

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 157

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Area: *Srath Healadail (Strath Halladale): Forsan Àrd, Fors an Fhàin, Tranntail Beag, Bìogas, Baile na Creige, Cùl Feàrna, An t-Achadh Mòr, Tranntail Mòr & Gleann Creagach*

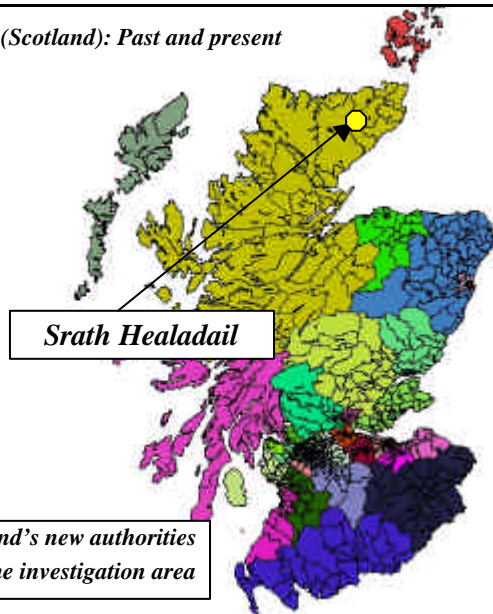
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Aultnagowl, Forsinard, Forsinain, Trantlebeag, Croick, Dalhalvaig, Craigton, Ardachue, Aultanigule, Achumore, Culfearn, Ashil, Bighouse, Maglyle, Millburn, Chilsey, Nhare, Trantlemore, Bunahoune, Dyke, Craggy, Clarville & Glencraggach)

Number of households: 81 **Population present at census night:** 333

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 72.0 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Sutherland	Reay	Reay	6	1 – 18

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

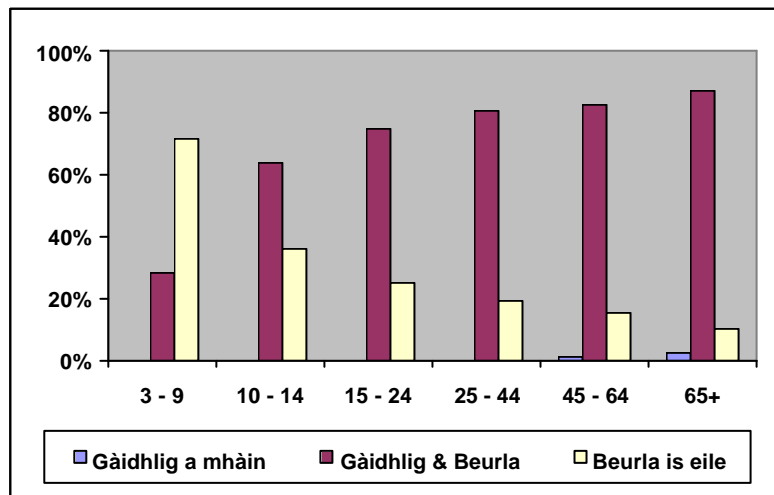
Communities in the lower part of the strath were overwhelmingly Gàidhlig-speaking (around 80 % of the local population). The “Lowland influence”, however, was already felt strongly further upstream around *Forsan Àrd* (Forsinard) where both the estate and the railway company employed a significant number of persons from outside the *Gaidhealtachd*.

The only generation predominantly English speaking was the youngest age group between 3 and 9.

Area description:

The district concerned is a long and wide strath extending just south of *Mealbhaich* (Melvich) as far as the watershed at *Forsan Àrd* (Forsinard) in the north-eastern part of *Cataibh* (Sutherland).

Besides the people living in a number of crofting hamlets on both sides of the valley inhabitants were either engaged in work on the estates or they were looking after the newly built railway line.



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. ³	Total ¹	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	333	18	1	18	296	1	212	72.0 %
3-4	17		0	1	16	0	1	6.3 %
5-9	36		0	3	33	0	13	39.4 %
10-14	27		0	2	25	0	16	64.0 %
15-24	50		1	5	44	0	33	75.0 %
25-44	74		0	6	68	0	55	80.9 %
45-64	71		0	1	70	0	59	84.3 %
65+	40		0	0	40	1	35	90.0 %
Gender								
Female	178	10	1	3	164	1	113	69.5 %
Male	155	8	0	15	132	0	99	75.0 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	235	17	1	2	215	1	171	80.0 %
In neighbouring parish¹	25	0	0	0	25	0	21	84.0 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	16	0	0	2	14	0	13	92.0 %
Other places	57	1	0	14	42	0	7	16.7 %

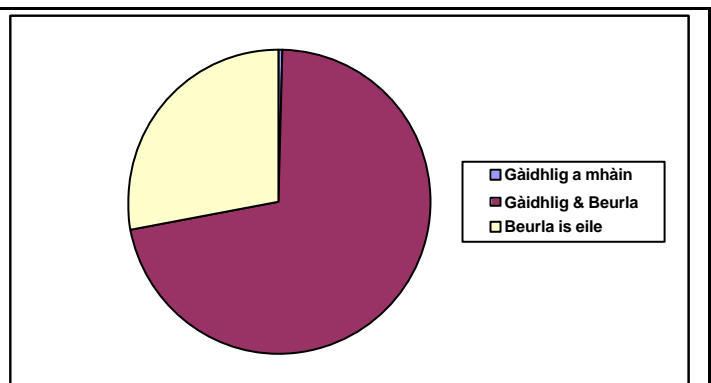
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Farr or Kildonan (both Sutherland) or Halkirk (Caithness).

² Other parishes in Scotland with more than 50 % Gàidhlig speakers in the 1891 census.

³ People described as visitors, boarders, lodgers or other similar terms.

⁴ 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.

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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Srath Healadail</i>	81	296	2	211	72.0 %
Individual communities					
<i>Forsan Àrd</i> (Forsinard)	8	39	0	15	38.5 %
<i>Fors an Fhàin</i> (Forsinain)	4	12	0	3	25.0 %
<i>Tranntail Beag & A'Chròic</i> (Trantlebeg & Croick)	9	25	0	17	68.0 %
<i>Dail Thalmhaig</i> (Dalhalvaig)	11	37	0	28	75.7 %
<i>Baile na Creige</i> (Craigton)	9	35	0	28	80.0 %
<i>An t-Achadh Mòr & Cul Feàrna</i> (Achumore & Culfearn)	9	34	0	28	82.4 %
<i>Bìogas</i> (Bighouse)	9	29	0	25	86.2 %
<i>Allt a'Mhuilinn</i> (Millburn)	7	27	0	24	88.9 %
<i>Tranntail Mòr</i> (Trantlemore)	9	36	1	26	75.0 %
<i>Gleann Creagach & Bun na h-Abhainn</i> (Glencraggach & Bunahoune)	6	22	0	18	81.8 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	18	90	0	68	75.6 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	7	31	1	25	83.9 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	7	36	0	12	33.3 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	2	12	0	0	0.0 %
Households with no children (0-14)	47	127	0	107	84.3 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	53	200	1	163	82.0 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	7	31	0	10	32.3 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	3	9	0	4	44.4 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	2	9	0	2	22.2 %
Living on private means	1	3	0	3	100 %
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	4	8	0	3	37.5 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	11	36	0	27	75.0 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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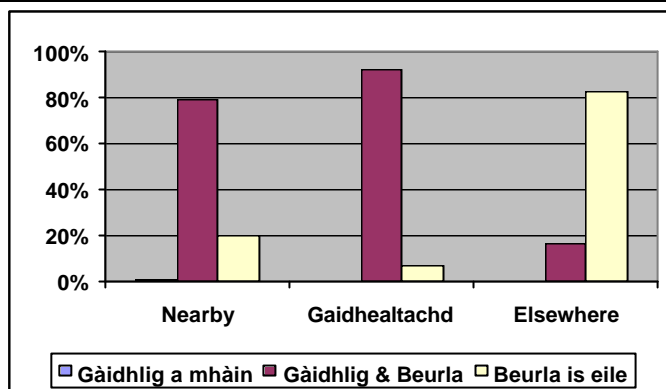
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The vast majority of those born either nearby or in the wider *Gaidhealtachd* spoke also Gàidhlig. Those born elsewhere, however, were very unlikely to speak the local tongue.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Reay or in the adjacent parishes of Kildonan, Farr (both Sutherland) or Halkirk (Caithness).

² Born in other parishes of Scotland with more than 50 % Gàidhlig speakers in the 1891 census.



Speakers according to place of birth (1) nearby¹
(2) in remaining *Gaidhealtachd*², or (3) elsewhere

Remarks

1. Only one person was reported as speaking “Gaelic only”. She was a 84 years old crofter’s widow who was born locally.
2. Official census figures reported 216 bilingual inhabitants and one monolingual Gàidhlig-speaker out of a total population of 333 persons (65.2 %). The usually resident population on the other hand consisted of 213 Gàidhlig-speakers (72.0 %) including one person “with no Gaelic”. The main cause for this difference is the use of the total population as a base for deriving percentages in the official census definition. However, children younger than 3 years of age were not taken into account in the enumeration of Gàidhlig speakers. In addition persons only temporarily living in the area (like tinsmiths or hawkers) were counted in the total population.