

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 045

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Area: *Gleann Eilg (Glenelg): Galltair, Gleann Mòr, Ceasag, Baile na h-Eaglaise, Gleann Eilg, Dubh Àirigh, Caol Reatha & Beàrnaraigh*

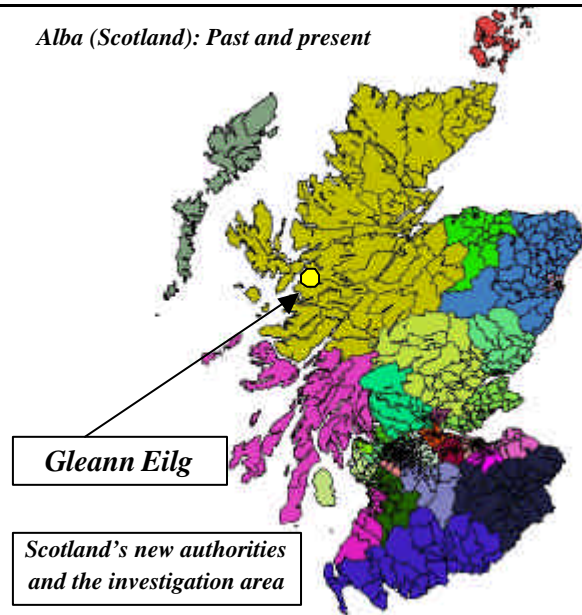
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Galder, Glen More, Ceosag, Kirkton, Glenelg Hotel, Duarry, Kylerhea & Bernera)

Number of households: 61 **Population present at census night:** 257

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 95.7 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness	Glenelg	Glenelg	1	1 – 14

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

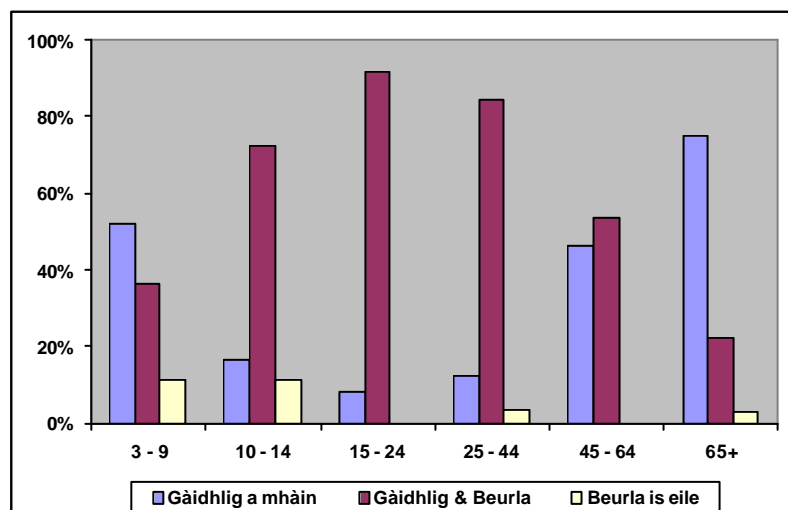
Almost all residents spoke Gàidhlig irrespective of their place of birth. More than one third of all inhabitants was still monolingual. Many children and people older than 45 years did not speak English. Generally local men than women were more likely to be bilingual. Most notable entries among the few residents with no Gàidhlig abilities were the local school master and his wife.

All local hamlets were almost exclusively Gàidhlig-speaking with the highlight of Ceasag (Ceosag) where all residents spoke Gàidhlig.

Area description:

The small communities under consideration are situated in the remote *Gleann Eilg* (Glenelg) district on the west coast of the old county of *Inbhirnis* (Inverness).

Generally this was traditional crofting country with a small number of gamekeepers and shepherds employed on the local estates. In addition some people were engaged in boat building and hotel keeping as the narrow *Caol Reatha* (Kyle Rhea) was an important gateway to *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye).



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	257	18	0	5	234	87	137	95.7 %
3-4	12		0	0	12	7	1	66.7 %
5-9	32		0	0	32	16	15	96.9 %
10-14	18		0	0	18	3	13	88.9 %
15-24	25		0	1	24	2	22	100 %
25-44	60		0	2	58	7	49	96.6 %
45-64	55		0	1	54	25	29	100 %
65+	37		0	1	36	27	8	97.2 %
Gender								
Female	140	10	0	1	129	55	71	97.7 %
Male	117	8	0	4	105	32	66	93.3 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	177	14	0	2	161	64	92	96.9 %
In neighbouring parish¹	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	48	0	0	3	45	13	31	97.8 %
Other places	31	4	0	0	27	10	13	85.2 %

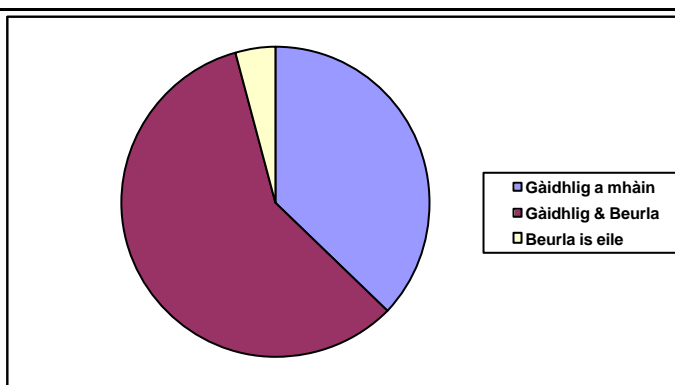
Notes:

¹Parishes of Glenshiel (Ross & Cromarty) or Arisaig & Moidart or Kilmonivaig (both Inverness-shire).

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 & 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.

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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Gleann Eilg</i>	61	234	87	137	95.7 %
Individual communities					
<i>Galltair</i> (Galltair)	17	66	27	36	95.5 %
<i>Ceasag</i> (Ceosag)	12	34	22	12	100 %
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg)	21	82	17	60	93.9 %
<i>Dubh Àirigh & Caol Reatha</i> (Duarry & Kylerhea)	5	19	5	13	94.7 %
<i>Beàrnaraigh</i> (Bernera)	6	33	16	16	97.0 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	17	105	38	62	95.2 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	8	32	9	20	90.6 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	1	3	0	1	33.3 %
Households with no children (0-14)	35	40	40	54	100 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	16	64	30	34	100 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	3	11	0	10	90.9 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	5	30	1	24	83.3 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	12	68	26	42	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	2	6	2	3	83.3 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	21	55	28	24	94.5 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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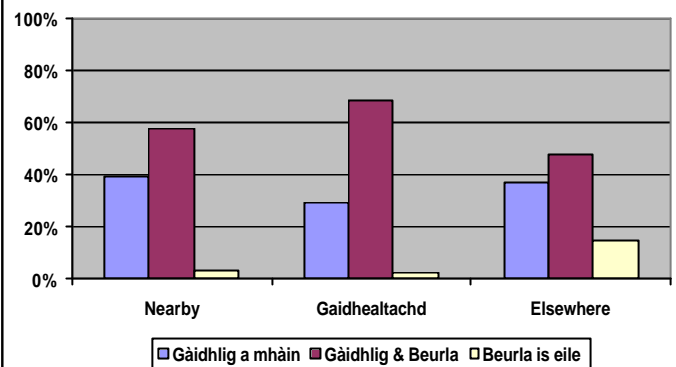
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Around 40 % of all locally born residents did not speak English. Even those born outside the *Gaidhealtachd* were more likely than not speaking *Gàidhlig*.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Glenelg or in the adjacent parishes of Glenshiel (Ross & Cromarty) or Arisaig & Moidart or Kilmonivaig (both Inverness-shire).

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. There were ten persons in the usually resident population who did not have a “G&E” or “G” marked on their registration sheet. Four census returns seem to have been genuine “English only” speakers: The local schoolmaster and his wife, a six year old boy (all born in Glasgow) and a 13 year old boy who had moved to the area from London. Four three year old children were also reported with “no Gaelic”. The remaining two doubtful “blank” entries in the language column came from a 71 year old shoemaker (birthplace on Skye) and an 11 year old girl (born locally).
2. In original census report terms the whole community in total had a population of 257 persons of all ages. 144 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 89 persons were reported as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. These figures lead to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 90.7 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this fact-sheet reveals that this percentage was a significant under-estimate of 5.0 % caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.