed down but the census figures of 46.6 % are still far beyond those for the whole population. Around 1992 only 19.5 % of primary school pupils in *Innse Gall* (Outer Hebrides) were fluent *Gàidhlig*-speakers (West Highland Free Press, 1992). The corresponding figure for those entering school was 16.8 %!! In 1998 still only 48 fluent *Gàidhlig*-speakers entered primary school which meant 18.0 % (Oban Times, 1998) of all first-year pupils. These facts may explain the obvious decline of *Gàidhlig*-speaking abilities also in this rural part of *Leòdhas*.

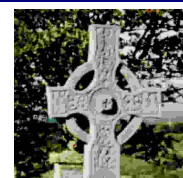
Since the 2001 census pre-school developments were slightly improved by the establishment of two new *Gàidhlig*-medium day nurseries in *Barabhas* and *Siabost* in addition to the existing provision at *Borogh* and *Nis*. In 2003/2004 for example 46 children were enrolled at the age of 3 or 4. This may be seen as a small step towards improving the state of *Gàidhlig* in the younger generation especially in the weakened language communities around *Siabost*, *Bradhagair* and *Arnol*. The *Gàidhlig*-medium rolls in *Nis* were, however, still higher than in *An Taobh Siar* (fig. 14).

The census of 2011 saw generally a decrease of *Gàidhlig* speaking in the area. The total population, however, rose since 2001 from 3.133 to 3.244. 2.726 inhabitants were born in Scotland (84.0 %) compared with 90.2 % ten years before. Accordingly, the percentage of *Gàidhlig* speakers based on the total population may be an underestimate if thinking of a “local” community.

Unfortunately, the local data about the age structure of the language community were not as detailed in 2011 as in previous censuses. In contrast to the previously used small output areas, in 2011 the somewhat larger data zones were used as smallest geographical area for age distribution analysis. Accordingly, a direct comparison with 2001 data is not always possible. However, the figures of *Gàidhlig* knowledge for the 3-15 age group and the total population is provided in table 5 for selected local data zones. The intergenerational viability of these selected census data zones shows relatively small negative values apart from a pronounced minimum of almost -15 % at *Barabhas* (Barvas).

A new feature in the 2011 census was a question about the language (other than English) used at home. This saw about 80 % of *Gàidhlig* speakers also lived in households where the language was used. This information is also provided in table 5.

¹⁶ This designation was limited to five schools in the island; the remaining “Gaelic schools” were situated in *Uig* parish of *Leòdhas* (Lewis) and in *Staoinebrig* in *Uibhist a Deas* (South Uist).



Census Data Zone	An Taobh Siar & Nis – Census 2011					Gàidhlig as home language (% of speakers)
	Knowledge of Gàidhlig					
	Young age (3-15)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	
Siabost & Bradhagair (Shawbost & Bragar)	55	64.0%	413	67.2%	- 3.2 %	88.7 %
Barabhas (Barvas)	59	54.1%	494	68.6%	- 14.5 %	86.9 %
Gabhunn & Siadar (Galson & Shader)	55	67.9%	541	73.4%	- 5.5 %	86.4 %
Suainebost (Swanibost)	63	72.4%	474	73.4%	- 1.0 %	92.0 %
Nis (Ness)	81	66.9%	552	71.0%	- 4.0 %	88.5 %
<i>In comparison:</i> Na h- Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles)	48.8 %		61.2 %		- 12.4 %	76.8 %

Table 5: Intergenerational viability and Gàidhlig as home language in selected census data zones in comparison with the whole Na h-Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles) according to census data of 2011

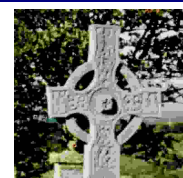
2.3 Development of literacy in Gàidhlig between 1971 and 2011

Information on other aspects of language use became available from 1971 onwards: Census questions were introduced on the ability to read or write Gàidhlig (see tables 6 and 7 below).

	Number of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to read Gàidhlig					Percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to read Gàidhlig				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
An Taobh Siar (Westside)	1510	1478	1194	944	692	85.3%	86.6%	80.2%	81.8%	78.5%
Nis (Ness)	1570	1628	1241	941	904	84.6%	87.3%	80.8%	81.8%	78.4%

Table 6: Number of people able to read Gàidhlig and Gàidhlig readers as % of Gàidhlig-speakers (1971-2011)

Generally, literacy in the language is very high which can be explained by the traditional use of Gàidhlig in the church and the comparatively intensive school efforts in the area. The latter were improved considerably between 1971 and 2001 as figures 8 and 9 show clearly regarding reading abilities in different age groups. The low values for primary school age (5-11) in 1971 underline also the unsatisfactory education policy before the establishment of *Comhairle nan Eilean*. In 2011 no real changes in literacy were reported, neither in reading nor in writing abilities.



	Number of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to write Gàidhlig					Percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to write Gàidhlig				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
An Taobh Siar (Westside)	825	1178	832	728	559	48.0%	64.5%	55.9%	63.1%	63.5%
Nis (Ness)	905	1257	1006	731	753	48.8%	67.4%	65.5%	63.6%	65.3%

Table 7: Number of people able to write Gàidhlig and Gàidhlig writers as % of speakers (1971-2011)

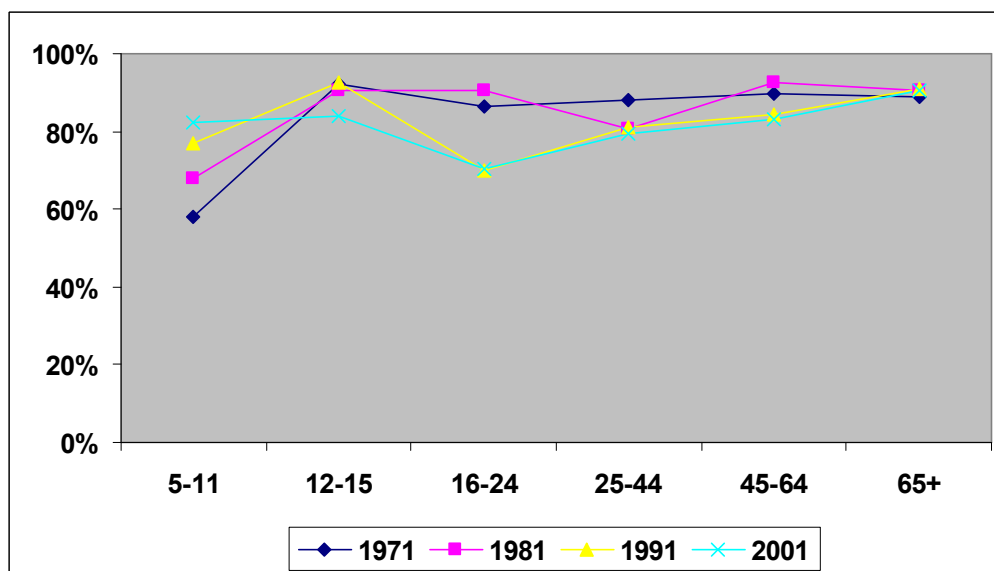


Fig. 8: Persons able to read Gàidhlig as a percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups (1971-2001): An Taobh Siar

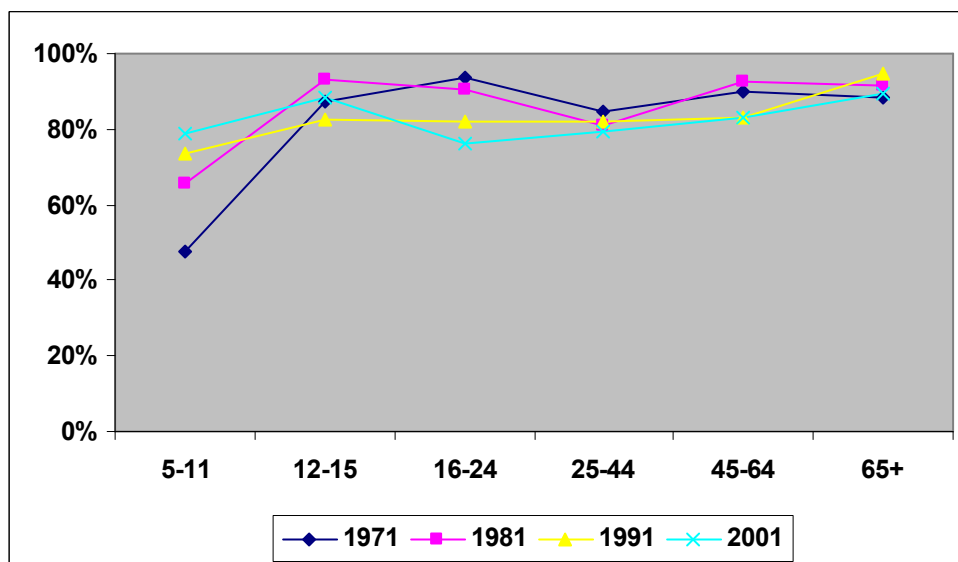
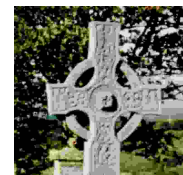


Fig. 9: Persons able to read Gàidhlig as a percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups (1971-2001): Nis



3 Digression: The Situation of 2001 in Focus

Census results for 2001 were the most comprehensive and detailed information base ever provided for Scotland. This was also true for the inclusion of questions on *Gàidhlig* language knowledge. Two new aspects were introduced:

1. Persons were asked whether they were “able to understand spoken Gaelic”.
2. Children under the age of 3 were enumerated regarding their language abilities.

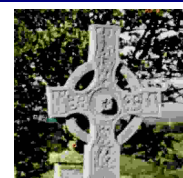
IMPORTANT NOTICE: The more recent census data of 2011 were not as detailed as 2001 regarding generational differences in language use. Therefore 2001 is used here as baseline for research purposes.

The following sections will describe generally the distribution of language abilities (inter-generational and community by community) and the specific conditions of the younger age groups in local primary school catchments.

3.1 General overview: *Gàidhlig* language capabilities in 2001

The distribution of language abilities both geographically and between generations differed slightly between *An Taobh Siar* and *Nis*. In general, the following conclusions may be drawn from the 2001 census information:

- ***An Taobh Siar*:** Both understanding and speaking *Gàidhlig* was gradually decreasing with younger age (fig 10). There was a marked difference in *Gàidhlig*-speaking percentage between 2001 and 1991 by almost 14 % for the whole population and a staggering loss of more than 26 % at primary school age (table 7). The new category of understanding spoken *Gàidhlig*, however, still provided a very high proportion of the inhabitants of over 81 %. Inter-generational difference (table 8) between those aged 3 to 24 and those for the total population here is at an unfavourable rate at -11.2 %. Small area statistics for census output areas (table 16) gave more local detail. Here the share of the population being able to speak the language ranged from roughly 60 % in *Arnol* to some 88 % in *Barabhas* (Barvas). The corresponding figures for the „understands spoken Gaelic” category varied between around 71 % in *Bradhagair* and almost 96 % in *Siadar Iarach*. Looking at the overall picture (fig. 11) most of the population lived in neighbourhoods where over 80 % knew at least some *Gàidhlig* and the rest of the inhabitants lived in neighbourhoods where between 65 % and 80 % knew the language. 21 children below the age of three (46.7 %) were recorded with some knowledge of *Gàidhlig*. The new category of “understanding spoken Gaelic” in 2001 gave additional 121 persons (7.8 %) in the area who were at least competent in some aspects of the language in addition to the 1,154 (71.6 %) *Gàidhlig*-speakers.
- ***Nis*:** Both understanding and speaking *Gàidhlig* was uniformly the norm through all generations except pre-school age (fig 11). The language ability distribution according to generation had no marked tendency to decrease towards the younger speakers but increases in primary and secondary school age. Between 1991 and 2001 the speaking ability of primary school children did stay the same at around 65 %, this was a rare phenomenon in the islands. Understanding spoken *Gàidhlig* was still widespread in all age groups (fig. 11). The intergenerational difference of percentages at -3.1 % was by far not as high as in neighbouring *An Taobh Siar* – the language here is more strongly maintained. The local detail of census output areas showed those being able to speak the language ranging from a share of roughly 65 % in *Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh* (Five-penny Borge) to some 82 % in *Còig Peighinnean*. The corresponding figures for the „understands spoken Gaelic” category ranged from around 81 % in *Tabost* to more than 97 % in *Còig Peighinnean*. Fig. 12 outlines that about two thirds of the population lived in neighbourhoods



where over 80 % of the people knew at least some *Gàidhlig*. 17 children (50.0 %) below the age of 3 were recorded with some knowledge of *Gàidhlig*. The new category of “understanding spoken Gaelic” in 2001 gave 112 persons (7.2 %) in the area who were at least competent in some aspects of the language in addition to the 1,150 *Gàidhlig*-speakers (73.4 %) in *Nis*.

Overall literacy levels were comparable in both areas in 2001 with more than 80 % able to read and well over 60 % of *Gàidhlig*-speakers able to write the language.

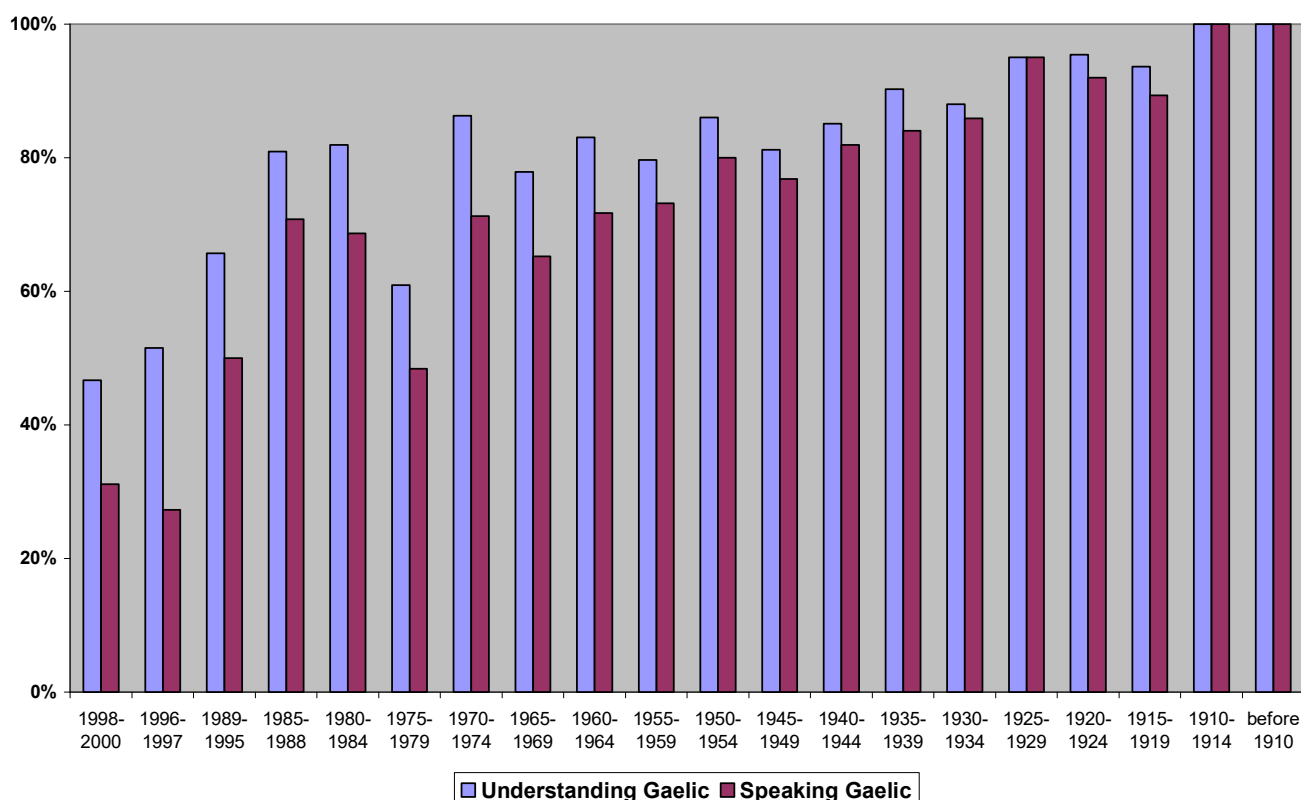
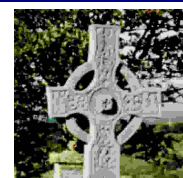


Fig. 10: Percentage of population able to understand or speak *Gàidhlig* and year of birth – *An Taobh Siar* (Westside) according to Census 2001

Age group	2001						1991		Diff. 2001 – 1991
	Knowing ¹⁷ <i>Gàidhlig</i>		Able to speak & read <i>Gàidhlig</i>		Able to speak <i>Gàidhlig</i>		Able to speak <i>Gàidhlig</i>		
0-2	21	46.7 %	1	2.2 %	14	31.1 %	n/a	n/a	n/a
3-4	17	51.5 %	2	6.1 %	9	27.3 %	23	59.0 %	- 31.7 %
5-11	82	64.1 %	51	41.0 %	63	49.2 %	128	75.3 %	- 26.1 %
12-15	69	80.2 %	51	59.6 %	61	71.9 %	81	77.9 %	- 6.0 %
16-24	105	73.4 %	62	43.4 %	87	60.8 %	152	79.5 %	- 18.7 %
3-24	273	70.0 %	166	42.6 %	221	56.7 %	384	76.2 %	- 19.5 %
All ages	1,275	81.4 %	944	60.0 %	1,154	73.6 %	1,488	87.1 %	- 13.5 %
Difference	- 11.4 %		- 17.4 %		- 16.9 %		- 10.9 %		

Table 8: Knowledge of *Gàidhlig* in younger age groups in *An Taobh Siar* (Westside) in 2001 and 1991

¹⁷ Persons able to understand spoken *Gàidhlig* and/or able to speak, read or write *Gàidhlig*.



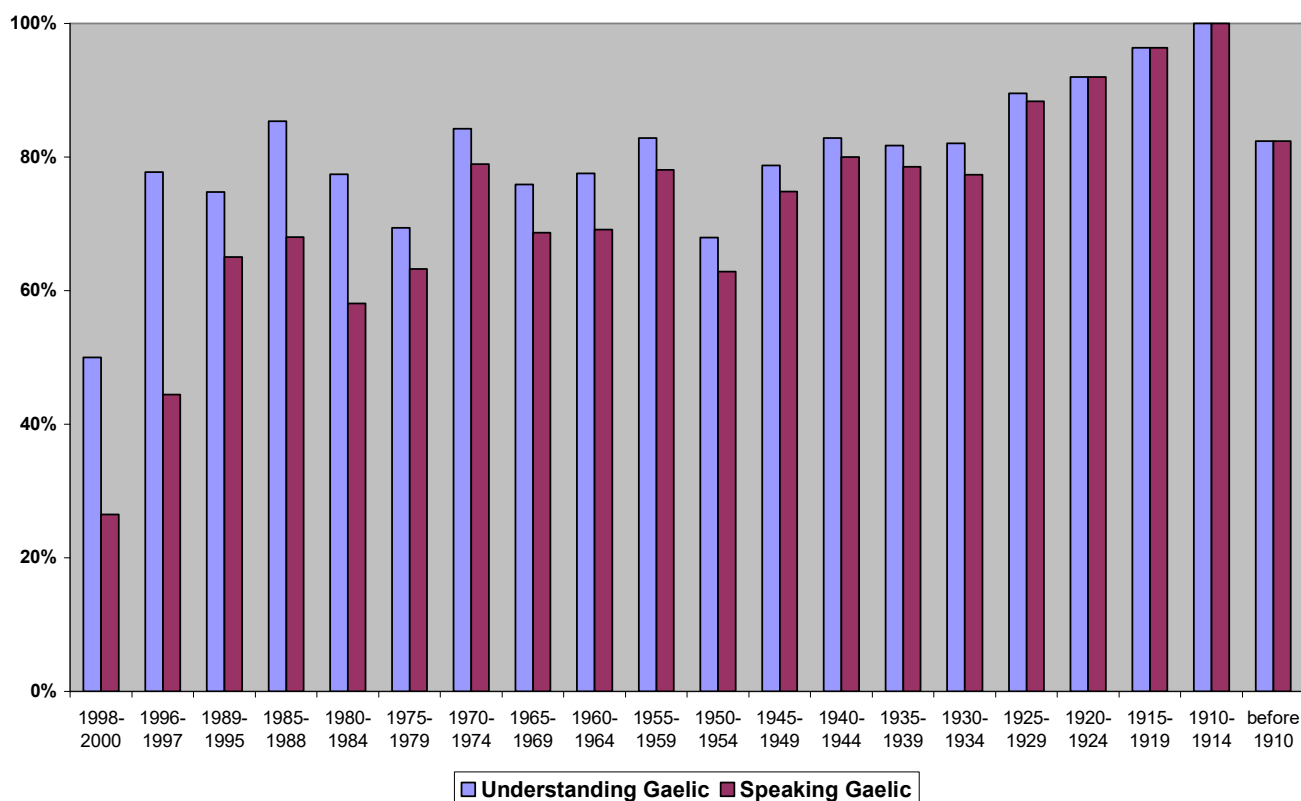
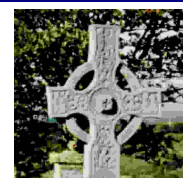


Fig. 11: Percentage of population able to understand or speak *Gàidhlig* and year of birth – *Nis* (Ness) according to Census 2001

Age group	2001						1991		Diff. 2001 – 1991
	Knowing ¹⁸ <i>Gàidhlig</i>		Able to speak & read <i>Gàidhlig</i>		Able to speak <i>Gàidhlig</i>		Able to speak <i>Gàidhlig</i>		
0-2	17	50.0 %	0	0.0 %	9	26.5 %	n/a	n/a	n/a
3-4	21	77.8 %	1	3.7 %	12	44.4 %	25	78.1 %	- 33.7 %
5-11	83	76.1 %	57	51.5 %	71	65.1 %	103	65.0 %	+ 0.1 %
12-15	67	85.9 %	47	60.0 %	53	68.0 %	87	84.5 %	- 16.5 %
16-24	84	73.0 %	51	44.3 %	69	60.0 %	187	86.6 %	- 26.6 %
3-24	255	77.5 %	156	47.4 %	205	62.3 %	402	79.0 %	- 16.7 %
All ages	1,262	80.6 %	943	60.2 %	1,150	73.4 %	1,536	86.5 %	- 13.1 %
Difference	- 3.1 %		- 12.8 %		- 11.1 %		- 7.5 %		

Table 9: Knowledge of *Gàidhlig* in younger age groups in *Nis* (Ness) in 2001 and 1991

¹⁸ Persons able to understand spoken *Gàidhlig* and/or able to speak, read or write *Gàidhlig*.



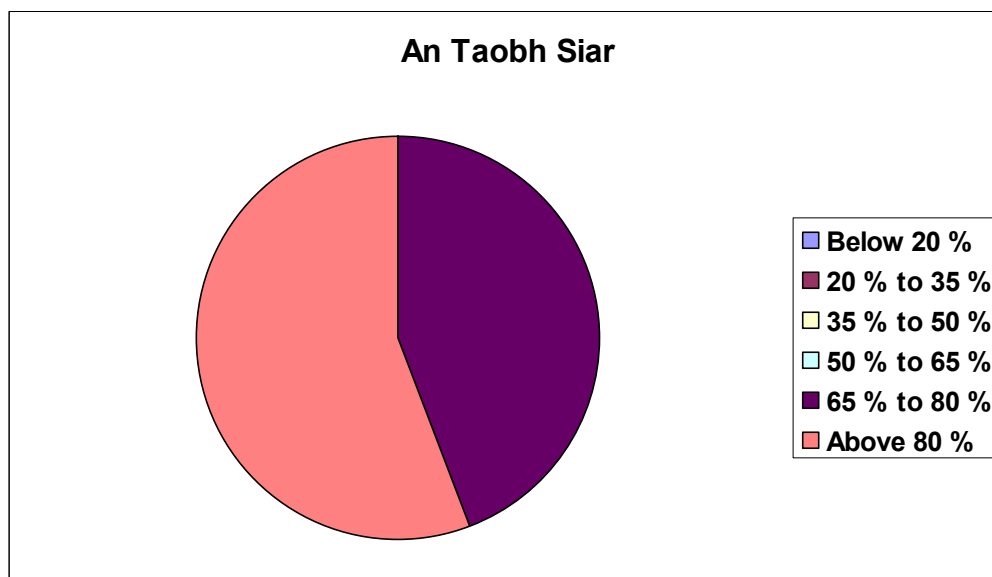


Fig. 12: Share of population living in neighbourhoods (census output areas) with different intensity of language knowledge in *An Taobh Siar* (Westside) according to Census 2001

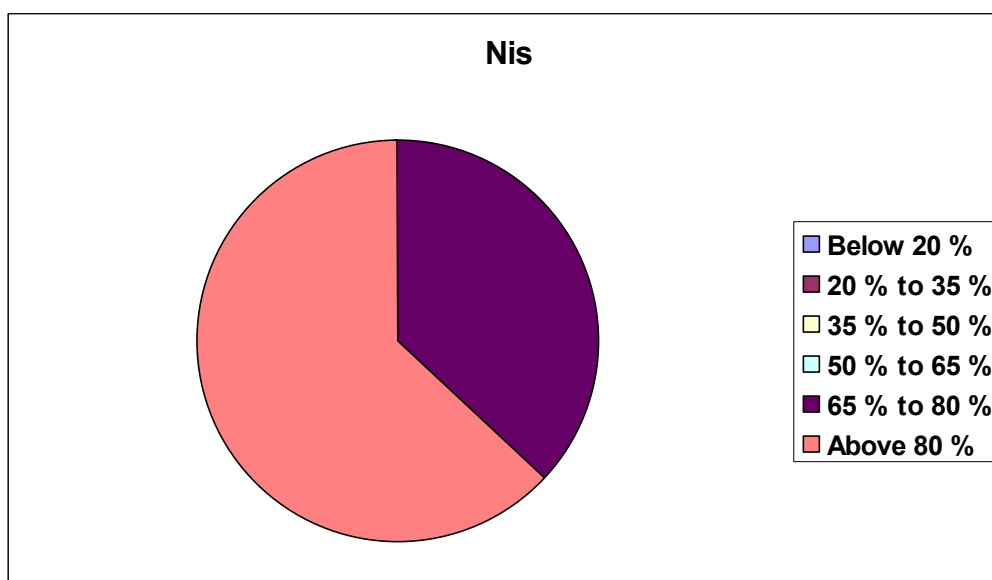
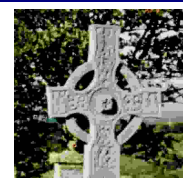


Fig. 13: Share of population living in neighbourhoods (census output areas) with different intensity of language knowledge in *Nis* (Ness) according to Census 2001

3.2 Children with knowledge of Gàidhlig in primary school catchments

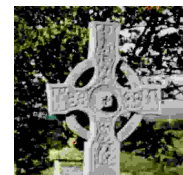
The statistics for the catchment areas of local primary schools show the influence of local authority and parental attitudes towards *Gàidhlig*. It is possible to calculate data for different age groups and for the purpose of this investigation they have been attributed to pre-school age (0-4), primary school age (5-11) and secondary school age (12-15). As an additional indicator a column is provided in table 9 with the age group of 24-35 which is meant to represent the language abilities of possible parents.



Generally, the following conclusions may be drawn for the five school catchments involved:

- Pre-school children: *Cròileagan* at the time of the census were established in the central and northern parts of the area (*Borbh* and *Nis*). This was underlined by the comparatively low percentages for the school catchments of *Siabost* and *Bradhagair*.
- Primary school children: The relatively “poor” performance of the two western primary schools is evident also in the primary school statistics of table 10. There were four primary schools with GME in the area: *Siabost* (7 pupils in 2000/2001), *Barabhas* (20), *Airidhantuim* (17) and *Lional* (34). In total 78 GME children were registered in the 2000/2001 school year (out of 238 children), this means a share of 32.8 %. The remaining pupils experienced “bilingual” mainstream education which seemed to work in *Cros* but not very successful in *Bradhagair* and *Siabost*.
- Secondary school children: In secondary stages S1 and S2 47 out of 91 pupils were learning *Gàidhlig* as “fluent speakers”, the rest as “learners” in the two junior secondary departments at *Siabost* and *Lional*. Only 6 pupils at *Lional* had gone through GME in primary schools before entering secondary education. Therefore, the remaining approximately 15 fluent speakers in S1 and S2 probably were *Gàidhlig* mother tongue speakers from *Nis*. At *Siabost* 22 pupils had experienced GME during their primary school years (including those from *Carlabhagh* primary in *Uig* parish) and this correlates very strongly with the number of 25 children who got *Gàidhlig* lessons as “fluent speakers”.
- Parents: In the whole district more than 75 % of those aged between 25 and 34 knew some *Gàidhlig*. These percentages did match the language intensities among primary school children at *Barabhas*, *Airidhantuim*, *Cros* and *Lional*. In these catchments the number of children at pre-school age with knowledge of the language was also at a comparative level. However, intergenerational language transmission at *Siabost* and *Bradhagair* was not at all satisfactory.

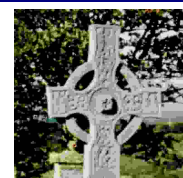
The effect of language acquisition and maintenance was positively influenced by educational provision in the larger part of the parish. The western part of *An Taobh Siar*, however, was setting the negative example.



Knowledge of Gàidhlig (Census 2001) in Selected Primary School Catchment Areas ¹⁹								
Primary School(s)	“Pre-School” Age 0-4		“Primary” Age 5-11		“Secondary” Age 12-15		“Parents” Age 25-34	
<i>Siabost</i> (Shawbost)	10	45.5 %	24	58.5 %	13	72.2 %	33	80.5 %
<i>Bradhagair</i> (Bragar)	7	31.8 %	24	54.6 %	14	73.7 %	41	78.9 %
<i>Barabhas</i> (Barvas)	18	62.1 %	25	75.8 %	27	79.4 %	39	83.0 %
<i>Airidhantuaim</i> (Airidhantuim)	13	68.4 %	33	78.6 %	30	90.9 %	51	82.3 %
<i>Cros</i> (Cross)	10	55.6 %	22	75.9 %	26	92.9 %	35	87.5 %
<i>Lional</i> (Lionel)	18	62.1 %	37	77.1 %	26	81.3 %	49	74.2 %

Table 10: Number and percentage of persons with knowledge of Gàidhlig in selected age groups for primary school catchment areas according to the census 2001

¹⁹ Percentages above 50% are given in bold figures.



4 Future Perspectives – 2011 and beyond

The 2011 census results can also be used to predict future developments because major underlying facts cannot be changed within a time span of a few years. *Nis* and *An Taobh Siar* still belong to the strongest Gàidhlig-speaking communities in Scotland. Nevertheless, the negative values for the language viability indicator LVI²⁰ point to unsatisfactory intergenerational language transmission.

Area	An Taobh Siar & Nis – Census 2011					
	Knowledge of Gàidhlig					Gàidhlig as home language (% of speakers)
	Young age (3-15)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	
An Taobh Siar (Westside)	114	58.5%	907	67.9%	- 9.5 %	87.8 %
Nis (Ness)	199	68.9%	1567	72.5%	- 3.7 %	88.8 %
In comparison: Na h- Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles)	48.8 %		61.2 %		- 12.4 %	76.8 %

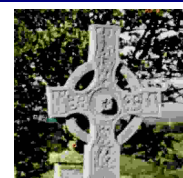
Table 11: Intergenerational viability and Gàidhlig as home language in *An Taobh Siar* (Westside) und *Nis* (Ness) in comparison with the whole *Na h-Eileanan an Iar* (Western Isles) according to census data of 2011

Intergenerational viability is overall healthier in *Nis* than in *An Taobh Siar*.

Future educational progress: The overall temporal evolution of Gàidhlig-medium primary education is depicted in fig. 14 for the period 1992-2023. For example, in the 2022-23 session 44 pupils (55.7 %) attended the GMU in *Lional*, 53 in *Barabhas* (61.6 %) and 22 pupils (47.8 %) were recorded in the *Sia-bost* GMU.

In conclusion: The north-western part of *Leòdhas* remains still a comparatively strong part of the “Gàidhlig-speaking heartland”, especially in the district of *Nis* and around *Barabhas*. But deterioration tendencies are clearly seen in *An Taobh Siar* - namely in *Arnol* and *Bradhagair*.

²⁰ LVI: The “Language Viability Indicator” is a measure of the prospective reproductivity of language speakers in a community. It is here defined on the basis of knowledge of Gàidhlig in the census and is calculated by the difference of percentages between the age group below 16 years of age and the total population.



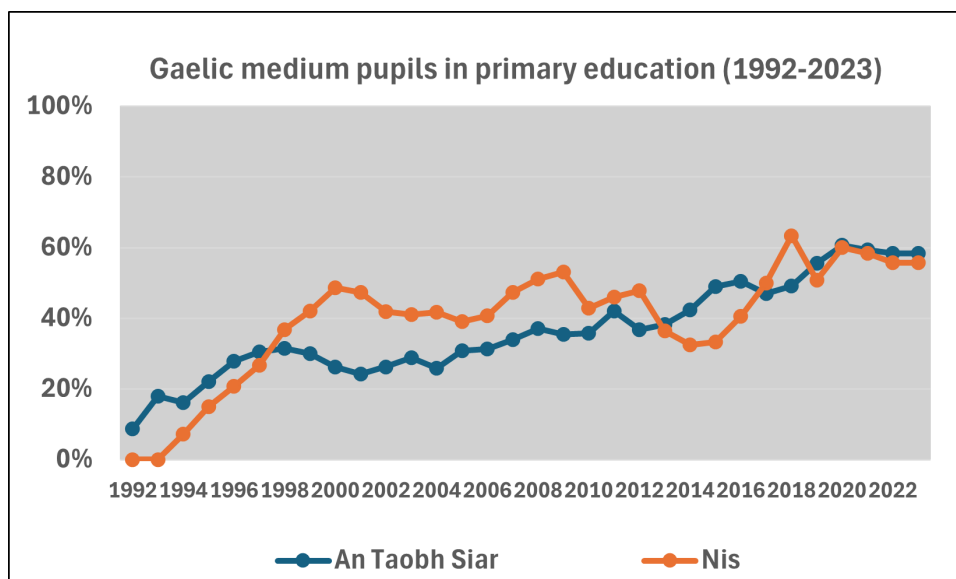
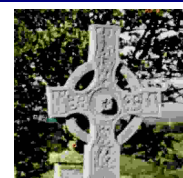


Fig. 14: Share of primary school children attending *Gàidhlig*-medium classes in *An Taobh Siar* and *Nis* (September 1992 – September 2023)²¹

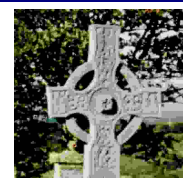
²¹ Gaelic Dept, University of Strathclyde.



I. Supplementary Tables

Gaelic and Gaelic only between 1881 and 1901: <i>An Taobh Siar & Nis</i>	Total Popula- tion	Gàidhlig and Eng- lish	Gàidhlig but no English
Census/Selected Area			
1881 (Speaking “habitually” Gaelic)	5,325	5,119	
----- Villages (included in the above) ---			
<i>Barabhas Iarach & Barabhas Uarach</i> (Lower Barvas & Upper Barvas) <i>Vi</i>	561	556	
<i>Bradthagair bho Thuath & Bradthagair bho Dheas</i> (North Bragar & South Bragar) <i>Vi</i>	635	628	
<i>Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh</i> (Fifepenny Borve) <i>Vi</i>	308	288	
<i>An Cnoc Àrd & Eòropaidh</i> (Knockaird & Eoropie) <i>Vi</i>	408	401	
<i>Suainebost</i> (Swanibost) <i>Vi</i> ²²	1,495	1,382	
----- Ecclesiastic parishes (included in the above) ---	2,600	2,548	
<i>Barabhas</i> (Barvas)	2,725	2,571	
<i>Cros</i> (Cross)			
1891	5,099	1,555	3,901
----- Villages (included in the above) ---			
<i>Arnol</i> (Arnol) <i>Vi</i>	320	152	142
<i>Barabhas Iarach & Barabhas Uarach</i> (Lower Barvas & Upper Barvas) <i>Vi</i>	554	372	155
<i>Bradthagair bho Thuath & Bradthagair bho Dheas</i> (North Bragar & South Bragar) <i>Vi</i>	652	260	372
<i>Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh</i> (Fifepenny Borve) <i>Vi</i>	357	5	352
<i>An Cnoc Àrd & Eòropaidh</i> (Knockaird & Eoropie) <i>Vi</i>	380	95	276
<i>Suainebost</i> (Swanibost) <i>Vi</i>	1,589	127	1,414
----- Ecclesiastic parishes (included in the above) ---	2,792	1,097	1,556
<i>Barabhas</i> (Barvas)	2,907	458	2,345
<i>Cros</i> (Cross)			
1901	6,736	2,993	3,143
----- Villages (included in the above) ---			
<i>Arnol</i> (Arnol) <i>Vi</i>	347	229	91
<i>Barabhas Iarach & Barabhas Uarach</i> (Lower Barvas & Upper Barvas) <i>Vi</i>	453	146	287
<i>Bradthagair bho Thuath & Bradthagair bho Dheas</i> (North Bragar & South Bragar) <i>Vi</i>	685	239	405
<i>Dail bho Dheas</i> (Dell South) <i>Vi</i>	346	84	245
<i>Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh</i> (Fifepenny Borve) <i>Vi</i>	360	155	175
<i>An Cnoc Àrd & Eòropaidh</i> (Knockaird & Eoropie) <i>Vi</i>	573	117	389
<i>Siadar & Baile an Truiseil</i> (Shader & Ballantrushal) <i>Vi</i>	647	212	383
<i>Siabost bho Thuath</i> (Shawbost North) <i>Vi</i>	339	234	70
<i>Suainebost</i> (Swanibost) <i>Vi</i>	1,729	687	897
----- Ecclesiastic parishes (included in the above) ---	2,872	1,413	1,242
<i>Barabhas</i> (Barvas)	3,043	1,033	1,725
<i>Cros</i> (Cross)			
----- Electoral areas (included in the above) ---	3,488	1,241	1,933
<i>Barabhas a Tuath</i> (Barvas North)	3,234	1,752	1,210
<i>Barabhas a Deas</i> (Barvas South)			

Table 12: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig between 1881 and 1901 – selected areas (civil parish, ecclesiastic parishes, villages and electoral areas)

²² Figures for this “village” include all townships between *Cros* (Cross) and *Port Nis* (Port Ness).

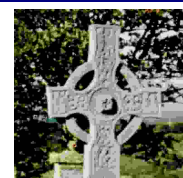
Gaelic and Gaelic only between 1911 and 1971: <i>An Taobh Siar & Nis</i>	Total Popula- tion	<i>Gàidhlig</i> and Eng- lish	<i>Gàidhlig</i> but no English
Census/Selected Area			
1911	6,953	4,284	2,136
1921	6,660	4,969	1,241
1931	5,876	4,558	1,007
1951	5,111	4,443	366
1961	4,331	3,950	149
<i>Barabhas a Tuath</i> (Barvas North) CCED	2,241	2,032	88
<i>Barabhas a Deas</i> (Barvas South) CCED	2,090	1,918	61
1971²³	3,983	3,625	~35
<i>Barabhas a Tuath</i> (Barvas North) CCED	2,060	1,855	*
<i>Barabhas a Deas</i> (Barvas South) CCED	1,920	1,770	*

Table 13: Number of persons speaking *Gàidhlig* between 1911 and 1971 – selected areas (civil parish and county council electoral divisions)

District Council of <i>Leòdhas</i> (Census 1961)					
Age	Population	Speaking <i>Gàidhlig</i> only		Speaking both <i>Gàidhlig</i> and English	
3-4	488	203	41.6 %	203	41.6 %
5 – 9	1,252	37	3.0 %	1,079	86.2 %
10 – 14	1,554	-	-	1,451	93.4 %
15 – 24	1,579	3	0.2 %	1,384	87.7 %
25 – 44	3,461	15	0.4 %	3,176	91.8 %
45 – 64	4,776	18	0.4 %	4,618	96.7 %
65 and over	2,867	139	4.8 %	2,682	93.5 %
3 and over	15,977	415	2.6 %	14,593	91.3 %

Table 14: Number of persons speaking *Gàidhlig* for the area of the former Lewis District Council in 1961 – results exclude returns from the Small Burgh of Stornoway

²³ Due to rounding of figures to the nearest 0 and 5 it is impossible to provide exact “Gaelic only” numbers in 1971. The figures in the table should be read as “between 3,619 and 3,631” and “between 29 and 41” respectively.



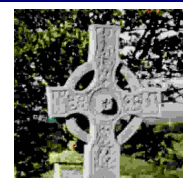
Percentage of population speaking Gàidhlig but no English in island parishes of former Ross & Cromarty ²⁴					
Age group	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
3-4	74.4 %	73.2 %	76.8 %	65.5 %	63.0 %
5-9	56.1 %	44.5 %	43.8 %	24.6 %	16.7 %
10-14	32.5 %	17.4 %	9.2 %	3.6 %	1.6 %
15-19	34.4 %	11.8 %	4.6 %	0.8 %	0.4 %
20-24	38.1 %	15.0 %	4.2 %	0.8 %	0.5 %
25-29	46.6 %	17.7 %	5.7 %	1.3 %	0.8 %
30-34	48.9 %	24.4 %	11.8 %	2.0 %	1.3 %
35-39	49.4 %	33.8 %	16.1 %	3.4 %	1.3 %
40-44	57.2 %	39.8 %	25.9 %	5.7 %	2.5 %
45-49	61.0 %	38.2 %	34.2 %	11.1 %	3.8 %
50-54	68.2 %	50.5 %	40.8 %	17.1 %	8.3 %
55-59	65.7 %	52.9 %	41.4 %	26.8 %	14.0 %
60-64	73.9 %	61.5 %	51.9 %	35.3 %	23.6 %
65-69	71.8 %	65.3 %	57.7 %	37.9 %	34.9 %
70-74	72.1 %	67.2 %	66.3 %	51.9 %	43.5 %
75-79	77.5 %	69.4 %	70.2 %	61.2 %	44.0 %
80 and over	83.0 %	72.9 %	76.9 %	65.6 %	57.4 %
Total “Gaelic only”	52.2 %	35.6 %	28.3 %	15.5 %	12.8 %

Table 15: Percentage of persons speaking Gàidhlig but no English (aged three years and over) for different age groups in island parishes of former Ross & Cromarty according to census data from 1891 to 1931

Number of persons and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in former County Council Electoral Divisions (Ross & Cromarty) (Population aged 3 years and over)						
Area	1961/71 Code	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Barabhas (Deas) (Barvas (South) CCED)	BS	1,969 98.3 %	1,784 96.7 %	1,733 95.8 %	1,488 87.1 %	1,140 74.4 %
Barabhas (Tuath) (Barvas (North) CCED)	BN	2,120 98.7 %	1,876 95.5 %	1,865 95.0 %	1,536 86.5 %	1,141 74.4 %

Table 16: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig and all Gàidhlig-speakers as a percentage of the population (aged three years and over) for pre-1975 county council electoral divisions (CCED) according to census data from 1961 to 2001

²⁴ Island of *Leòdhais* (Lewis) with civil parishes of *Barabhas* (Barvas), *Na Lochan* (Lochs), *Steòrnabhagh* (Stornoway) and *Uig* (Scotland Census Office, 1932).



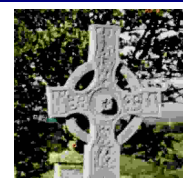
Gaelic knowledge according to age groups and whether born in Scotland <i>Census 1981: Barabhas</i> ²⁵						
Map No	Census output area ²⁶	Age groups				Born in Scotland ²⁷
		3 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65+	
01+02	<i>Siabost (Shawbost)</i>	83 89.2%	61 95.3%	70 98.6%	70 100.0%	285 97.9%
03+04	<i>Eibhig & Pairc Shiaboist</i>	73 81.1%	45 83.3%	64 100.0%	52 100.0%	234 95.5%
05+06	<i>Bradhagair & Bradhagair bho Dheas</i>	80 95.2%	47 100.0%	59 98.3%	56 96.6%	240 97.6%
07+08	<i>Bradhagair bho Thuath & Arnol</i>	57 98.3%	43 95.6%	61 98.4%	64 95.5%	221 96.5%
09+10	<i>Brù & Barabhas Iarach</i>	102 97.1%	62 92.5%	58 98.3%	60 100.0%	275 96.5%
11+12	<i>Barabhas & Barabhas Uarach</i>	59 93.7%	54 94.7%	49 100.0%	41 100.0%	199 95.7%
13+14	<i>Siadar Iarach & Siadar Uarach</i>	62 92.5%	62 100.0%	69 92.0%	69 98.6%	261 97.8%
51+52	<i>Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh & Bail Àrd Bhuirgh</i>	76 87.4%	32 78.0%	53 96.4%	42 100.0%	204 95.3%
53	<i>Gabh sunn (Galson)</i>	66 100.0%	49 100.0%	61 96.8%	50 100.0%	223 97.8%
54	<i>Dail</i>	60 89.6%	42 91.3%	44 89.8%	66 100.0%	204 94.9%
55+56	<i>Cros & Suainebost</i>	86 90.5%	63 92.6%	69 95.8%	64 95.5%	279 96.2%
57+58	<i>Tabost & Lional</i>	84 92.3%	54 93.1%	64 100.0%	51 96.2%	253 94.8%
59	<i>Adabroc</i>	98 97.0%	62 100.0%	64 97.0%	64 94.1%	278 96.9%
60+61	<i>Sgiogarstaigh & Port Nis</i>	57 89.1%	26 78.8%	54 98.2%	54 100.0%	192 95.5%
62+63	<i>Còig Peighinnean & Èoropaidh</i>	41 89.1%	44 97.8%	50 92.6%	69 94.5%	203 96.2%
Total	Barabhas (Barvas)	1,094 92.6%	749 94.1%	897 97.5%	873 98.5%	3,573 96.4%

Table 17: Population with Gàidhlig knowledge in output areas of *Barabhas* (Barvas) according to age group and birthplace in 1981

²⁵ Figures may not add up exactly because of measures to keep returns anonymous.

²⁶ A more detailed list of all locations in each output area is to be found in section IV.

²⁷ Scottish born population aged 3 years and over.



Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers ²⁸ <i>An Taobh Siar</i>							
Map No	Census output area ²⁹	1981		1991		2001	
01	<i>Siabost bho Dheas</i>	285	96.3 %	113	84.3 %	83	67.5 %
02	<i>Siabost bho Thuath</i>			99	85.3 %	64	81.1 %
03	<i>Eibhig</i>	232	92.8 %	226	92.3 %	112	65.5 %
04	<i>Pairc Shiaboist</i>					58	85.3 %
05	<i>Bradhagair bho Dheas</i>	242	97.2 %	127	92.0 %	94	78.3 %
06	<i>Bradhagair</i>			74	90.2 %	44	60.4 %
07	<i>Bradhagair bho Thuath</i>	219	94.4 %	86	90.5 %	88	81.5 %
08	<i>Arnol</i>			118	80.3 %	72	59.5 %
09	<i>Brù</i>	284	98.6 %	132	88.0 %	102	77.9 %
10	<i>Barabhas Iarach</i>			92	73.6 %	84	73.0 %
11	<i>Barabhas Uarach</i>	201	96.6 %	219	82.6 %	71	60.7 %
12	<i>Barabhas</i>					107	85.6 %
13	<i>Siadar Iarach</i>	261	95.3 %	88	86.3 %	84	84.9 %
14	<i>Siadar Uarach</i>			114	82.0 %	91	77.8 %

Table 18: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers for the census output areas in *An Taobh Siar* (Westside) according to data from 1981 to 2001

<i>An Taobh Siar: Gàidhlig-speaking in Age Groups (1971-2001)</i>								
Age group	1971 ³⁰		1981		1991		2001	
0-2³¹	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	14	31.1 %
3-4	25 (+8)	66.0 %	35	87.5 %	23	59.0 %	9	27.3 %
5-24	465 (+2)	98.3 %	479	91.7 %	361	77.7 %	212	59.6 %
25-44	330 (+0)	97.1 %	375	94.4 %	394	89.5 %	271	70.8 %
45-64	595 (+1)	98.5 %	431	98.4 %	342	90.0 %	348	80.4 %
65 +	355 (+3)	96.8 %	413	99.0 %	368	95.8 %	300	91.4 %
Total (3 years and over)	1,770 (+14)	96.7 %	1,733	95.8 %	1,488	87.1 %	1,140	74.4 %
Born in Scotland	n/a	n/a	1,715	96.8 %	1,446	88.5 %	1,123	79.2 %

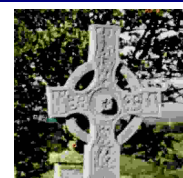
Table 19: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups in *An Taobh Siar* (Westside) according to data from 1971 to 2001

²⁸ Statistical base is the population aged 3 years and over for 1981 and 1991 and the total population in 2001.

²⁹ Information on data for individual census output areas may not be available for every census to prevent the disclosure of individuals. A more detailed list of locations for each output area is to be found in Annex D.

³⁰ Speakers of Gàidhlig but not English in 1971 are distributed in age groups according to general distribution for the counties of Inverness-shire and Ross & Cromarty (approximate numbers are given in brackets).

³¹ Information only available since 2001.



Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers ³² <i>Nis</i>							
Map No	Census output area ³³	1981		1991		2001	
51	<i>Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh</i>	202	89.8 %	163	74.4 %	37	59.7 %
52	<i>Bail Àrd Bhuirgh</i>					107	65.6 %
53	<i>Gabh sunn</i>	224	99.6 %	157	79.7 %	122	75.3 %
54	<i>Dail</i>	208	91.6 %	215	83.0 %	149	68.7 %
55	<i>Cros</i>	271	89.7 %	160	87.0 %	114	78.1 %
56	<i>Suainebost</i>			97	82.9 %	86	81.1 %
57	<i>Tabost</i>	264	99.2 %	108	89.3 %	66	68.8 %
58	<i>Lional</i>			113	85.0 %	69	78.4 %
59	<i>Adabroc</i>	284	96.3 %	191	85.3 %	150	76.5 %
60	<i>Sgiogarstaigh</i>	193	94.6 %	92	76.7 %	64	77.1 %
61	<i>Port Nis</i>			48	64.0 %	47	60.3 %
62	<i>Còig Peighinnean</i>	206	94.5 %	93	85.3 %	66	82.5 %
63	<i>Eòropaidh</i>			99	85.3 %	73	82.0 %

Table 20: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers for the census output areas in *Nis* (Ness) according to data from 1981 to 2001

<i>Nis: Gàidhlig-speaking in Age Groups (1971-2001)</i>								
Age group	1971 ³⁴		1981		1991		2001	
0-2³⁵	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	26.5 %
3-4	25 (+12)	56.9 %	34	73.9 %	25	78.1 %	12	44.4 %
5-24	440 (+4)	95.5 %	538	94.0 %	377	79.0 %	193	65.4 %
25-44	360 (+0)	96.0 %	373	94.2 %	317	82.8 %	268	73.2 %
45-64	560 (+1)	97.6 %	459	96.2 %	404	90.0 %	337	75.2 %
65 +	470 (+4)	97.7 %	461	97.9 %	413	95.2 %	331	87.8 %
Total (3 years and over)	1,855 (+21)	95.5 %	1,865	95.0 %	1,536	86.5 %	1,141	74.4 %
Born in Scotland	n/a	n/a	1,836	96.0 %	1,532	91.1 %	1,117	84.1 %

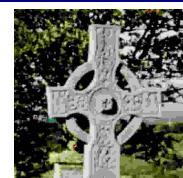
Table 21: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups in *Nis* (Ness) according to data from 1971 to 2001

³² Statistical base is the population aged 3 years and over for 1981 and 1991 and the total population in 2001.

³³ Information on data for individual census output areas may not be available for every census to prevent the disclosure of individuals. A more detailed list of locations for each output area is to be found in Annex D.

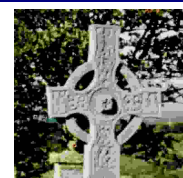
³⁴ Speakers of Gàidhlig but not English in 1971 are distributed in age groups according to general distribution for the counties of Inverness-shire and Ross & Cromarty (approximate numbers are given in brackets).

³⁵ Information only available since 2001.



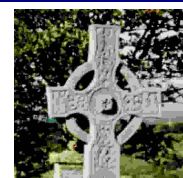
Map No.	Output Area	Knowledge of Gàidhlig in 2001					
		Young age (0-24)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	Born in Scotland (Language community indicator)
01	<i>Siabost bho Dheas</i>	15	57.7 %	93	75.6 %	- 17.9 %	84.3 %
02	<i>Siabost bho Thuath</i>	9	60.0 %	65	82.3 %	- 22.3 %	91.3 %
03	<i>Eibhig</i>	36	62.1 %	132	77.2 %	- 15.1 %	80.1 %
04	<i>Pairc Shiaboist</i>	15	100. %	62	91.2 %	+ 8.8 %	96.9 %
05	<i>Bradhagair bho Dheas</i>	22	71.0 %	105	87.5 %	- 16.5 %	91.2 %
06	<i>Bradhagair</i>	13	48.2%	51	69.9 %	- 21.7 %	71.4 %
07	<i>Bradhagair bho Thuath</i>	16	69.6 %	95	88.0 %	- 18.4 %	88.5 %
08	<i>Arnol</i>	15	40.5 %	84	69.4 %	- 28.9 %	73.0 %
09	<i>Brù</i>	33	84.6 %	112	85.5 %	- 0.9 %	88.9 %
10	<i>Barabhas Iarach</i>	25	64.1 %	91	79.1 %	- 15.0 %	79.0 %
11	<i>Barabhas Uarach</i>	24	63.2 %	82	70.1 %	- 6.9 %	74.3 %
12	<i>Barabhas</i>	30	76.9 %	114	91.2 %	- 14.3 %	91.9 %
13	<i>Siadar Iarach</i>	21	95.5 %	89	89.9 %	+ 5.6 %	96.6 %
14	<i>Siadar Uarach</i>	20	76.9 %	100	85.5 %	- 8.6 %	89.9 %

Table 22: Intergenerational viability and Gàidhlig-speakers born in Scotland in *An Taobh Siar* (Westside) according to census data of 2001



Map No.	Output Area	Knowledge of Gàidhlig in 2001					
		Young age (0-24)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	Born in Scotland (Language community indicator)
51	<i>Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh</i>	11	84.6 %	50	80.7 %	+ 3.9 %	83.3 %
52	<i>Bail Ard Bhuirgh</i>	36	73.5 %	127	77.9 %	- 4.4 %	86.6 %
53	<i>Gabh sunn</i>	25	73.5 %	132	81.5 %	- 8.0 %	89.2 %
54	<i>Dail</i>	43	72.9 %	162	74.7 %	- 1.8 %	85.1 %
55	<i>Cros</i>	36	82.9 %	123	84.3 %	- 1.4 %	84.9 %
56	<i>Suainebost</i>	15	79.0 %	90	84.9 %	- 5.9 %	90.8 %
57	<i>Tabost</i>	14	63.6 %	71	74.0 %	- 10.4 %	81.2 %
58	<i>Lional</i>	5	41.7 %	72	81.8 %	- 40.1 %	88.6 %
59	<i>Adabroc</i>	31	68.9 %	159	81.1 %	- 12.2 %	91.9 %
60	<i>Sgiogarstaigh</i>	10	66.7 %	67	80.7 %	- 14.0 %	89.3 %
61	<i>Port Nis</i>	14	73.7 %	57	73.1 %	+ 0.6 %	92.7 %
62	<i>Còig Peighinnean</i>	17	100. %	71	88.8 %	+ 11.2 %	97.1 %
63	<i>Eòropaidh</i>	17	94.4 %	81	91.0 %	+ 3.4 %	94.1 %

Table 23: Intergenerational viability and Gàidhlig-speakers born in Scotland in Nis (Ness) according to census data of 2001



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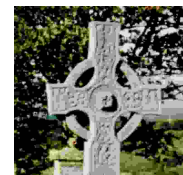
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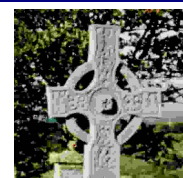
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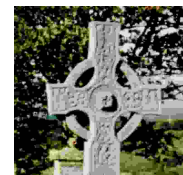
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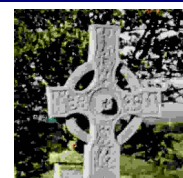
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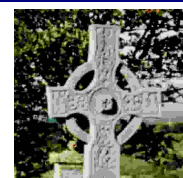
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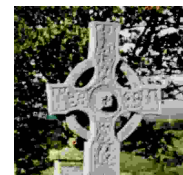
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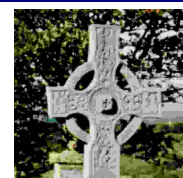
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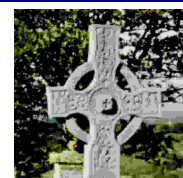
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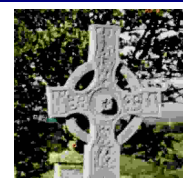
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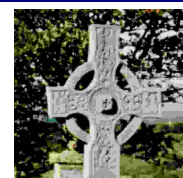
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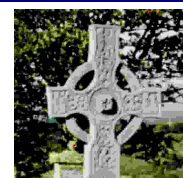
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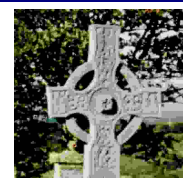
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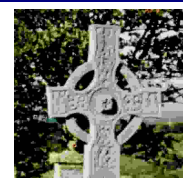
III. Some Valuable Comments about Census Information

The interpretation of census figures (derived statistics in particular) is not as straightforward as the pure numbers might suggest. The author has taken great pains to compare like with like and the calculated tables with greatest geographical detail and age group information as possible. But the differences of census questions, enumeration districts and information details between years are quite substantial. It is therefore very important to notice the following facts:

1. Questions on *Gàidhlig* have been raised in census enumerations in Scotland since 1881. In this first instance, however, it was asked whether the person "speaks Gaelic habitually" and the information was provided by the enumerator. From 1891 onwards this wording was changed into "speaks Gaelic" and the information was given by the head of the household. Accordingly direct comparison of the results of 1881 and later years is not possible.
2. Until 1971 it was asked whether the person "speaks Gaelic and English" or "speaks Gaelic but not English" (Gaelic only). Due to the simple necessity to survive in an English dominated society and the considerable impact of the school system in fact all *Gàidhlig*-speaking people were forced to become bilingual – with the notable exceptions of pre-school children and very old people. **These "Gaelic only" persons did not, however, present those who had *Gàidhlig* as their natural and preferred language nor were they the only mother tongue speakers.** This was already highlighted after the census 1911 by comments given by the then registrar general and the superintendent of statistics in the county report on Inverness (Census Office, Scotland, 1912): "*When discussing the statistics of the Gaelic-speakers of Argyll we expressed an opinion that the reduction in the number of persons speaking Gaelic but unable to speak English should not be taken as a proof that the use of the language was being discontinued, and after making a similar study of statistics of the Gaelic-speakers of the islands of Inverness, we are in a position to repeat that opinion. One fact alone seems to justify such an expression, and that is that fully three-fourths of the children of less than school age, more than three but less than five, speak Gaelic exclusively. Such a condition seems possible only when Gaelic is the language habitually spoken in the homes, and this seems conclusive evidence of its wide and habitual use.*" Due to the ever increasing presence of English in the *Gàidhlig* community (mixed language marriages, in-migration of English only speakers, radio and television) more and more children under the age of 5 became bilingual and the census question proved to be irrelevant after the 2nd World War. Because of the very small numbers involved and the ambiguity of the question no census enumeration took place after 1971 on persons who spoke *Gàidhlig* but no English.
3. No data are available on persons speaking *Gàidhlig* outside Scotland in the rest of the United Kingdom. Census returns are, however, recorded in Canada where the *Gàidhlig* language survived as a community language in a few locations of the province of *Alba Nuadh* (Nova Scotia) well into the 1940s.
4. During World War II no census was taken. Therefore no figures are available for 1941.
5. In 1971 the wording was changed from "speaks Gaelic" into "is able to speak Gaelic". This resulted in areas with low density of speakers in a substantial increase of *Gàidhlig*-speakers counted compared with 1961. These were essentially those who could speak *Gàidhlig* but did not have the opportunity to use it. In strongly *Gàidhlig*-speaking areas those who were able to speak *Gàidhlig* were also using the language. So in the islands and on the western seaboard the figures should have remained comparable with previous censuses.
6. In 1981 the population basis was changed from persons present on census night to usually resident persons. In the light of increased mobility of the population this change was inevitable.



7. From 1971 onwards additional questions were asked on the ability of people to read *Gàidhlig* or to write *Gàidhlig*.
8. In 2001 another question was introduced on the ability of a person to understand spoken *Gàidhlig*. This may have had an influence on some people with only a small command of the language to record themselves as being able to understand rather than able to speak the language. Without this choice some of them might have enlisted themselves or their children as *Gàidhlig*-speaking in order to be counted at all. This may explain the small decrease of speakers in the age group of 3 to 4 despite the strong efforts by the *cròileagan* movement in the preceding decade.
9. Additionally in 2001 for the first time all children under the age of 3 were recorded with their knowledge of *Gàidhlig*. In previous enumerations these children were not counted or (in 1891 and 1901) only a few children were enumerated in this age group. In many census publications percentages were calculated by using the enumerated *Gàidhlig*-speaking population (aged 3 years and over) on the basis of the total population. This led to slightly lower percentages than actually existed.
10. Census counts are not strictly exact. Apart from inevitable small enumeration errors the census authorities have introduced measures to keep returns anonymous. For example in 1971 figures in tables were rounded to the nearest 0 or 5. This fact represented a major obstacle in using small area statistics for further evaluation because of the small numbers involved. Comparable measures were taken in later censuses but with smaller overall “uncertainties” of +/- 1 in general.
11. All census material used and reproduced in this study is Crown Copyright. The use of this material in this study has been allowed under the licence no. C02W0003665.
12. Further information may be obtained by contacting the General Register Office for Scotland at <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk>.



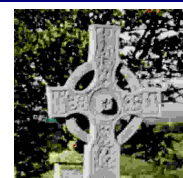
IV. List of Census Output Areas with Numbers and Placenames

The following list provides detailed information on all postcode names included in individual census output areas and shows the abbreviations/numbers defining output areas in census statistics between 1961 and 2001.

Census Output Areas in <i>An Taobh Siar</i>				
Map No.	Census output area ³⁶	Area Codes		
		1961 1971	1981 1991	2001
01	<i>Siabost bho Dheas</i>	BS	56AG22A	60RJ000076
02	<i>Siabost bho Thuath</i>	BS	56AG22B	60RJ000177
03	<i>Siabost bho Thuath & Eibhig</i>	BS	56AG23	60RJ000206
04	<i>Pairc Shiaboist</i>	BS	56AG23	60RJ000205
05	<i>Bradhagair bho Dheas & Labost</i>	BS	56AG20A	60RJ000072
06	<i>Bradhagair</i>	BS	56AG20B	60RJ000073
07	<i>Bradhagair bho Thuath</i>	BS	56AG21B	60RJ000075
08	<i>Arnol</i>	BS	56AG21A	60RJ000074
09	<i>Brù, Barabhas Iarach & Loch Mòr Bharabhais</i>	BS	56AH07A	60RJ000081
10	<i>Barabhas Iarach</i>	BS	56AH07B	60RJ000082
11	<i>Barabhas Uarach & Barabhas Iarach</i>	BS	56AH08	60RJ000208
12	<i>Barabhas</i>	BS	56AH08	60RJ000209
13	<i>Siadar Iarach</i>	BS	56AH09A	60RJ000083
14	<i>Siadar Uarach & Baile an Truiseil</i>	BS	56AH09B	60RJ000084

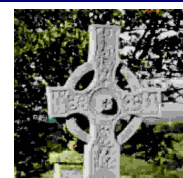
Table A-1: List of locations within individual census output areas and official numbers for different census dates for *An Taobh Siar* (Westside) – 1961-2001

³⁶ Placenames are given according to official information by the Ordnance Survey and used in modern maps. The placenames in the Outer Hebrides do have officially *Gàidhlig* names. „English“ versions are only used in addition for major settlements. Therefore the old anglicised names are provided in tables A-1 and A-2 for a few prominent locations only.



Census Output Areas in <i>Nis</i>				
Map No.	Census output area	Area Codes		
		1961 1971	1981 1991	2001
51	<i>Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh & Siadar Iarach</i>	BT	56AH10	60RJ000211
52	<i>Bail Àrd Bhuirgh & Còig Peighinnean Bhuirgh</i>	BT	56AH10	60RJ000210
53	<i>Gabh sunn bho Dheas, Gabh sunn bho Thuath, Bail Àrd Bhuirgh & Mealabost Bhuirgh</i>	BT	56AH11	60RJ000085
54	<i>Dail bho Dheas, Dail bho Thuath & Àird Dhail</i>	BT	56AH01	60RJ000207
55	<i>Cros</i>	BT	56AH02A	60RJ000170
56	<i>Suainebost</i>	BT	56AH02B	60RJ000190
57	<i>Tabost & Lional</i>	BT	56AH03A	60RJ000171
58	<i>Lional</i>	BT	56AH03B	60RJ000172
59	<i>Rathad Cros Sgiogarstaigh, Adabroc & Eòradal</i>	BT	56AH04	60RJ000224
60	<i>Port Sgiogarstaigh, Sgiogarstaigh & Eòradal</i>	BT	56AH05A	60RJ000173
61	<i>Port Nis & Adabroc</i>	BT	56AH05B	60RJ000174
62	<i>An Cnoc Àrd & Còig Peighinnean</i>	BT	56AH06B	60RJ000176
63	<i>Eòropaidh</i>	BT	56AH06A	60RJ000175

Table A-2: List of locations within individual census output areas and official numbers for different census dates for *Nis* (Ness) – 1961-2001



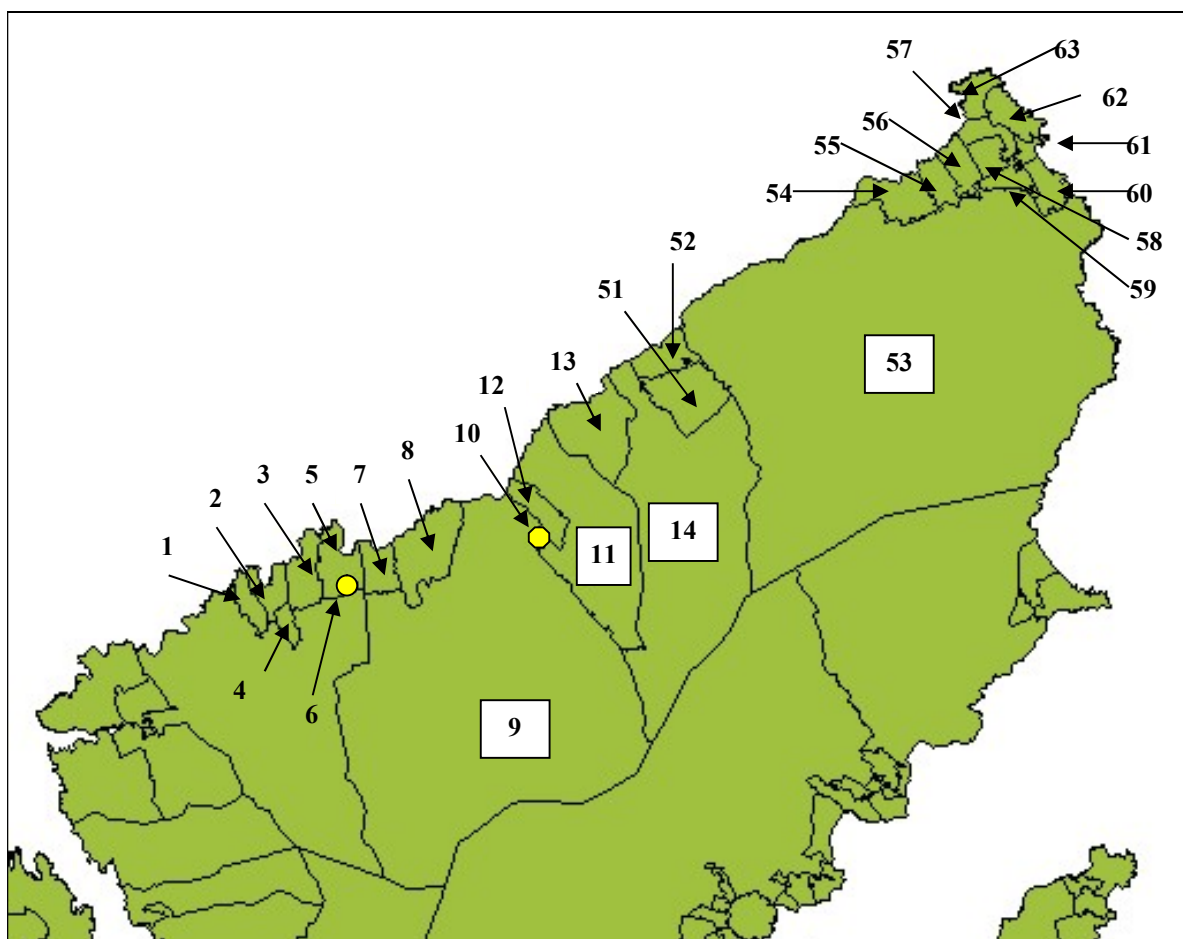
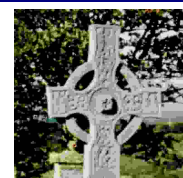


Fig. 15: Overview map of census output areas for *An Taobh Siar & Nis* (Westside & Ness) - numbers are provided in tables A-1 and A-2 ³⁷

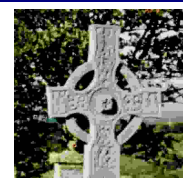
³⁷ Digital boundaries courtesy of Ordnance Survey as part of the Geography Products provided by GROS for the 2001 census



V. List of Tables

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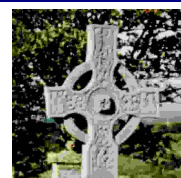
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ANNEXES

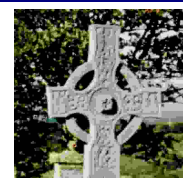
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VII. List of Abbreviations

There are a number of abbreviations used in the text which might not be known by every reader. Therefore this short list intends to facilitate better understanding:

CCED	County council electoral division
CP	Civil parish
CNSA	<i>Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich</i> : Gaelic playgroup association
<i>Comhairle nan Eilean</i> (CNE) – later: <i>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar</i> (CNES)	Official name of the Western Isles Council, the local government body of the Outer Hebrides (with abbreviations)
<i>Cròileagan</i>	Gaelic speaking playgroup
Fèis	Local art festival with normally some Gaelic courses
GLPS	“Gaelic Language for the Primary School”: Course as introduction of Gaelic as second language
GME	Gaelic medium education
GMU	Gaelic medium unit: Class(es) with Gaelic medium education but as part of an English medium school
GROS	General Register Office for Scotland
LVI	Language viability indicator
LCI	Language community indicator
<i>Mòd</i>	Gaelic language gathering (conversation, song and music) comparable to the Welsh Eisteddfod
n/a	Information is not available
OA	(Census) output area: the smallest enumeration unit on which census data are available
P1	Primary school year 1
P2	Primary school year 2
S1	Secondary school year 1
S2	Secondary school year 2
<i>Sgoil Araich</i>	Gaelic speaking nursery school
<i>Sràdagan</i>	Gaelic speaking clubs for primary school children
<i>Vi</i>	Village according to census definition in 1881, 1891 and 1901



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