

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 098

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**Area:** *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach (Isle of Skye): Aoineart, Grùla, Craicinis, Hùsdail, Fearann an Leagha, Fiosgabhaig & Talaisgeir*

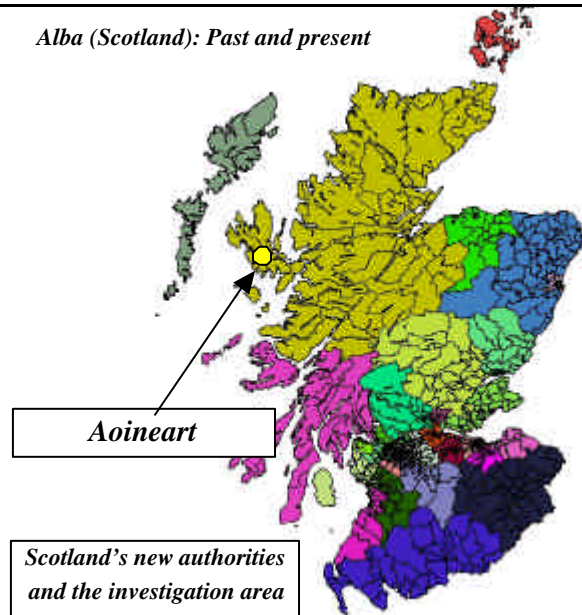
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Eynort, Gruile, Cracknish, Huisdale, Fernlea, Fìsgavaig & Tallisker)

**Number of households:** 42      **Population present at census night:** 172

**Share of resident population (aged three years +) speaking Gàidhlig:** 98.1 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness	Bracadale	Bracadale	6 7	1 - 5 1 - 7

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

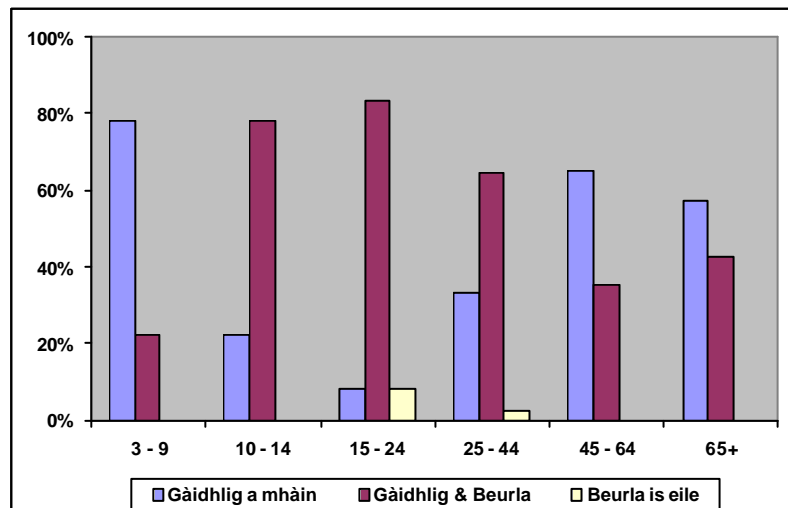
The district was a Gàidhlig speaking area as strong as anywhere to be found in the Hebrides in those days. Apart from one family at *Talaisgeir* (Talisker) all usually resident persons spoke Gàidhlig in this area.

Around 40 % of the population still did not speak English. Those monolingual speakers were to be found mostly among the pre-school children and the generation older than 44 years of age. On the other hand *Fiosgabhaig* (Fiskavaig) was the only hamlet where most inhabitants did not speak English at all.

## Area description:

The district in question occupies a number of remote coastal communities on the *Minginis* (Minginish) peninsula in the west of *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye) which belonged to the county of *Inbhirnis* (Inverness).

The inhabitants were engaged in a variety of occupations. Besides a few crofters and fishermen most people worked on the estates as gamekeepers, shepherds or servants. In addition a few worked also in the adjacent distillery at *Carbost*.



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>†</sup>	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b>Age</b>								
<b>Total</b>	172	12	0	3	157	69	85	98.1 %
<b>3-4</b>	9		0	0	9	9	0	100 %
<b>5-9</b>	11		0	2	9	5	4	100 %
<b>10-14</b>	18		0	0	18	4	14	100 %
<b>15-24</b>	24		0	0	24	2	20	91.7 %
<b>25-44</b>	40		0	1	39	13	25	97.4 %
<b>45-64</b>	37		0	0	37	24	13	100 %
<b>65+</b>	21		0	0	21	12	9	100 %
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	94	5	0	0	89	47	41	98.9 %
<b>Male</b>	78	7	0	3	68	22	44	97.1 %
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	145	12	0	3	130	59	68	97.7 %
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	11	0	0	0	11	3	8	100 %
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	13	0	0	0	13	7	6	100 %
<b>Other places</b>	3	0	0	0	3	0	3	100 %

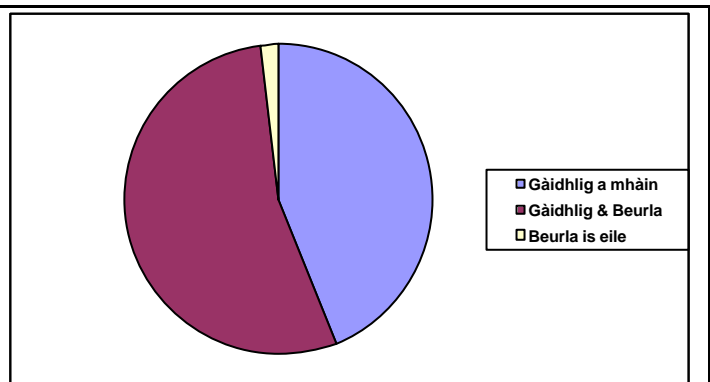
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Snizort, Portree or Duirinish (all in Inverness-shire).

<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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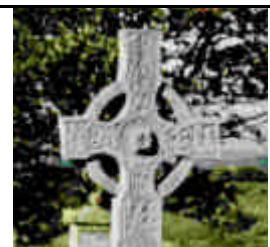
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Aoineart, Fiosgabhaig &amp; Talaisgeir</i>	42	157	69	85	98.1 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Aoineart</i> (Eynort)	6	25	11	14	100 %
<i>Grùla</i> (Gruile)	2	11	4	7	100 %
<i>Craicinis &amp; Hùsdail</i> (Crackinish & Huisdale)	2	5	4	1	100 %
<i>Fearann an Leagha</i> (Fernilea)	23	68	32	36	100 %
<i>Fiosgabhaig</i> (Fiskavaig)	3	17	9	8	100 %
<i>Talaisgeir</i> (Talisker)	6	31	9	19	90.3 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	13	67	33	34	100 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	5	23	9	14	100 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	0	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	24	67	27	37	95.5 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	4	33	15	15	90.9 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	8	28	11	17	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	1	2	0	2	100 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	5	21	8	13	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	2	5	3	2	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	22	68	32	36	100 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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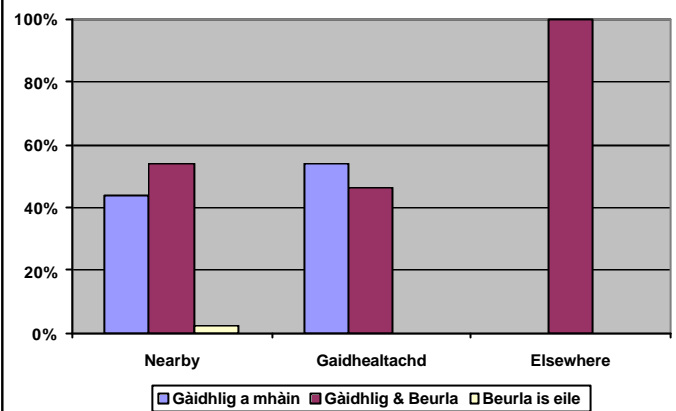
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Monolingual Gàidhlig speakers accounted for almost 40 % of all inhabitants born nearby. Those born in the wider *Gaidhealtachd* were even more likely not to speak English. The few persons born further away were also bilingual.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born in the parishes of Bracadale, Duirinish, Portree, Strath or Snizort (all Inverness-shire).

<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 three persons in the usually resident population in the area did not speak Gàidhlig according to the census files. These were all part of one family at “Tallisker House” where the local sheep farmer, his sister and brother did not have a “G” or “G&E” marked on their registration sheets. However, all were born in the parish round about 25 years earlier. It is highly unlikely that they did not learn to speak Gàidhlig then. Therefore it might be assumed that they did not speak Gàidhlig although they could do it. Their mother by the way was bilingual and her birthplace was *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist).
2. In original census report terms the district had a population of 172 persons of all ages. In total 88 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 73 were counted as monolingual Gàidhlig speakers. This count led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 93.6 %. This figure was an under-estimate of 4.5 % compared with the more realistic figures used here which take into account only the usually resident population.