

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 090

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Area: *Leòdhas (Lewis): Ranais, Grimsiadair & Àirinis*

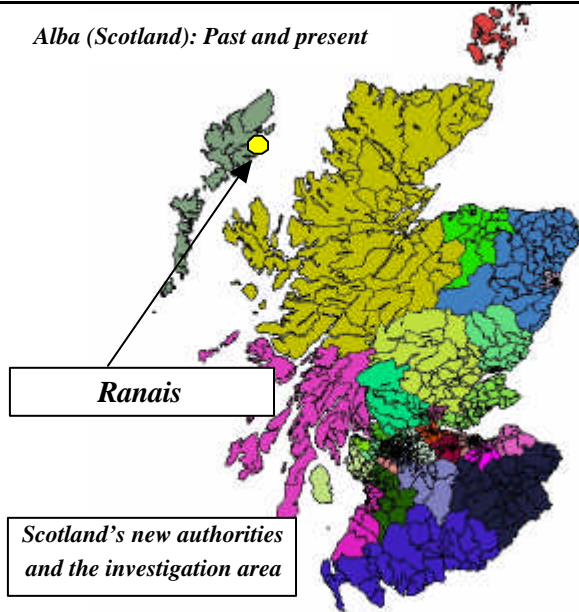
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms : Arnish, Grimshader, Rarnish)

Number of households: 112      Population present at census night: 604

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: **92.6 %**

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

Alba (Scotland): Past and present

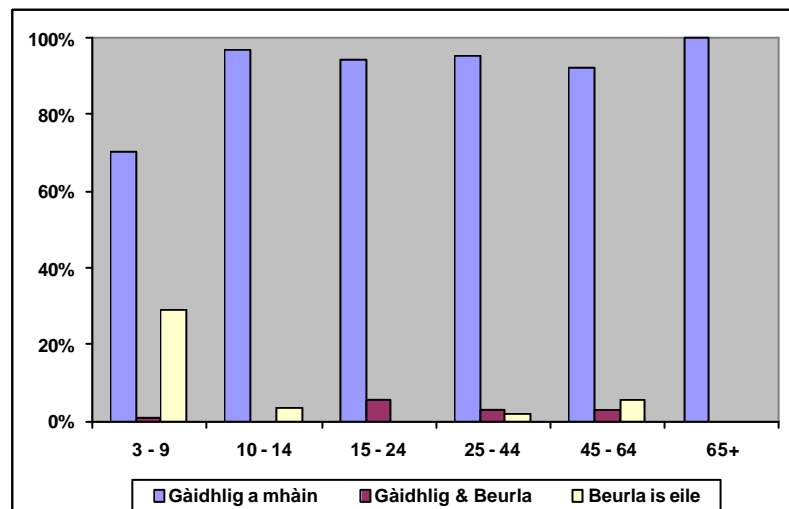


## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

By far the most inhabitants of the area did not speak English. There were only a few bilingual persons enumerated with a handful of incomers who were mainly ignorant of the local language. With the exception of some young people (see remarks on page 4) the local population was returned as completely Gàidhlig speaking. The two crofting hamlets of *Ranais* and *Grimsiadair* were almost entirely monolingual communities. On the other hand the lighthouse keepers and the gamekeeper at *Àirinis* (Arnish) were lonely outposts of the anglophone world.

## Area description:

The district is part of the parish of *Na Lochan* (Lochs) in the south-western part of the island of *Leòdhas* (Lewis). It consists mainly of barren moorland with the crofting townships of *Grimsiadair* (Grimshader) and *Ranais* (Rarnish) being the only human settlements apart from the lighthouse at *Àirinis* (Arnish). At the time local inhabitants were mainly occupied with crofting and fishing.



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>604</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>92.6 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45.5 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>88.1 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>96.7 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>98.2 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>94.7 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>93.1 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>92.2 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>94.9 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>66.7 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7.7 %</b>

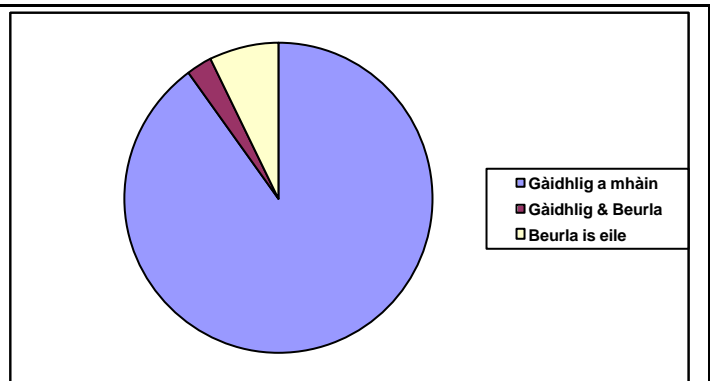
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Harris (Inverness), Stornoway or 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).

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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Ranais, Grimsiadair &amp; Àirinis</i>	112	557	502	14	92.6 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Airinis</i> (Arnish)	3	13	0	4	30.8 %
<i>Grimsiadair</i> (Grimshader)	26	129	121	3	96.1 %
<i>Ranais</i> (Ranish)	83	415	381	7	93.5 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	60	334	306	4	92.8 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	13	65	58	4	95.4 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	3	15	0	2	13.3 %
Households with no children (0-14)	36	143	138	4	99.3 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	105	527	496	4	94.9 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	1	4	0	3	75.0 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	3	15	0	2	13.3 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	2	9	6	3	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Remaining occupations	1	2	0	2	100 %

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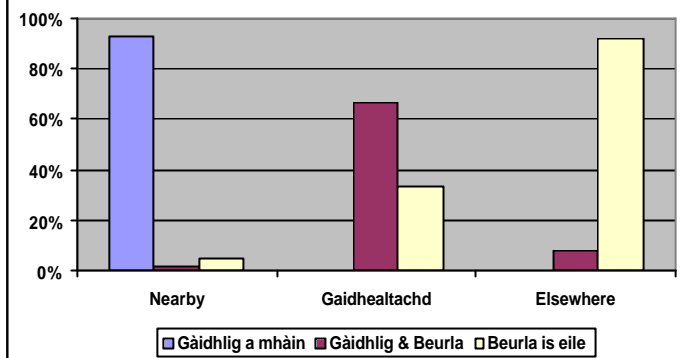
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The vast majority of locally (or nearby) born persons did not speak English. In the case of the few people from the Lowlands or further away the opposite was the case.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Lochs or in the adjacent parishes of Harris (Inverness), 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:

- 41 persons of the usually resident population were reported as not speaking *Gàidhlig*. Apart from some dubious returns concerning children (see below) these “English only” inhabitants belonged to three households. Two lighthouse keepers at *Airinis* and the school teacher had the “privilege” to lead the only non-*Gàidhlig* speaking families in the district.
- A substantial number of young persons aged between 3 and 7 had no “G” or “G&E” marked on their enumeration sheets. 25 of those “non-Gaelic speaking” persons in 1891 were traced in the 1901 census. All were found to be *Gàidhlig*-speaking and 7 were even monolinguals at this time! Therefore it cannot be assumed that the low percentage of *Gàidhlig*-speakers in this age group had been a genuine enumeration result in 1891.
- In original census report terms the enumeration district in total had a population of 604 persons of all ages. Just 14 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 519 persons were reported as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. These figures lead to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 88.2 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this fact-sheet reveals that this percentage was a slight under-estimate of 4.2 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.