

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 037

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**Area: Àth Tharracaill (Acharacle): Àth Tharracaill, Àird Seileach, Achadh nan Eilean, Taobh Seile, Drochaid Seile & Bun na h-Abhainn**

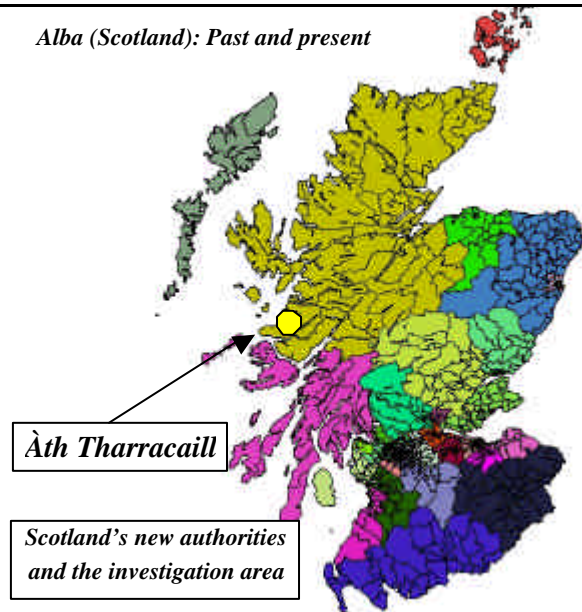
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Acharacle, Ardshealach, Achnanellan, Acharacle New Crofts, Shielside, Shielbridge, Shielfoot)

**Number of households: 46      Population present at census night: 197**

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 92.9 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Argyll	Ardnamurchan	Acharacle	1 2	1 – 7 1 (part), 8 - 12

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

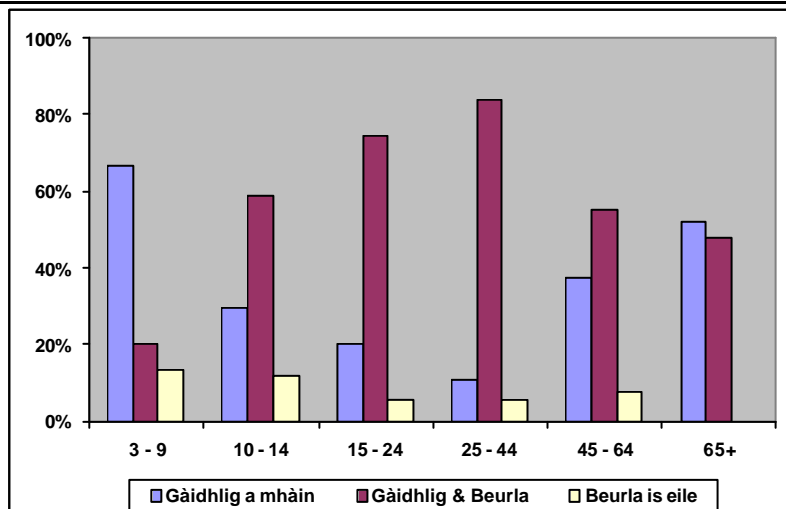
Apart from the family of the public school teacher virtually everyone spoke *Gàidhlig* in this district. Around 40 % of the usually resident population did not speak English at all. These monolingual persons were mostly enumerated among small children and the older generation. The handful of monoglot English speakers was born almost exclusively beyond the boundaries of the *Gaidhealtachd*.

Outside the village of *Àth Tharracaill* itself almost every person spoke *Gàidhlig*.

## Area description:

The district described forms the central part of the old parish of *Àth Tharracaill* (Acharacle) within the north-western corner of *Earra-Ghaidheal* (Argyll).

Most inhabitants of the tiny settlements between *Loch Seile* (Loch Shiel) and *Bun na h-Abhainn* (Shielfoot) were occupied with crofting.



**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>†</sup>	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b>Age</b>								
<b>Total</b>	197	7	0	6	184	64	107	92.9 %
<b>3-4</b>	9	0	0	0	9	7	0	77.8 %
<b>5-9</b>	21	0	0	0	21	13	6	90.5 %
<b>10-14</b>	17	0	0	0	17	5	10	90.5 %
<b>15-24</b>	37	0	0	2	35	7	26	88.2 %
<b>25-44</b>	40	0	0	3	37	4	31	94.3 %
<b>45-64</b>	40	0	0	0	40	15	22	92.5 %
<b>65+</b>	26	0	0	1	25	13	12	100 %
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	108	4	0	2	102	38	56	92.2 %
<b>Male</b>	89	3	0	4	82	26	51	93.9 %
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	148	7	0	1	140	57	81	98.6 %
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>†</sup></b>	15	0	0	0	15	5	10	100 %
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	18	0	0	2	16	2	13	93.8 %
<b>Other places</b>	16	0	0	3	13	0	3	23.1 %

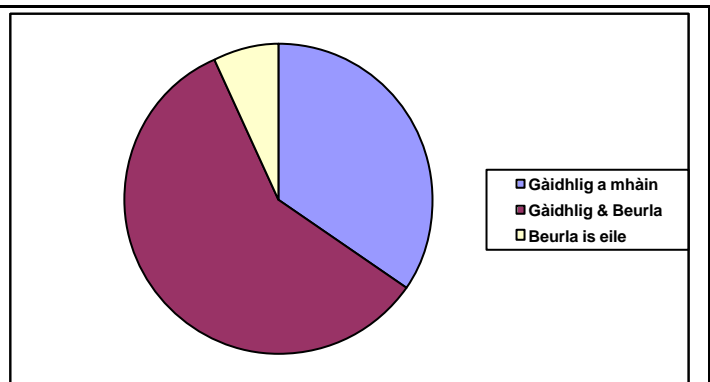
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Ardgour, Morvern (both Argyll); Arisaig & Moidart, Kilmallie (all 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 (%)
<b>Àth Tharracaill &amp; Bun na h-Abhainn</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>92.9 %</b>
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Ath Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle)	23	88	19	57	86.4 %
<i>Aird Seileach &amp; Achadh nan Eilean</i> (Ardshealach & Achnanellan)	3	15	3	12	100 %
<i>Bun na h-Abhainn &amp; Drochaid Seile</i> (Shielfoot & Shielbridge)	20	81	42	38	98.8 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	12	74	34	40	100 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	5	22	9	13	100 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	2	9	0	7	77.8 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	1	10	0	0	0.0 %
Households with no children (0-14)	26	69	21	47	98.6 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	29	113	49	63	99.1 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	1	5	2	3	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	3	21	0	10	47.6 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	5	23	4	19	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	1	5	0	4	80.0 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	7	17	9	8	100 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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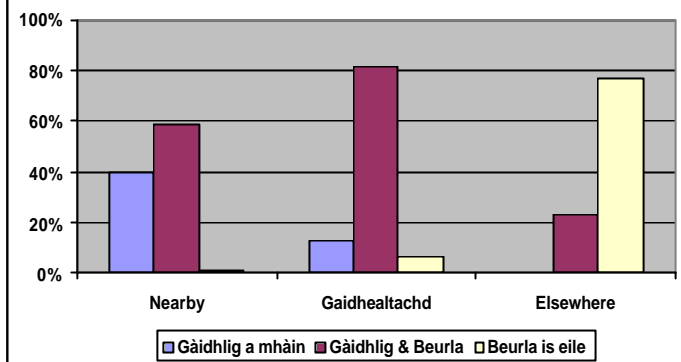
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Most of the “English only” speakers were born outside the *Gaidhealtachd*. Gàidhlig monolingual speakers were most prominent among those born in the parish or nearby.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Ardnamurchan or in the adjacent parishes of Ardgour, Morvern (both Argyll); Arisaig & Moidart, Kilmallie (all 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. Thirteen persons were returned as not speaking Gàidhlig. 10 of these returns were “supplied” by the teacher of the board school (from Aberdeenshire) and his family. The wives of the local minister, the hotel manager and of a fisherman constituted the remaining “English only” contingent.
2. In original census report terms the district had a population of 197 persons of all ages. 109 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 68 were counted as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. This led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 89.8 %. This was an under-estimate of 3.1 %!