

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 032

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**Area:** *Latharn (Lorn): Gleann Comhann (Am Baile), Inbhir Comhann, Caolas nan Con, Ceann Loch Beag, Allt na Fèidhe & Achadh Triachatain*

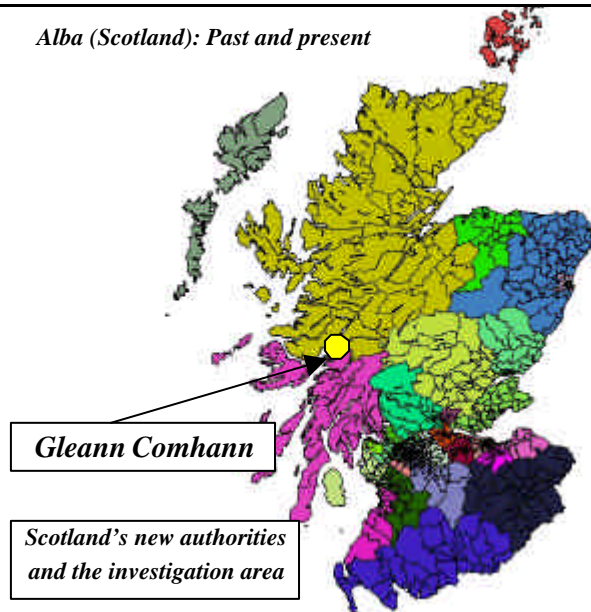
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Glencoe Road, Invercoe, Caolasnacn, Kinlochbeg, Iron Lodge, Alltnafeidh, Auchatrichtan)

**Number of households:** 96      **Population present at census night:** 437

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig:** 92.3 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Argyll	Lismore & Appin	Glencoe & Ballachulish	2 3	13 (part) – 29 1 - 2

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



**Gleann Comhann**

Scotland's new authorities and the investigation area

## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

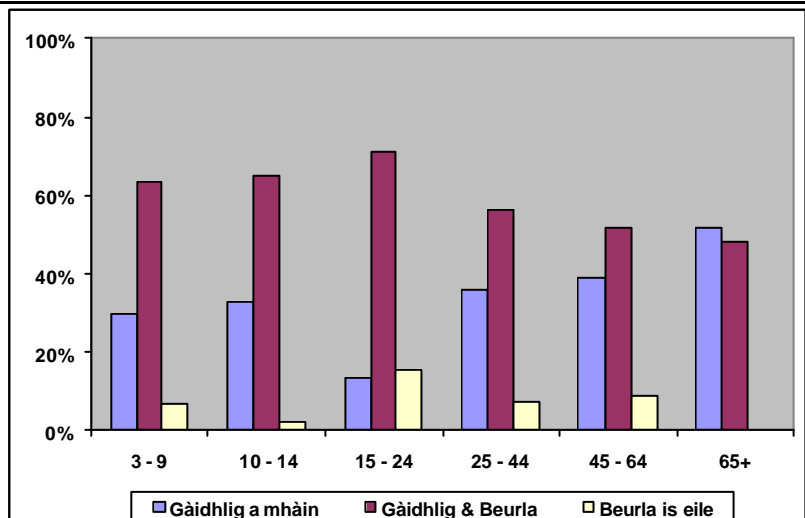
The village of *Gleann Comhann* (Glencoe) and the few outlying dwellings of the surrounding district were overwhelmingly Gàidhlig-speaking. The language was equally strong across all age groups. A considerable part of the usually resident population even did not speak English in 1891.

The inhabitants of *Am Baile* (the village of Glencoe proper) were even more strongly Gàidhlig-speaking than their game keeping neighbours in the few occupied houses in the glen and on the coast of *Loch Liobhann* (Loch Leven).

## Area description:

The famous district of *Gleann Comhann* (Glen Coe) occupies the north-easterly part of the ancient county of *Earra-Ghaidheal* (Argyll). This vast area was almost uninhabited apart from the small village of the same on the mouth of the river.

Most villagers were engaged in the nearby slate quarries of *Baile a'Chaolais* (Ballachulish) to the west. Additional work was provided by crofting and services like game keeping for the local lairds.



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>1</sup>	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b>Age</b>								
<b>Total</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>92.3 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>19</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>89.5 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>52</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>94.2 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>46</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>97.8 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>54</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>84.6 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>114</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>92.4 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>91</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>90.8 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>28</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>92.3 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>92.2 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>98.0 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>72.2 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>88.2 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>53.1 %</b>

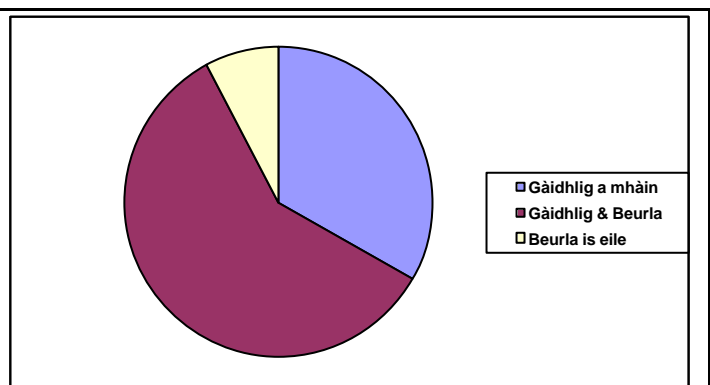
**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Ardochattan & Muckairn, Glenorchy & Inishail (both Argyll) or Kilmallie (Inverness).

<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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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Gleann Comhann</i>	96	388	129	229	92.3 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Gleann Comhann (Am Baile)</i> (Glencoe Village)	87	352	124	205	93.5 %
<i>Caolas nan Con &amp; Ceann Loch Beag</i> (Caolasnacon & Kinlochbeg)	4	27	0	21	77.8 %
<i>Achadh Triachatain &amp; Allt na Fèidhe</i> (Achtriochtan & Altnafeadh)	5	9	5	3	88.9 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	34	199	70	123	97.0 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	9	31	7	23	96.8 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	1	6	0	3	50.0 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	1	8	0	0	0.0 %
Households with no children (0-14)	51	144	52	80	91.7 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	13	69	12	42	78.3 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	10	40	3	30	82.5 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	3	7	0	5	71.4 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	8	26	4	21	96.2 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	2	4	2	0	50.0 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	60	242	108	131	98.8 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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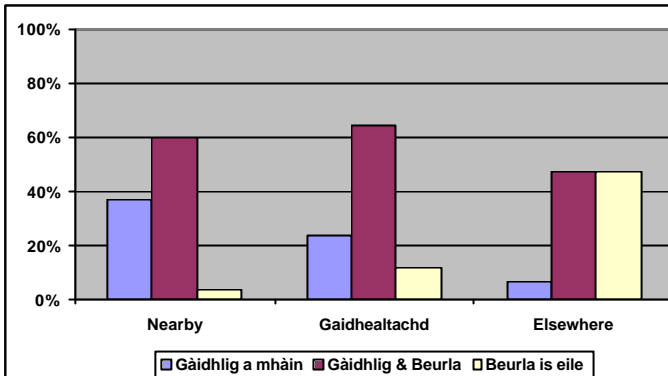
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

A significant proportion of those outside the *Gaidhealtachd* did speak Gàidhlig. Monolingual speakers of Gàidhlig were most prominent among those born in the parish or nearby.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Lismore & Appin or in the adjacent parishes of Glenorchy & Inishail, Ardchattan & Muckairn (both Argyll) or Kilmallie (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 original census report terms the district had a population of 437 persons of all ages. 217 enumerated inhabitants spoke "Gaelic and English" and 131 were counted as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. This led to an "official" share of Gàidhlig speakers of 79.6 %. Accordingly the figure was a significant under-estimate of 12.7 % caused mainly by the inclusion of under three olds in the population base.
2. Census returns concerning four households were incomplete. Household heads were Angus McDonald (enumeration district 2, page 16), Dugald McInnes (page 19), Donald McIntyre (page 19), and Angus Kennedy (page 26). There was no language information given for 14 family members although their relatives (young and old) spoke mostly Gaelic only. In a subsequent check in the 1901 census pages 13 of those persons (out of 14) could be traced. 7 persons were returned as "only Gaelic" and 6 as "Gaelic & English" in 1901. Accordingly their returns in 1891 were adjusted to the 1901 status.