

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 016

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**Area:** *Gleann Fhionghain, An Druim Fheàrna, Druim na Saille, Ceann Loch Iall, An Coire Beag, Am Fasadh Feàrna, Achadh Do Liubha, Poll Loch, Gleann na h-Iubhraich, Sgamadal*

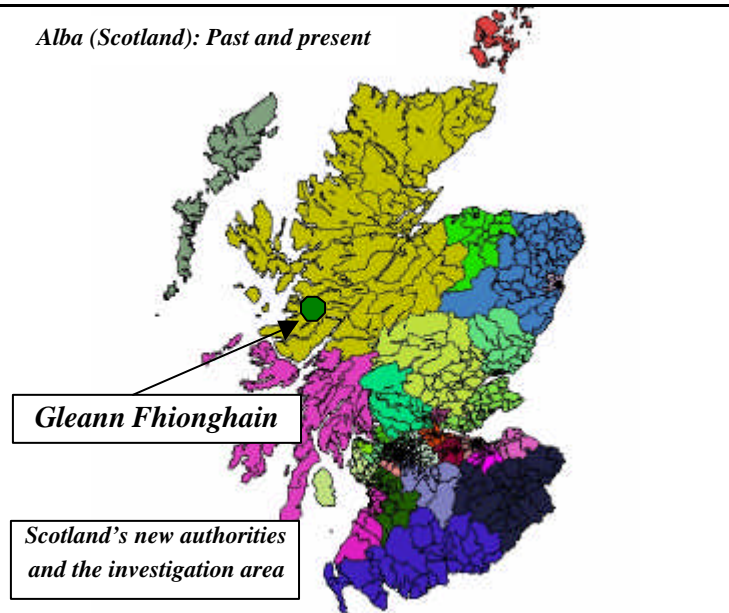
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Glenfinnan, Corriehullie, Drimfern, Callap, Drimsallie, Glenduilly, Uachan, Kinlocheil, Corriebeg, Fassifern, Achdaliu, Polloch, Kinloch, Glenhurich, Rhisamhraidh, Gortanmhorran, Scamadale & Giusachan)

**Number of households:** 51      **Population present at census night:** 257

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig:** 84.3 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Argyll	Arisaig & Moidart	Arisaig	4	2 - 5
Inverness-shire	Kilmallie	Kilmallie	12	1 - 6
Inverness-shire	Ardgour	Kilmallie	17	6
Argyll	Ardrnamurchan	Sunart (Strontian)	4	1 - 13

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*

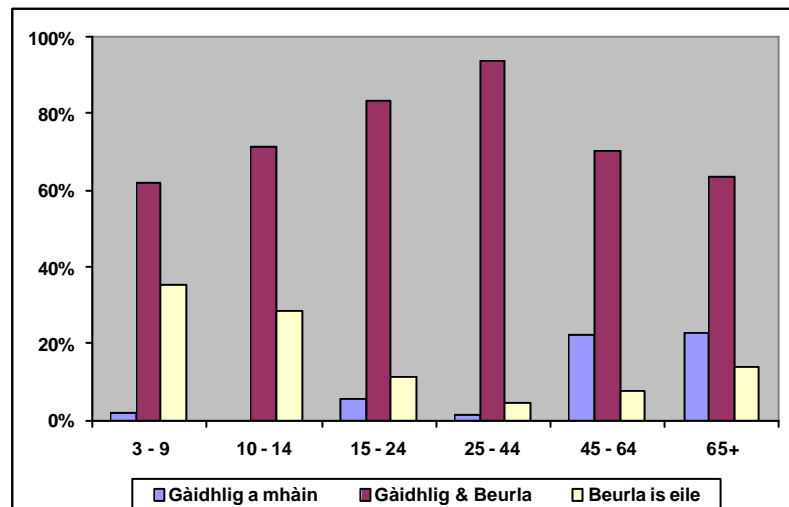


## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

Although the small population was rather heterogeneous in its origins with a considerable influx of Lowland shepherds and other English monoglots the Gàidhlig language was still commonly spoken by most of the inhabitants. The most thoroughly Gàidhlig speaking hamlets were those with the few crofters remaining like *Poll Loch* (Polloch) and *An Coire Beag* (Corriebeg). However, Gàidhlig monoglots were rather seldom and mostly confined to the older generation. With the exception of three English speaking households children were generally accustomed to the native tongue.

## Area description:

This vast Highland area around the famous hamlet of *Gleann Fhionghain* (Glenfinnan) covers a number of remote settlements and shepherd huts on the shores of *Loch Seile* (Loch Shiel) and *Loch Iall* (Loch Eil). Largely “cleared” by distant landlords decades ago most of the people left were occupied as shepherds or gamekeepers.



**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. <sup>3</sup>	Total <sup>4</sup>	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b>Age</b>								
<b>Total</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>84.3 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>60.0 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>65.7 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>71.4 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>88.9 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>95.3 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>92.5 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>86.4 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>84.0 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>84.5 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>85.2 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>98.0 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28.6 %</b>

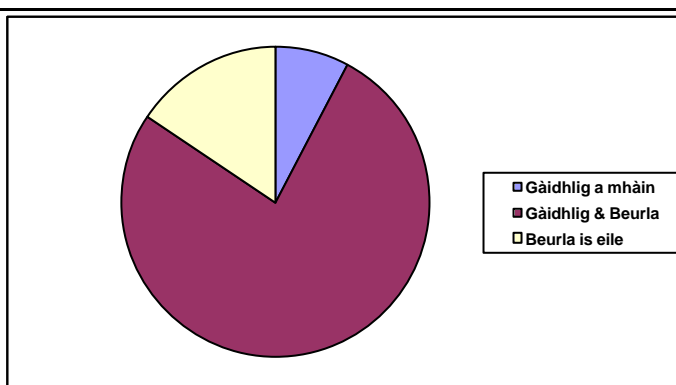
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Arisaig & Moidart, Ardnamurchan, Ardgour (both Argyll); Glenelg, Kilmallie (both Inverness) – whichever was not the location of the household enumerated. This fact-sheet covers communities in a number of parishes!

<sup>2</sup> Other parishes in Scotland with more than 50 % Gàidhlig speakers in the 1891 census.

<sup>3</sup> People described as visitors, boarders, lodgers or other similar terms.

<sup>4</sup> 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 fact-sheets are a welcome way to publish some of the “local gems”. More information is provided at [http://www.linguae-celticae.org/GLP\\_english.htm](http://www.linguae-celticae.org/GLP_english.htm).

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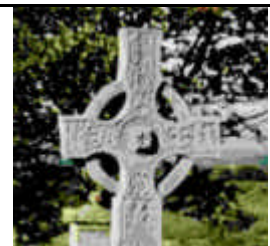
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig (%)
<i>Gleann Fhionghain &amp; Loch Iall</i>	51	235	18	180	84.3 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Gleann Fhionghain</i> (Glenfinnan)	8	33	9	15	72.7 %
<i>Coire na h-Ulaidh</i> (Corriehully)	5	26	5	17	84.6 %
<i>Poll Loch</i> (Polloch)	3	18	0	17	94.4 %
<i>Gleann na h-Iubhraich</i> (Glen Hurich)	3	23	0	15	65.2 %
<i>Sgamadal &amp; Giuthsachan</i> (Scamadale & Giusachan)	3	25	0	25	100 %
<i>Druim na Saille &amp; Callap</i> (Drimsallie & Callop)	9	33	2	22	72.7 %
<i>Ceann Loch Iall</i> (Kinlocheil)	6	23	0	22	95.7 %
<i>An Coire Beag</i> (Corrybeg)	5	23	0	22	95.7 %
<i>Fasadh Feàrna &amp; Achadh Do Liubha</i> (Fassiefern & Achdaliu)	9	31	2	25	87.1 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	15	112	3	92	84.8 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	14	49	3	40	87.8 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	3	12	0	1	8.3 %
Households with no children (0-14)	19	62	12	47	95.2 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	11	52	4	47	98.1 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	25	126	6	96	81.0 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	2	4	0	1	25.0 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	1	3	0	3	100 %
Living on private means	1	7	2	4	85.7 %
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	2	19	0	13	68.4 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	7	21	5	14	90.5 %
Remaining occupations	2	3	1	2	100 %

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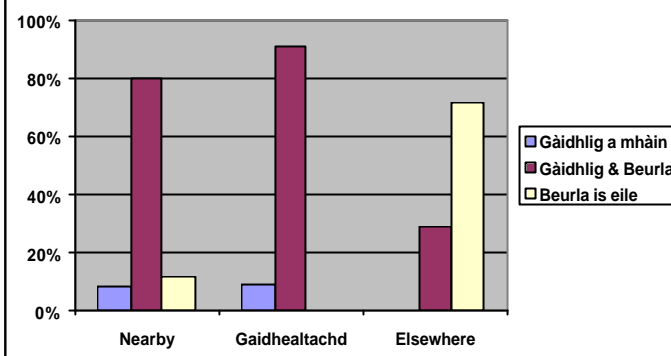
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Monolingual Gàidhlig speakers were already rather rare and (naturally) originated from the Hebrides. English monolinguals came mostly from further afield, but also a number of local children were reported as not speaking Gàidhlig (see also remarks below).

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Arisaig & Moidart or in the parishes of Ardnamurchan, Ardgour (both Argyll), Glenelg and Kilmallie (both Inverness).

<sup>2</sup> Born in other parishes of Scotland with more than 50 % Gàidhlig speakers in the 1891 census.



Speakers according to place of birth (1) nearby<sup>1</sup> (2) in remaining *Gaidhealtachd*<sup>2</sup>, or (3) elsewhere

## Remarks:

1. In total 47 persons were returned as not speaking Gàidhlig. Among them were a number of shepherds from the Scottish Borders, a hotelier, a teacher and a few clergymen. In addition 16 children aged between 3 and 9 years had no “G” or “G&E” marked on their registration sheets. Six children could be traced in the 1901 census returns and all were reported as speaking both Gàidhlig and English! They must have learned the language in the meantime or their household head in 1891 did not want them to be reported as Gàidhlig-speaking for whatever reason.
2. In original census report terms the district had a population of 257 persons of all ages. 182 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 20 were counted as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. This led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 78.6 %. Accordingly this percentage was a substantial under-estimate of 5.7 % compared with the more realistic usually resident population base used in this analysis.