

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 075

Page 1 of 4

Area: *Leòdhas (Lewis): Dail bho Dheas, Àird Dhail & Gabhsunn*

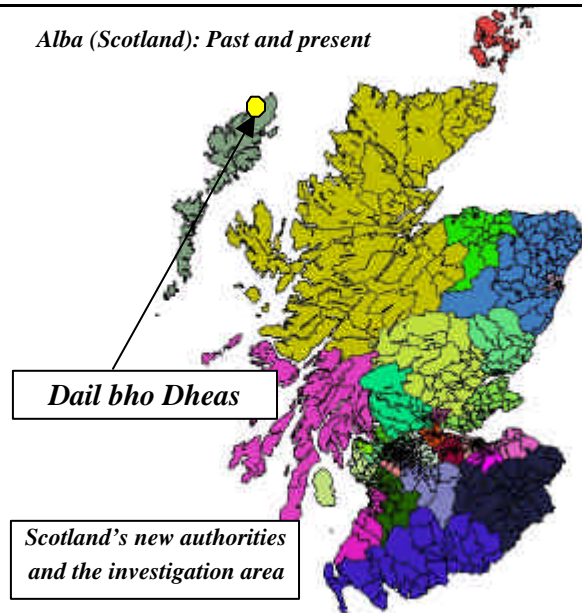
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms : South Dell, Aird Dell & Galson)

Number of households: 69 Population present at census night: 315

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 98.6 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Ross & Cromarty	Barvas	Barvas	6	1 – 13

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

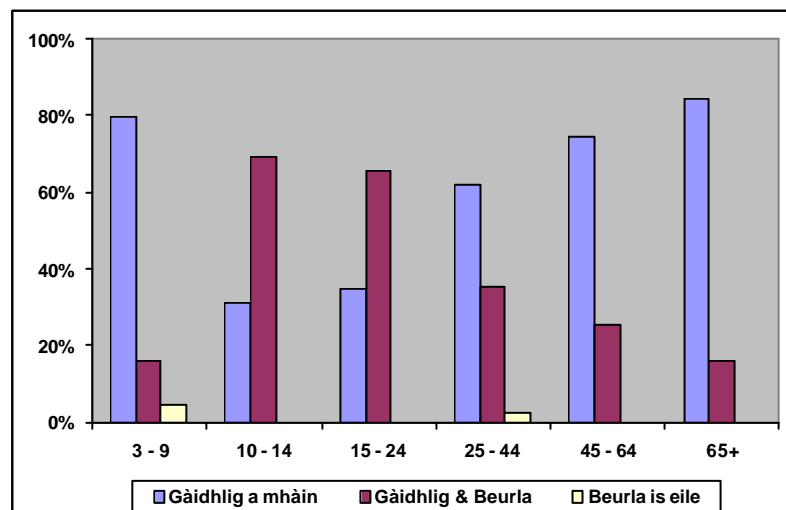
The usually resident population was overwhelmingly Gàidhlig-speaking. In fact the majority of all inhabitants did not speak English at all. There were only four persons enumerated with “no Gaelic”. All had Lowland backgrounds and lived on the farm of *Gabhsunn* (Galson).

Gàidhlig speakers with some knowledge of English were found mainly in the age group between 10 and 24 which had got in contact with the compulsory “English only” school system in those days.

## Area description:

The district concerned lies in the parish of *Barabhas* (Barvas) on the island of *Leòdhas* (Lewis) in the Outer Hebrides. The settlements involved were the crofting townships of *Dail bho Dheas* (South Dell) and *Àird Dhail* (Aird Dell) as well as the farm dwelling at *Gabhsunn* (Galson).

Most residents were of course engaged in crofting activities and some fishing.



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

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No. 075

Page 2 of 4

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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>315</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>98.6 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>91.7 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>32</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>96.9 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>29</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>53</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>82</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>97.6 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>51</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>98.1 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>99.2 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>99.2 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>60.0 %</b>

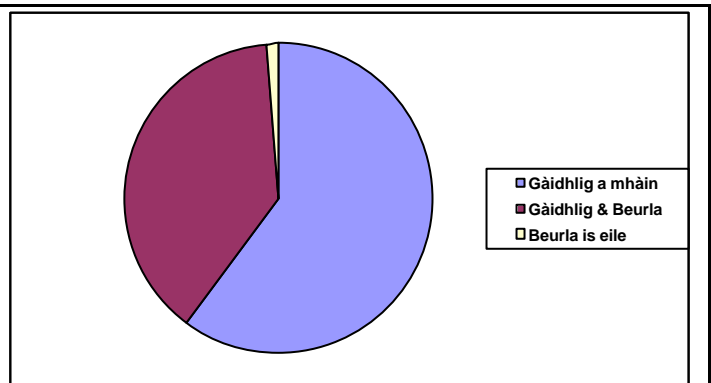
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Stornoway and Uig (both 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).

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 075

Page 3 of 4

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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Dail bho Dheas &amp; Gabhsunn</i>	<b>69</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>98.6 %</b>
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Dail bho Dheas</i> (South Dell)	<b>58</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<i>Àird Dhail</i> (Aird Dell)	<b>7</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<i>Gabhsunn</i> (Galson)	<b>4</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>82.6 %</b>
<b>Language of parents</b>					
<b>Both parents Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Single parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>One parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>76.5 %</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>28</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
<b>Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>98.8 %</b>
<b>Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>92.9 %</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>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Remaining occupations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>

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Page 4 of 4

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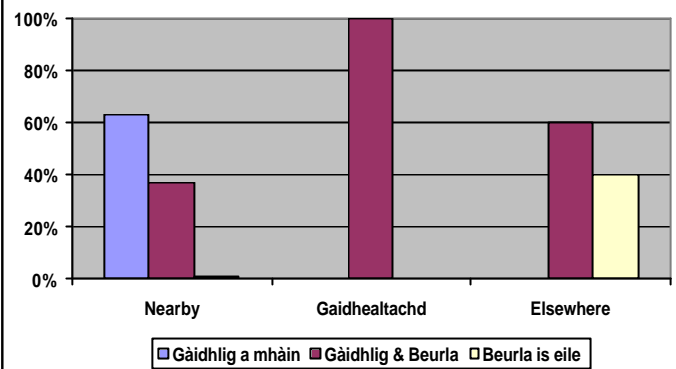
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The majority of locally born inhabitants did not speak English. Those with a birthplace in the wider *Gaidhealtachd*, however, were all bilingual. The two English monolingual adults came originally from Dumfries-shire.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Barvas or in the adjacent parishes of Stornoway and Uig (both 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. The census revealed just four persons who were not speaking *Gàidhlig*. All were residents of *Gabhsunn* (Galson). This group consisted of the local farmer (born in Dumfries-shire), two of his daughters (aged 6 and 4 years) and the wife of the local teacher. The latter originated also from Dumfries-shire.
2. In original census report terms the enumeration district in total had a population of 486 persons of all ages. Just 188 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 259 persons were reported as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. These figures lead to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 92.0 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this fact-sheet reveals that this percentage was an under-estimate of 6.6 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.