

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 039

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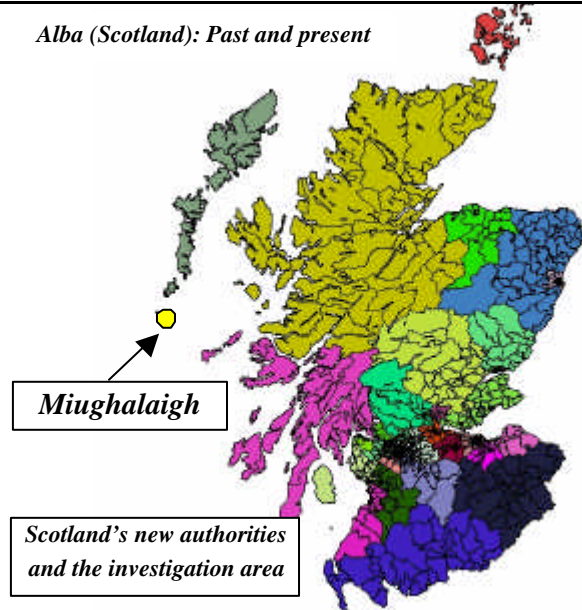
Area: *Miughalaigh (Mingulay), Ceann Bharraigh, Pabaigh, Sanndraigh & Bhatarsaigh*
 (Names of enumeration locations used on census forms : Mingulay, Barra Head, Pabbay, Sandray, Vatersay)

Number of households: 45 **Population present at census night:** 227

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 97.2 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness-shire	Barra	Barra	4 5	1 - 11 20 - 21

Alba (Scotland): Past and present

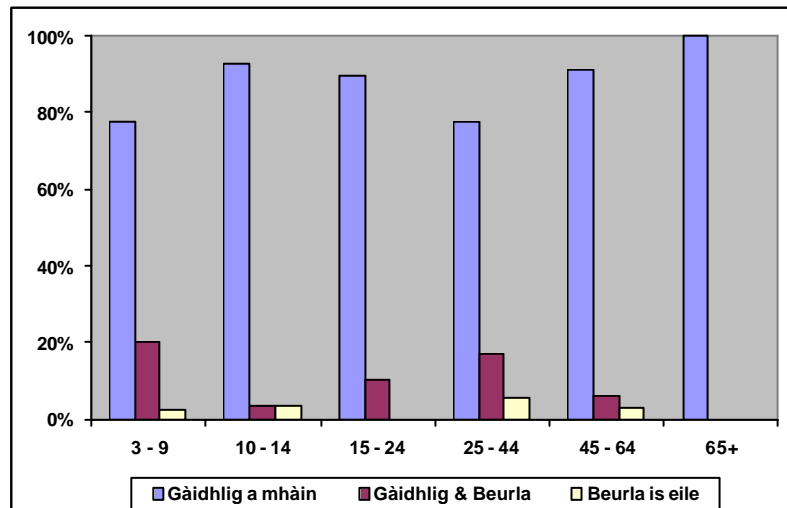


State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

All local people spoke Gàidhlig in the whole archipelago. The Celtic language was even used exclusively by most islanders. Just a few inhabitants were returned as speaking English, too. Those persons were mainly living on *Bhatarsaigh* (Vatersay) where bilingual people were more numerous than Gàidhlig monoglots. The community of *Miughalaigh* on the other hand did show a remarkable ignorance of the language of officialdom.

Area description:

This fact-sheet covers the remote communities living south of the Hebridean island of *Barraigh* (Barra). Most of the islanders made their living on the island of *Miughalaigh* (Mingulay) which was by far the most populous place in the archipelago. Apart from the lighthouse keepers on the lonely rock of *Ceann Bharraigh* (Barra Head) people earned their livelihood either by crofting or fishing. Due to the extreme sea and weather conditions connections to the outside world were infrequent and often interrupted for weeks.



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

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Area: *Miughalaigh (Mingulay), Ceann Bharraigh, Pabaigh, Sanndraigh & Bhatarsaigh*

	Population enumerated				Usually resident population (3+)			
	Total	Aged 0-2	Deaf & dumb	Visitors etc. ³	Total ¹	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	227	12	0	4	211	180	25	97.2 %
3-4	11	0	0	0	11	8	3	100 %
5-9	29	0	0	0	29	23	5	96.6 %
10-14	28	0	0	0	28	26	1	96.4 %
15-24	51	0	0	2	49	44	5	100 %
25-44	55	0	0	2	53	41	9	94.3 %
45-64	33	0	0	0	33	30	2	97.0 %
65+	8	0	0	0	8	8	0	100 %
Gender								
Female	127	7	0	4	116	100	12	96.6 %
Male	100	5	0	0	95	80	13	97.9 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	204	12	0	4	188	169	19	100 %
In neighbouring parish¹	10	0	0	0	10	9	1	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	3	0	0	0	3	0	3	100 %
Other places	10	0	0	0	10	2	2	40.0 %

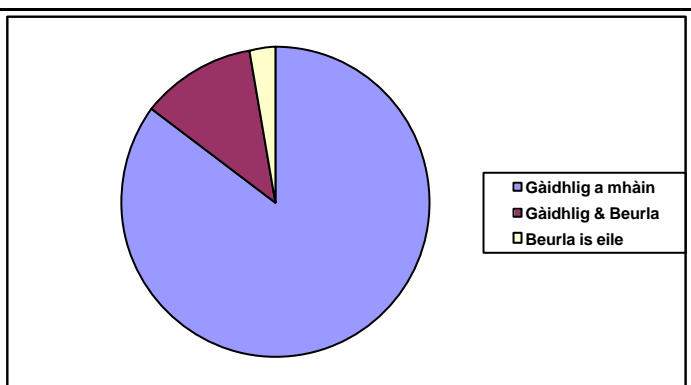
Notes:

¹ Parish of South Uist (Inverness).

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) Beurla is eile

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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Area: *Miughalaigh (Mingulay), Ceann Bharraigh, Pabaigh, Sanndraigh & Bhatarsaigh*

	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Miughalaigh & Bhatarsaigh</i>	45	211	180	25	97.2 %
Individual communities					
<i>Ceann Bharraigh</i> (Barra Head)	9	34	25	13	82.4 %
<i>Miughalaigh</i> (Mingulay)	29	131	126	5	100 %
<i>Pabaigh & Sanndraigh</i> (Pabbay & Sandray)	4	17	16	1	100 %
<i>Bhatarsaigh</i> (Vatersay)	3	29	13	16	100 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	13	92	76	16	100 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	11	54	49	5	100 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	1	4	0	0	0.0 %
Households with no children (0-14)	20	61	55	4	96.7 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	37	188	168	20	100 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	2	9	7	2	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	4	11	2	3	45.5 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	2	3	3	0	100 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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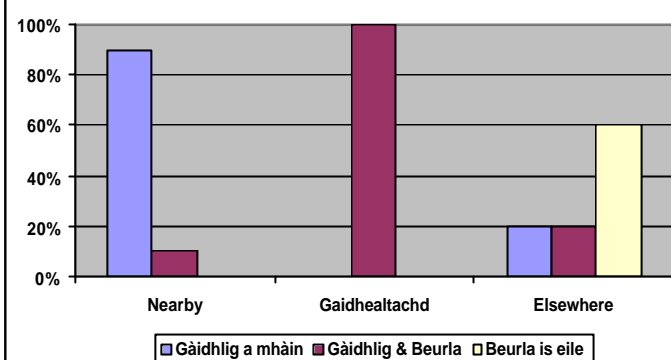
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was almost universally spoken as exclusive means of communication. “English only” was confined to lighthouse keepers who were born outside of the *Gaidhealtachd*.

Notes:

¹ Born in the parishes of Barra or South Uist (both Inverness).

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. The six persons not speaking *Gàidhlig* lived in two households of lighthouse keepers stationed on *Ceann Bharraigh* (Barra Head). All members of these families were born in places outside the *Gaidhealtachd* ranging from Orkney to Wigtownshire.
2. In original census report terms the islands had a population of 227 persons of all ages. Just 26 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 191 were counted as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. These figures lead to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 95.6 %. Accordingly this percentage was an under-estimate of 1.6 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds in the population base.