

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 131

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**Area:** *An t-Oban (Oban): Sràid Stafford, Cidhe a Tuath, Ceàrnag Alexandra, Rathad Thearlaich, Sràid Pheadair, Rathad Creige Àirde, Sràid Iain & Sràid Sheorais (#74 - #126)*

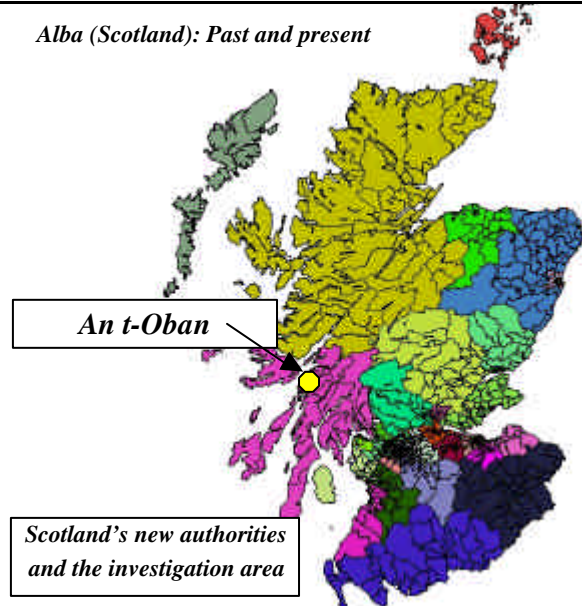
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Stafford Street, Oban Hotel, North Pier, Columba Hotel, Charles Street, Argyll Hotel, Waverley Hotel, Alexandra Place, Leopald Hotel, Columba Terrace, Great Western Hotel, Victoria Crescent, Corrylin Cottage, Laurel Cottage, Corrybeg Cottage, Duncraggan Villa, Selma Villa, Grand Hotel, Dunheanish, Achnellan Villa, Ardlui Villa, Carrick Villa, Firgrove Villa, London Villa, Daisybank Villa, Rosneath, Heath Cottage, Dunavon Villa, Claremount Villa, Claremount Place, Peter Street, Craigard Road, Balmoral Hotel, John Square, Temperance Hotel, John Street & George Street (#74 - #126)

**Number of households: 106    Population present at census night: 514**

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 59.5 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Argyll	Kilmore & Kilbride	Kilmore & Kilbride	1	1 - 21

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



### State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

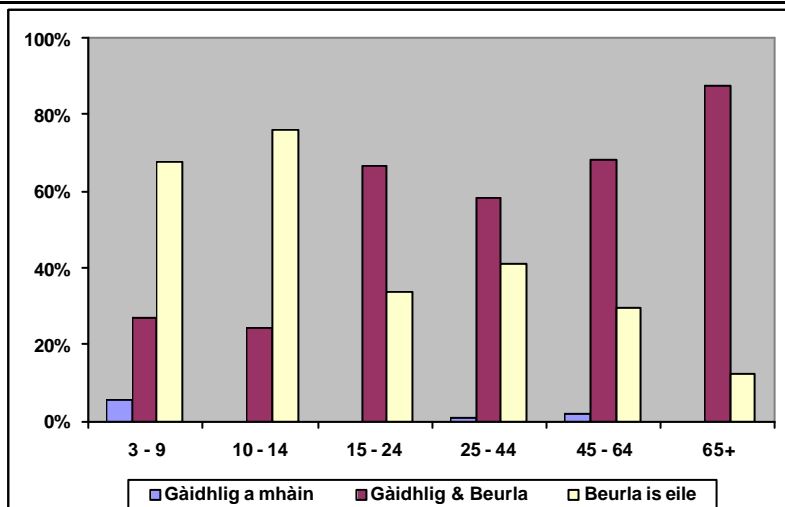
More than a third of the usually resident population of this part of the town originated from outside the Highlands. These persons apart the vast majority of townspeople still spoke Gàidhlig at the time. Only in the school age generation was English monolingualism dominant.

Gàidhlig was especially strong in quarters like *Sràid Stafford* (Stafford Street) and *Sràid Sheorais* (George Street) whereas in well-off villas around *Leth-chearcall Bhictoria* (Victoria Crescent) English was the language of the day. In the latter Lowlanders and Englishmen were most prominent.

### Area description:

The harbour town of *An t-Oban* (Oban) is the most important centre on the west coast of *Earra-Ghaidheal* (Argyll). This fact-sheet looks at the central portion between *Cidhe a Tuath* (North Pier) and the northern part of *Sràid Sheorais* (George Street). Therefore many hotels and lodging houses are included in this sample.

A very diverse range of occupations was found among the residents ranging from lawyers and those "living on private means" to ordinary seamen and servants.



**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>514</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>59.5 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33.3 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>28</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>32.0 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>42</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24.4 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>116</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>66.3 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>157</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>58.9 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>101</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>70.5 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>32</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>87.5 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>63.1 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>53.5 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>63.5 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>187</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>88.8 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19.7 %</b>

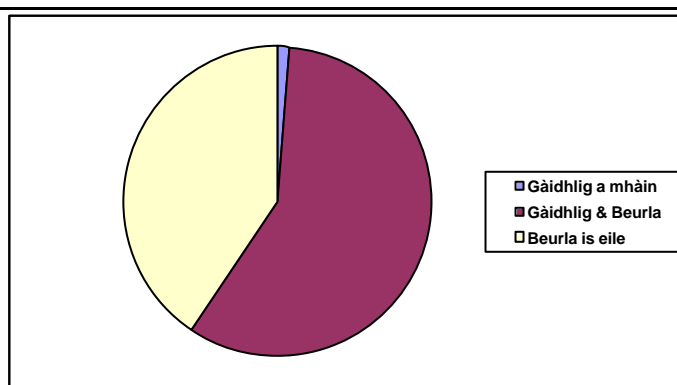
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Kilninver & Kilmelford, Kilchrenan & Dalavich and Ardchattan & Muckairn (all Argyll).

<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 & Beurla, 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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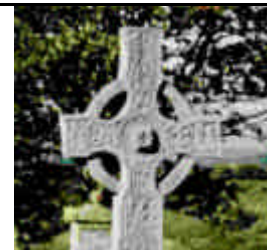
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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>An t-Oban (#1)</i>	106	425	5	248	59.5 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Sràid Stafford</i> (Stafford Street)	12	47	1	43	93.6 %
<i>Cidhe a Tuath &amp; Sràid Thearlaich</i> (North Pier & Charles Street)	6	29	0	18	62.1 %
<i>Ceàrnag Alexandra</i> (Alexandra Place)	11	45	0	26	57.8 %
<i>Leth-chearcall Bhictoria</i> (Victoria Crescent <sup>1</sup> )	30	142	1	53	38.0 %
<i>Sràid Pheadair &amp; Rathad Creige Àirde</i> (Peter Street & Craigard Road)	3	16	0	11	68.8 %
<i>Sràid Sheorais</i> (George Street)	40	129	3	87	69.8 %
<i>Sràid Iain &amp; Ceàrnag Iain</i> (John Street & John Square)	4	17	0	10	58.8 %
1 This part includes Columba Terrace and Claremount Place)					
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	12	54	3	45	88.9 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	9	44	0	35	79.5 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	5	32	0	13	40.6 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	17	104	0	17	16.3 %
Households with no children (0-14)	62	191	2	138	73.3 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	2	6	0	6	100 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	34	143	0	91	63.6 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	41	163	3	93	58.9 %
Living on private means	5	24	0	4	16.7 %
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	8	28	0	17	60.7 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	14	53	2	31	62.3 %
Remaining occupations	2	8	0	6	75.0 %

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Additional individual profiles may be downloaded from a special page on the Linguae Celticae website: [http://www.linguae-celticae.org/GLP\\_english.htm](http://www.linguae-celticae.org/GLP_english.htm)



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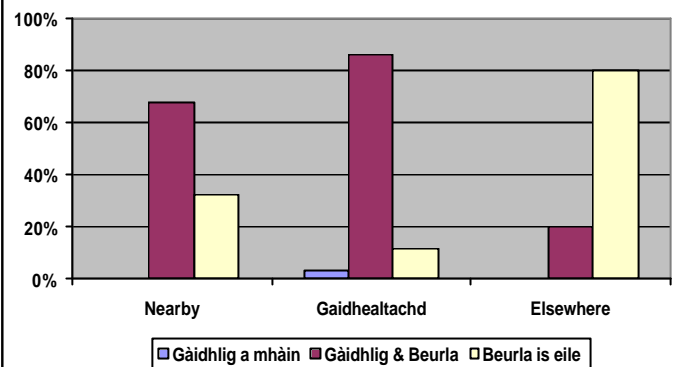
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Only a small minority of the large number of persons from outside the *Gaidhealtachd* spoke Gàidhlig. On the other hand most of those born in the town still spoke the traditional tongue in addition to English.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Kilmore & Kilbride or in the adjacent parishes of Kilninver & Kilmelford, Kilchrenan & Dalavich and Ardchattan & Muckairn (all Argyll).

<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. According to census material just five usually resident persons in this part of the town spoke “Gaelic only”. A house carpenter’s wife and two young children belonged to this group – they came originally from *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist). In addition a 60 year old dairyman from *Lios Mòr* (Lismore) and a 53 year old seaman’s wife from the district of *Torosaigh* (Torosay) on *Muile* (Mull) did not speak English.
2. Official census figures reported 267 bilingual inhabitants and six monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers out of a total population of 515 persons (53.0 %). The usually resident population, however, consisted of 253 Gàidhlig-speakers (59.5 %) including five persons “with no Gaelic”.