

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 040

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Area: *Eilean Bharraigh (Isle of Barra): Bàgh a'Chaisteil & An Gleann*

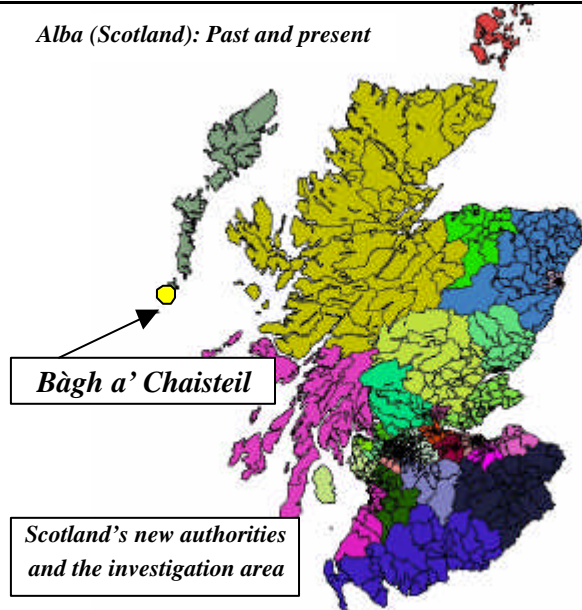
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Castle Bay, Glen)

Number of households: **81** Population present at census night: **428**

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: **95.8 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness-shire	Barra	Barra	5	1 – 19

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



Bàgh a' Chaisteil

Scotland's new authorities and the investigation area

## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

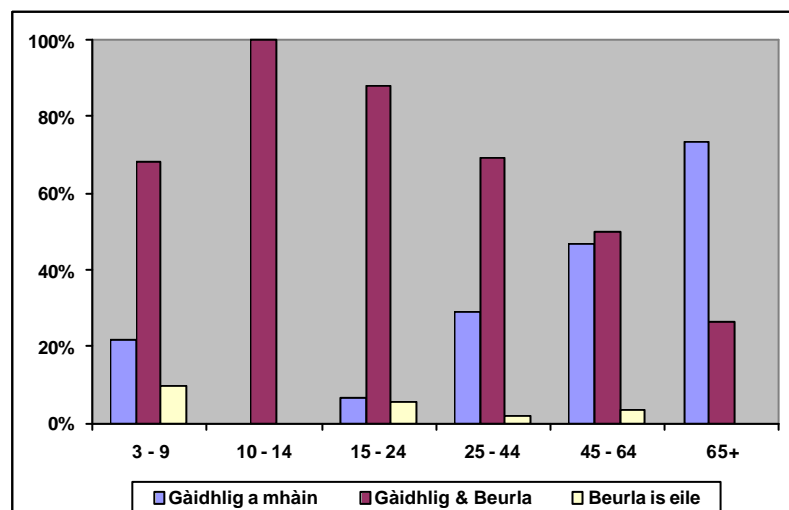
The island of *Barraigh* was almost totally *Gaidhlig* speaking. The only exception was the harbour of *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* (Castlebay) with a handful of incomers who were ignorant of *Gàidhlig*. On the other hand roughly a quarter of the population of this area in the south of the island did not speak English at all – most of them were at an advanced age. The age profile was well-balanced between the generations.

Incidence of language knowledge, however, differed very much locally between *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* (83.8 %) and the neighbouring hamlet of *An Gleann* (98.4 %).

## Area description:

Nowadays *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* (Castlebay) is the centre of the island of *Barraigh* (Barra) in the Outer Hebrides. In 1891 it was a tiny port which provided the most important link to the outside world.

Most of the inhabitants of this tiny hamlet and the neighbouring crofting community of *An Gleann* (Glen) were dependent on the success of the local fishing fleet.



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>428</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>95.8 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>70.0 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>96.8 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>94.6 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>98.1 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>96.6 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>96.1 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>95.4 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>98.1 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>96.0 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40.0 %</b>

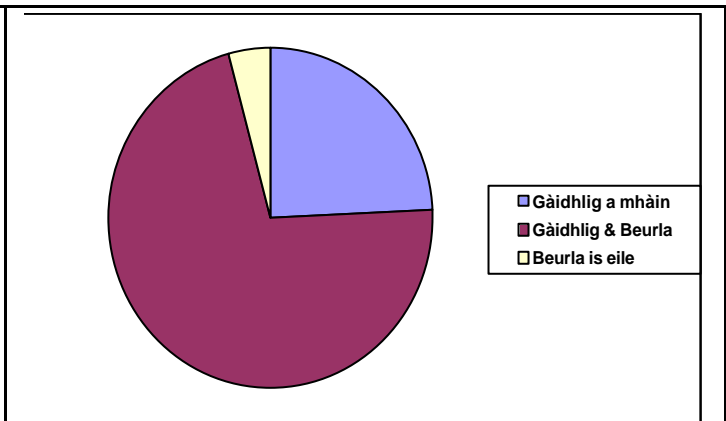
**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Parish of South Uist (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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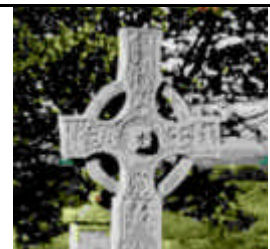
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Area: *Eilean Bharraigh (Isle of Barra): Bàgh a'Chaisteil & An Gleann*

	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil &amp; An Gleann</i>	<b>81</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>95.8 %</b>
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay)	<b>16</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>83.8 %</b>
<i>An Gleann</i> (Glen)	<b>65</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>98.4 %</b>
<b>Language of parents</b>					
<b>Both parents Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>97.3 %</b>
<b>Single parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>94.4 %</b>
<b>One parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16.7 %</b>
<b>No Gàidhlig speaking parent</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33.3 %</b>
<b>Households with no children (0-14)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
<b>Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>98.1 %</b>
<b>Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>69.6 %</b>
<b>Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>95.7 %</b>
<b>Living on private means</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Manager, coachman, cook, etc.</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>89.5 %</b>
<b>Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Remaining occupations</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100 %</b>

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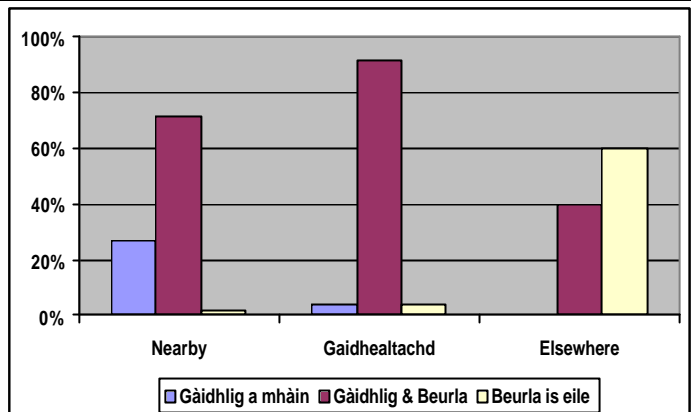
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

People born in the *Gaidhealtachd* were almost totally Gàidhlig speaking – many of them did not speak English. Even a remarkable minority of those born in the Lowlands could speak Gàidhlig.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in the civil parishes of Barra and South Uist (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. Most of the persons not speaking Gàidhlig lived in *Bàgh a'Chaisteil*. Most prominent were the two families of a fishery officer and a teacher.
2. In original census report terms both communities in total had a population of 428 persons of all ages. In all 278 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 95 were counted as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. These figures lead to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 87.1 %. Accordingly this percentage was an under-estimate of 8.7 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the population base.