

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 019

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Area: *Latharan (Latheron): Latharan, Latharan Iarach & Beinn a'Cheilt*

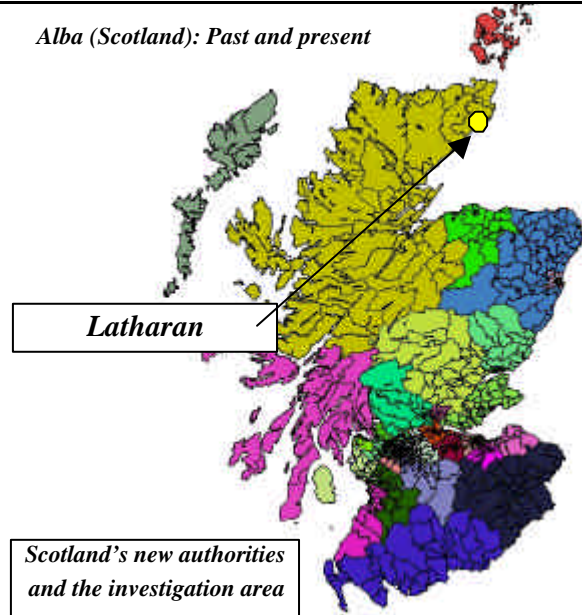
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Latheron, Upper Latheron & Benacheilt)

Number of households: 53 **Population present at census night:** 198

Share of resident population (aged three years +) speaking Gàidhlig: **68.8 %**

| County | Civil parish | Registration district | Enumeration district number | Census form pages |
|-----------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Caithness | Latheron | Latheron | 11 | 1 - 9 |

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

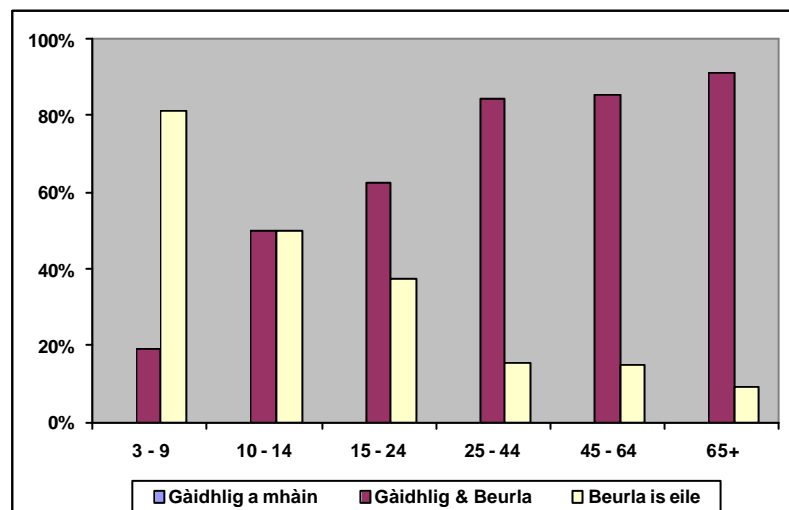
Gàidhlig was surprisingly strong in this part of *Gallaibh* (Caithness). Over two thirds of the usually resident population spoke the “Highland” language with a remarkable proportion of young people able to converse in the traditional tongue. The strongest community in this district was the crofting hamlet of *Beinn a'Cheilt* in the hinterland of the fishing village of *Latharan*. 77.8 % of all residents were Gàidhlig-speaking.

The area can rightfully be considered as a major stronghold of the language in the “Lowland” county during this period.

Area description:

The fishing village of *Latharan* (Latheron) and the two neighbouring crofting hamlets of *Latharan Iarach* (Upper Latheron) and *Beinn a'Cheilt* are object of this study. These communities are situated in the south-western corner of the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness).

Main economic factors were fishing and crofting in 1891.



Age profile: Share of population speaking (1) Gàidhlig, (2) Gàidhlig & English, or (3) no Gàidhlig at all

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| | Population enumerated | | | | Usually resident population (3+) | | | |
|--|-----------------------|----------|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | Total | Aged 0-2 | Deaf & dumb | Visitors etc. ³ | Total ¹ | Gàidhlig | Gàidhlig & English | Gàidhlig speakers (%) |
| Age | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 198 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 186 | 0 | 128 | 68.8 % |
| 3-4 | 8 | | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 25.0 % |
| 5-9 | 19 | | 0 | 1 | 18 | 0 | 3 | 16.7 % |
| 10-14 | 25 | | 0 | 3 | 22 | 0 | 11 | 50.0 % |
| 15-24 | 33 | | 0 | 1 | 32 | 0 | 20 | 62.5 % |
| 25-44 | 27 | | 0 | 1 | 26 | 0 | 22 | 84.6 % |
| 45-64 | 47 | | 0 | 0 | 47 | 0 | 40 | 85.1 % |
| 65+ | 33 | | 0 | 0 | 33 | 0 | 30 | 90.9 % |
| Gender | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 115 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 107 | 0 | 72 | 67.3 % |
| Male | 83 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 79 | 0 | 56 | 70.9 % |
| Place of birth | | | | | | | | |
| Born in parish | 165 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 155 | 0 | 117 | 75.5 % |
| In neighbouring parish¹ | 19 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 0 | 5 | 27.8 % |
| Gaidhealtachd elsewhere² | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 100 % |
| Other places | 9 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 12.5 % |

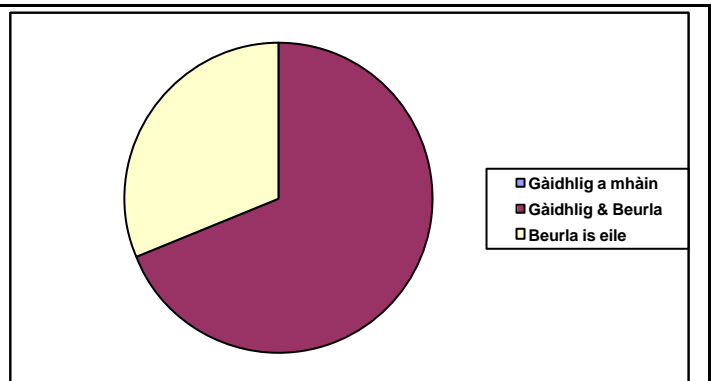
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten and Wick (all Caithness).

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

³ People described as visitors, boarders, lodgers or other similar terms.

⁴ Number of enumerated persons who were (1) older than 2 years of age, who were (2) not deaf & dumb and who (3) did not live only temporarily in the area.



Share of population speaking (1) Gàidhlig, (2) Gàidhlig & Beurla, or (3) no Gàidhlig at all

Background of Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profiles:

The 1891 census was the first such enumeration exercise with an unequivocal language question. After more than 100 years the original census forms are publicly available for detailed analysis. During research concerned with the "Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Studies" a vast number of such local statistics have been gathered about the Gàidhlig speaking population of Scotland in that year. As many of these results could not be included in the reports these concise 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.

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| | House-holds | Usually resident population (3+) | | | |
|---|-------------|----------------------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Total | Gàidhlig | Gàidhlig & English | Gàidhlig speakers (%) |
| <i>Latharan</i> | 53 | 186 | 0 | 128 | 68.8 % |
| Individual communities | | | | | |
| <i>Latharan (Latheron)</i> | 39 | 137 | 0 | 93 | 67.9 % |
| <i>Latharan Iarach (Upper Latheron)</i> | 6 | 22 | 0 | 14 | 63.6 % |
| <i>Beinn a'Cheilt (Benacheilt)</i> | 8 | 27 | 0 | 21 | 77.8 % |
| Language of parents | | | | | |
| Both parents Gàidhlig speaking | 10 | 56 | 0 | 35 | 62.5 % |
| Single parent Gàidhlig speaking | 10 | 37 | 0 | 27 | 73.0 % |
| One parent Gàidhlig speaking | 1 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 16.7 % |
| No Gàidhlig speaking parent | 1 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 12.5 % |
| Households with no children (0-14) | 31 | 79 | 0 | 64 | 81.0 % |
| Occupation of head of household | | | | | |
| Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc. | 23 | 93 | 0 | 68 | 73.1 % |
| Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 66.7 % |
| Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc. | 2 | 8 | 0 | 4 | 50.0 % |
| Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc. | 8 | 27 | 0 | 16 | 59.3 % |
| Living on private means | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| Manager, coachman, cook, etc. | 4 | 14 | 0 | 7 | 50.0 % |
| Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc. | 15 | 41 | 0 | 31 | 75.6 % |
| Remaining occupations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |

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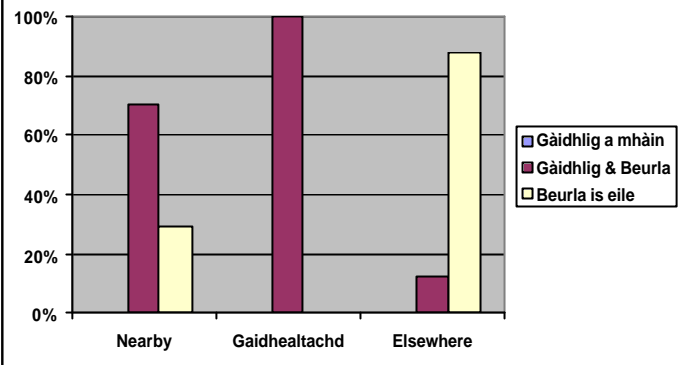
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The vast majority of locally born residents spoke Gàidhlig. On the other hand those born outside the *Gaidhealtachd* scarcely spoke the traditional language.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Latheron or in the parishes of Kildonan (Sutherland), Halkirk, Watten and Wick (all Caithness).

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. In original census report terms the district had a population of 198 persons of all ages. 129 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English”. This led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 65.2 %. The figure was therefore an under-estimate of 6.3 % compared with the more realistic figures taking into account only the usually resident population.
2. A large proportion of Gàidhlig-speakers was born in the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness). This underlines the fact that the language was not alien in an area which many characterize as a “Lowland” county today.