

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 069

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**Area: Coigeach (Coigach): Poll Glas, Achadh an Lochain & Aichillidh Bhuidhe**

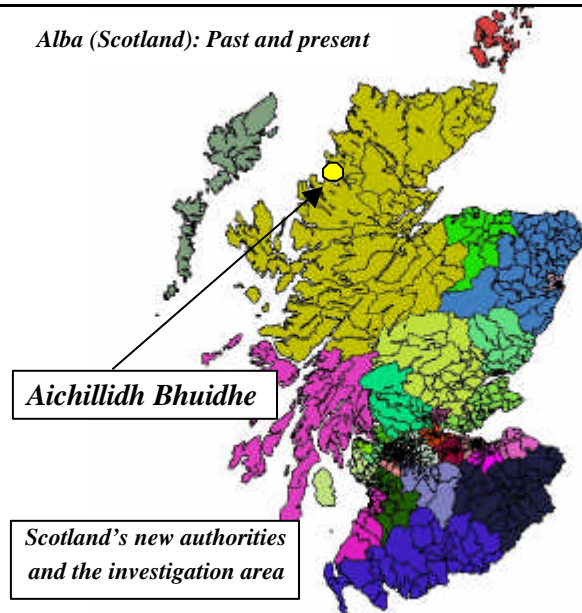
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms : Polglass, Achlochan, Achiltibuie)

**Number of households: 64      Population present at census night: 322**

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 98.0 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Ross & Cromarty	Lochbroom	Coigach	1	12 – 25

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*

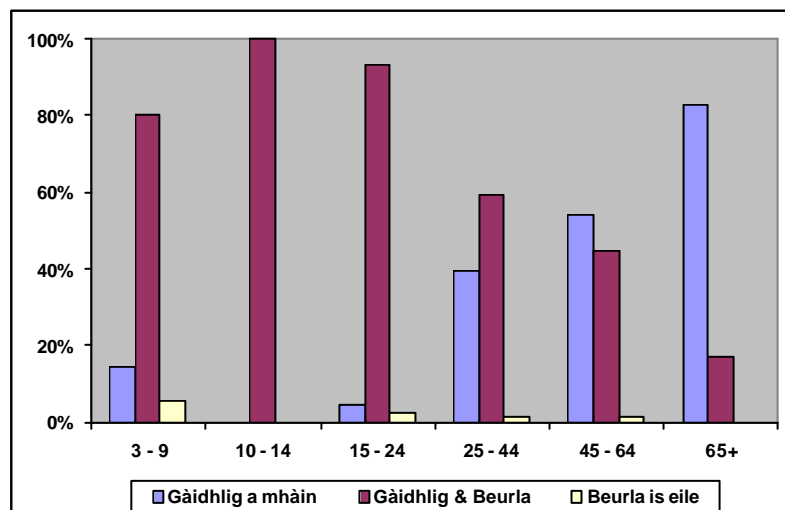


## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

Gàidhlig was the dominant language of the district. With the exception of a handful of persons (see also remarks on page 4) all residents spoke Gàidhlig, almost a third of the population did not speak English at all. These monolingual speakers, however, were mainly confined to the older generation. The language was equally strong in all three crofting townships in this district.

## Area description:

The district is part of the remote peninsula of *Coigeach* (Coigach) in the north-western part of mainland *Ros is Cromba* (Ross & Cromarty). It comprises the small hamlets of *Poll Glas* (Polglass), *Achadh an Lochain* (Achlochan) and *Aichillidh Bhuidhe* (Achiltibuie). Even today they can only be reached via a long and narrow road or alternatively by boat. *Aichillidh Bhuidhe* was and still is the “centre” of the district with facilities like the local school and police station.



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>322</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>98.0 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>83.3 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>97.7 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>97.7 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>98.4 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>98.4 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>97.9 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>98.1 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>99.3 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>81.8 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>81.8 %</b>

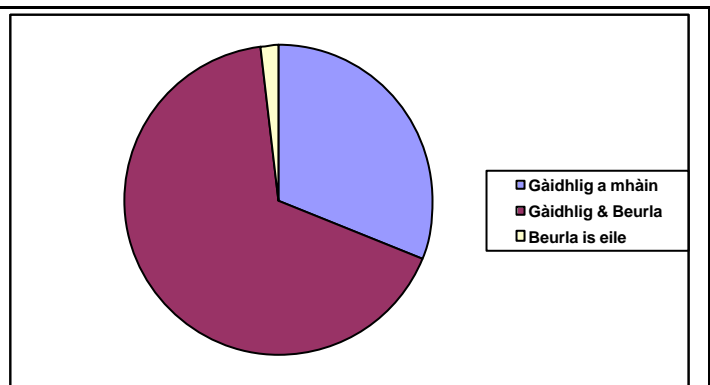
**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup>Parishes of Assynt (Sutherland), Gairloch, Contin and Kincardine (all Ross & Cromarty).

<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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Area: *Coigeach (Coigach): Poll Glas, Achadh Lochan & Aichillidh Bhuidhe*

	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b><i>Poll Glas &amp; Aichillidh Bhuidhe</i></b>	<b>64</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>98.0 %</b>
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Poll Glas</i> (Polglass)	24	116	37	75	96.6 %
<i>Achadh an Lochain</i> (Achlochan)	4	25	7	18	100 %
<i>Aichillidh Bhuidhe</i> (Achiltibuie)	36	154	48	104	98.7 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
<b>Both parents Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Single parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>97.6 %</b>
<b>One parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>81.8 %</b>
<b>No Gàidhlig speaking parent</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Households with no children (0-14)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>97.6 %</b>
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
<b>Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>98.4 %</b>
<b>Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>94.1 %</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>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Remaining occupations</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100 %</b>

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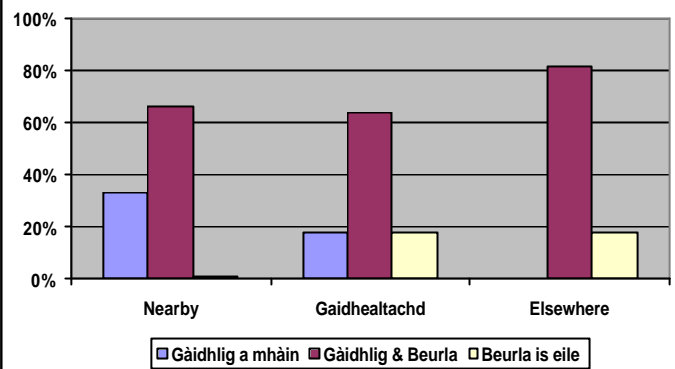
**Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:**

A significant proportion of locally (or nearby) born persons did not speak English. The few English monolinguals originated mainly from further away.

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Lochbroom or in the adjacent parishes of Assynt (Sutherland), Gairloch, Contin and Kincardine (all Ross & Cromarty).

<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. Just six persons of the usually resident population were reported as not speaking *Gàidhlig*. These residents “with no Gaelic” comprised a tailor’s wife (born in Olig, Caithness) and her youngest daughter as well as an imbecile pauper and his son. There were also two young relatives of a crofter family who were counted as not speaking *Gàidhlig*: The eight year old niece had been born in Greenock and the four year old nephew came from anglicised Stornoway – both children had apparently moved into the district rather late.
2. In original census report terms the enumeration district in total had a population of 322 persons of all ages. 210 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 94 persons were reported as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. These figures lead to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 94.4 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this fact-sheet reveals that this percentage was a slight under-estimate of 3.6 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.