

# Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Studies<sup>1</sup>

## Vol. 01: Àird nam Murchan & Loch Abar an Iar (Ardnamurchan & West Lochaber)

Author: Kurt C. Duwe

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

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### Executive Summary

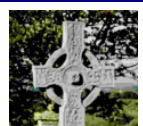
This publication is part of a series dealing with local communities which were predominantly Gaelic-speaking at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Based mainly (but not exclusively) on local population census information the reports strive to examine the state of the language through the ages from 1881 until today. The most relevant information is gathered comprehensively for the smallest geographical unit possible and provided area by area – a very useful reference for people with interest in their own community. Furthermore the impact of recent developments in education (namely teaching in Gaelic medium and Gaelic as a second language) is analysed for primary school catchments.

The area under investigation (Ardnamurchan and West Lochaber) has been a stronghold of the language right until the Second World War. Thereafter the trend did show a substantial decrease of Gaelic-speaking caused by the same various social and political pressures as experienced generally in Scotland. However, the most recent census results of 2001 paint a slightly more positive picture – especially in the communities served by the existing Gaelic medium units at Acharacle and Mòrar. It is important to note that an increase of both the number of Gaelic-speaking persons and their percentage of the population has occurred in the catchment area of Acharacle primary school (serving the area between Roshven in Moidart and Salen on Loch Sunart). Ardnamurchan generally has a far more positive ratio between younger and older Gaelic-speakers than West Lochaber.

However, conditions for the survival of the Gaelic language are still precarious everywhere although some signs of recovery are nevertheless apparent.

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## Foreword to the First Edition

Since 1881 every decennial population census in Scotland included a question about the “Gaelic-speaking” population. Despite some difficulty in interpreting this data (what really means to tick a box being able to speak Gaelic) this long-term data set holds a wealth of sociological and historical information. The series highlights the circumstances in which people speaking this Celtic language have lived and still live today. In most cases this data has been used only either for very problem-specific socio-linguistic studies or they were the basis of regional or Scotland wide analysis. However, it proved very difficult for people who were interested in their own local area to have a comprehensive overview of the number and distribution of Gaelic-speaking people right on their doorstep. This series is planned to cover all regions of Scotland where Scottish Gaelic (*A’Ghàidhlig* to be correct in its own words) was still spoken by a substantial part of the population at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Accordingly besides the main “Highland counties” of Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty, Inverness and Argyll the fringe areas of Bute (including the Isle of Arran), western Caithness, Nairn, North Dunbartonshire and more particularly Highland Perthshire will be covered. It is hoped that these small reports will be of interest not only to science people but also to those who have to cope with opinions like “Gaelic was never spoken here” in their own local community.

## Foreword to the Second Edition

Almost two years have passed since the publication of the first volume of this series. In the meantime a lot of “new” material has surfaced which merits to be publicised to a wider audience. In addition two years are sometimes a very long time when looking at the actual state of a dynamic process: the re-animation of Scottish Gaelic in a number of places. Therefore a second edition of the series is now being elaborated. Hopefully it will prove to be as popular as its predecessor.

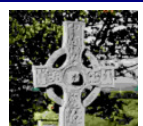
**Important note:** Although this text is written in the modern lingua franca for the purpose of maximum readership the object has to take its rightful place. Therefore *Gàidhlig* place-names or expressions are preferred and the so-called English version is mentioned in brackets where appropriate. For those unfamiliar with the language: Every Gaelic expression is written in *italics* and the other place names are mainly examples of anglicisation efforts of early cartographers.

## Acknowledgements

The author is indebted to many organisations which have been very kind in providing information about the subject. I am very grateful for this active encouragement. Very special thanks go of course to the General Register Office for Scotland for the opportunity to use the census material in this study. The team at the Demographic Dissemination Branch has been very supportive. Crown Copyright on the census data is acknowledged gratefully. Very worthwhile was also the relentless assistance of Mrs. Melissa Barlow of the University of Texas and Mrs. Liz Mackie of the University of Aberdeen who both proved to be very successful in unearthing rare material of more than a century ago. And last but not least thank is also due to the many individuals with whom I spent endless hours of discussion witnessing true Highland hospitality. *Tapadh leibh a h-uile duine!*

Wedel, *An Dàmhar* 2003  
Hamburg, *An t-Sultain* 2005

Kurt C. Duwe



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## 1 Introduction

Until very recently the mainland area west of *An Gearasdan* (Fort William) was one of the most inaccessible parts on the western seaboard of Scotland (fig. 1). Locally much of this mountainous area was known as *Na Garbh Chrìochan* (The Rough Bounds) and rightfully so. It extends from *A'Mhorbhairn* (Morvern) to the remote *Cnòideart* (Knoydart) peninsula north of the fishing village of *Malaig* (Mallaig). This region has a rich tradition in *Gàidhlig* literature (*Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair* was the most prominent bard in its own time) and the use of this Celtic language was widespread far into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The much publicised Scotland-wide retreat of the language under various social and political pressures did not spare this region, however, but the *Gàidhlig* language is still spoken today by a substantial minority. In recent years a moderate revival took place which led to the establishment of *cròileagan* (*Gàidhlig* pre-school groups) and the introduction of *Gàidhlig*-medium education (GME) in some schools. The spirit of cultural awakening in the 1970s was especially strong in this area, one of the reasons why bilingual road signs were introduced – a first on the Scottish mainland and so far the only example. It is therefore fitting to start this study series with an area where *Suas leis a' Ghàidhlig* has a substantial meaning in the community.

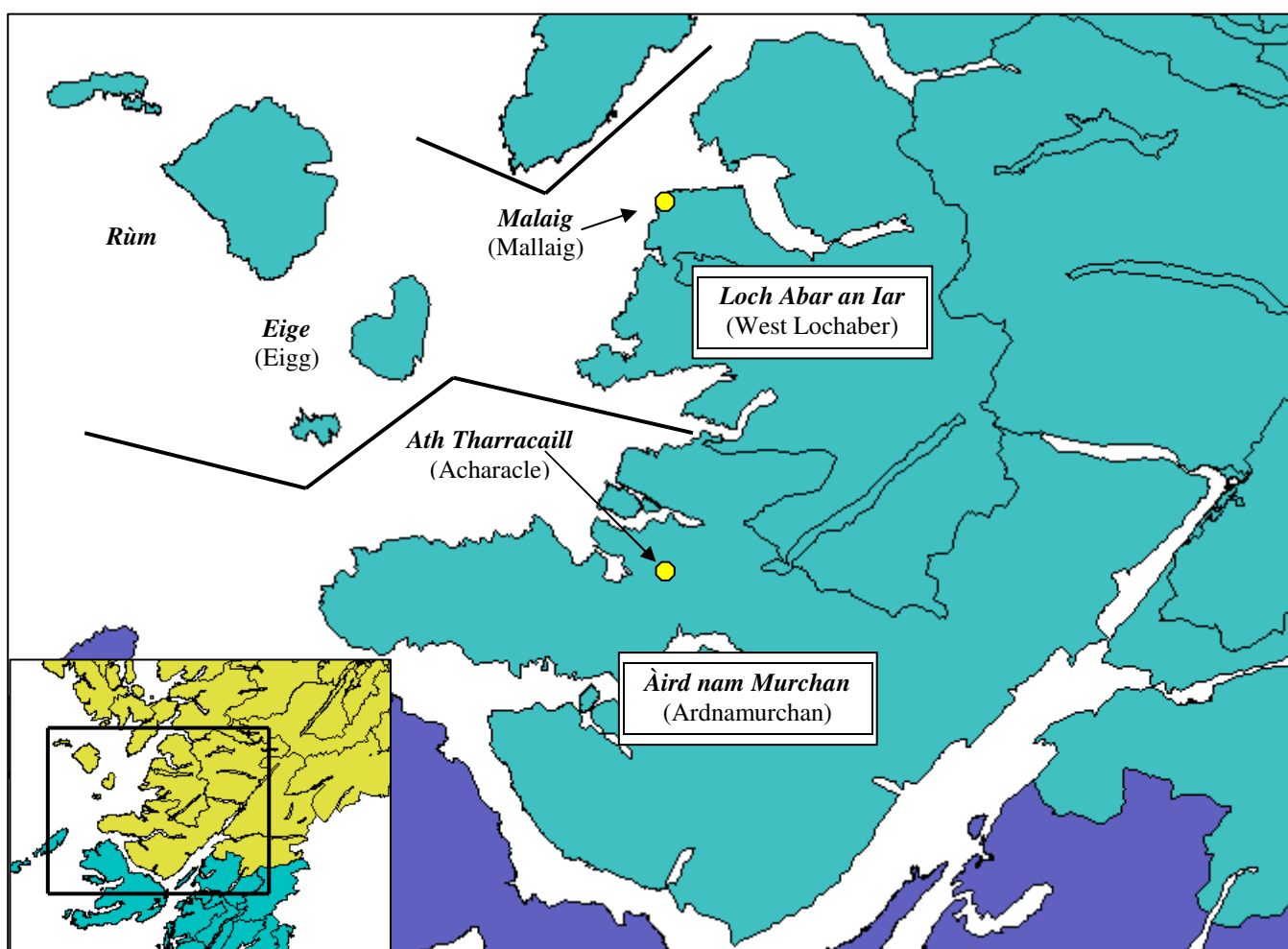


Fig. 1: Overview map of the areas under investigation<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Digital boundaries courtesy of Ordnance Survey as part of the Geography Products provided by GROS for the 2001 census.



Nowadays the area forms the south-westerly region administered by the Highland Council which superseded the old county framework in 1975. Before then the Ardnamurchan District Council (parishes of Ardnamurchan proper, Ardgour and Morvern) belonged to Argyll County; the remaining area from Moidart to Glenelg was administered as part of Lochaber District Council and belonged to the vast County of Inverness-shire (here the civil parishes of Glenelg, Arisaig & Moidart and Small Isles). In those times school policy was planned from either Lochgilphead or Inverness. This fact has to be taken into account when looking at some historic information presented in this study. For the sake of comparability this county boundary is also adhered to in some tables but for analysis of more recent data the more natural divisions are preferred. Thus the area of *Mùideart* (Moidart) is incorporated within *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan). The small communities north of *Cnòideart* on the other hand are lumped together with the adjacent communities of *Loch Aillse* (Lochalsh). They are not considered in the study region named as *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber) but in Vol. 10 of this series.

The population of roughly 4,000 is dispersed over a very wide area. The only settlement of significant size is the township of *Malaig* (Mallaig) at the end of the so-called “Road to the Isles” acting as ferry port to *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye) and the outlying small islands including *Eige* (Eigg) and *Rùm*. South of the town very small and scattered crofting settlements are dotted on the small coastal strips leaving much of the hinterland essentially as empty space. Main occupations of the inhabitants are concerned with tourist services, crofting (small hold farming), fish farming and inshore fisheries, and public services. In addition a substantial part of the population has moved there for retirement or “to get away from it all”. Roughly a quarter was not born in Scotland according to the most recent census of 2001. With this background in mind the following short chapters will look into the historical development of the use of *Gàidhlig* in the area from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century till today – mainly highlighted by references to and analysis of population census results in local detail. Information on additionally available studies of language use and especially educational provision to study *Gàidhlig* (or even being educated through the medium of the language) is used where considered as appropriate.



## 2 The Historical Background

The *Gàidhlig* language was the dominant language of the local community for centuries. Only a few immigrants and some upper class notables were ignorant of the local vernacular. The New Statistical Account of Scotland (1831-1845) provided interesting information about the usual perception of the language in the minds of the clergy. The report on the parish of *Gleann Eilg* (Glenelg) was informative indeed: “*Glenelg being a purely Highland district, the language spoken is almost exclusively Gaelic... Here, as throughout the whole Highlands, there exists the greatest ambition for the acquirement of English. Without it, it is well known there is little probability of advancing in the world; but from the system pursued in our schools, the progress hitherto made in introducing English has been limited indeed... Highlanders require a double translation; this... all, moreover, with the aim of ultimately substituting the more for the less perfect language.*” Of course there is no doubt which was meant to be the “less perfect language”!

Reality, however, was still behind this “progress” decades later. This was proven also by the results of the Scottish census in 1881 in which for the first time a question appeared concerning the *Gàidhlig* language. Although it was asked whether the person “habitually speaks Gaelic” (a very strict measure of language use) over 90 % of persons in this part of Scotland responded in the affirmative. This then was part of normal life although the English language was used (or more precise: had to be used) of course in dealing with officialdom. Apart from remote shepherd huts in glens “cleared” by their landlords (including the notorious evictions of the whole population from the island of *Rùm* in 1828) local communities were as close-knit as ever and until 1872 even *Gàidhlig* schools had their share in opposing the destruction of their very own culture.

The historical development of *Gàidhlig*-speaking is described in the following sections. In fig. 2 below the overall decrease of *Gàidhlig*-speaking intensity in the two areas shows the tendency prevailing until today.

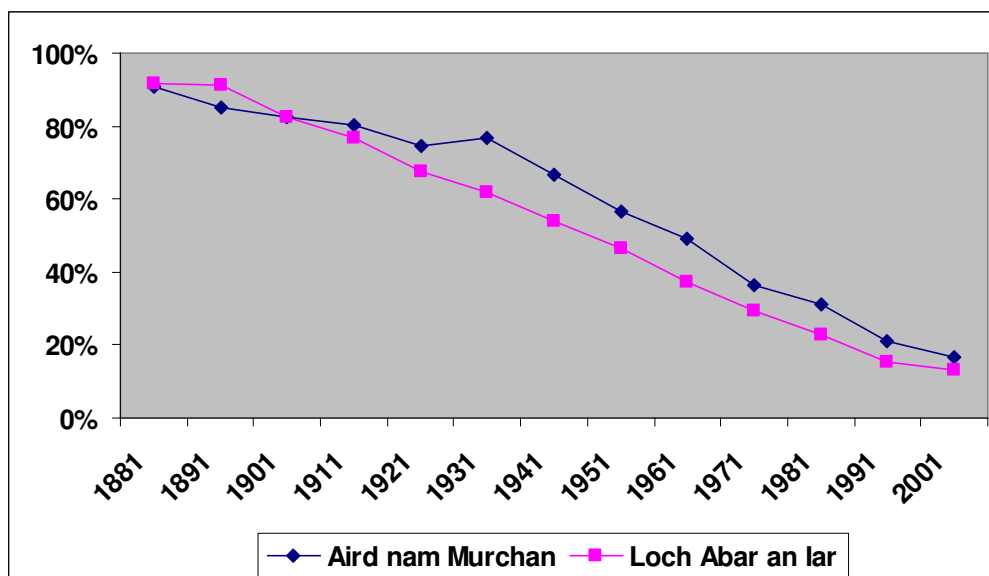


Fig. 2: *Gàidhlig*-speakers (3 years and over) as percentage of total population between 1881 and 2001 for the areas of *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan) and *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> There was no census taken in 1941 because of World War II – values are therefore interpolated between 1931 and 1951.



## 2.1 From Victorian times until the Second World War (Census 1881-1931)

The first census enumeration exercises on “Gaelic-speakers” in 1881 and 1891 saw virtually the whole population speaking the language. The strength of the language was especially evident in the remote communities around the *Àird nam Murchan* peninsula and the adjacent areas of *Arasaig & Mùideart* (Arisaig & Moidart). Roughly a quarter of the inhabitants did not even speak English (see tables 14 to 18 and fig. 3 for comparison).

The exclusive English medium education policy since 1872 and the increased building of communication networks by roads and railways, however, were to have its effect in future decades. In line with the general trend on the mainland the percentage of *Gàidhlig*-speaking persons was slightly decreasing between 1891 and 1921 (table 13). But in 1931 most of the area followed the island trend which saw a consolidation of *Gàidhlig*-speaking intensity. The only exception from the rule was the development around the fishing harbour of *Malaig* (included in the Glenelg parish result) which had led to a certain in-migration of monolingual English speakers (cf. tables 12 and 13 for historic details for the six civil parishes in the study area).

Fig. 3 presents the share of *Gàidhlig* and English speakers until 1931. In 1891 the proportion of people speaking no English was even higher than the percentage who spoke no *Gàidhlig*. This situation changed through the decades, however. But even in 1931 a non-negligible number of persons (see tables 14 to 18) remained who were returned as speaking no English (114 in total). These were either elderly persons or children aged 3 or 4 from *Gàidhlig*-speaking homes who had not yet started school education. In their future schooldays of course English would have become the dominant (often the exclusive language) of the classroom.

A closer look at the original census forms<sup>4</sup> provides even deeper insight into the overwhelmingly *Gàidhlig* speaking society of those times. For example the usually resident population<sup>5</sup> of the communities between *Miogharraidh* (Mingarry) and *Langal* was 97.5 % *Gàidhlig* speaking in 1891 (Duwe, 2005). Out of 242 inhabitants of this district in *Mùideart* (Moidart) just six were reported as not speaking the Celtic tongue: A house carpenter and his wife (both from England), a three-year old child, a wine & spirit merchant from Glasgow and last but not least the school mistress and her sister (both from England)! It was common place to employ monolingual English speaking staff to teach monolingual *Gàidhlig* speaking children in the Highlands - such was the ideology of the time.

Fortunately census information is very detailed for the years 1881, 1891 and 1901. Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of the individual strength of the language in different parts of the area in question (see also tables 14 to 18 in the annex). Substantial parts of the population consisted still of monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers even in 1901! Apart from the obvious anglicisation forces in the fishing port of *Malaig* (Mallaig) and setting aside the exclusive gentry on the island of *Rùm* English monolingualism was almost totally confined to teachers, to wives and children of local ministers and the odd shepherd from the Scottish Borders. Language switch generally took place in the years to come.

<sup>4</sup> After a period of 100 years information provided on the original census forms is publicly available. At the time of writing this is already the case for census returns of 1881, 1891 and 1901.

<sup>5</sup> This figure excludes children below the age of three, dumb persons and those who were only temporarily living in the area. The “traditional” census figures include all these persons in the total population base – associated census percentages especially are therefore considerable under-estimates of the real situation!



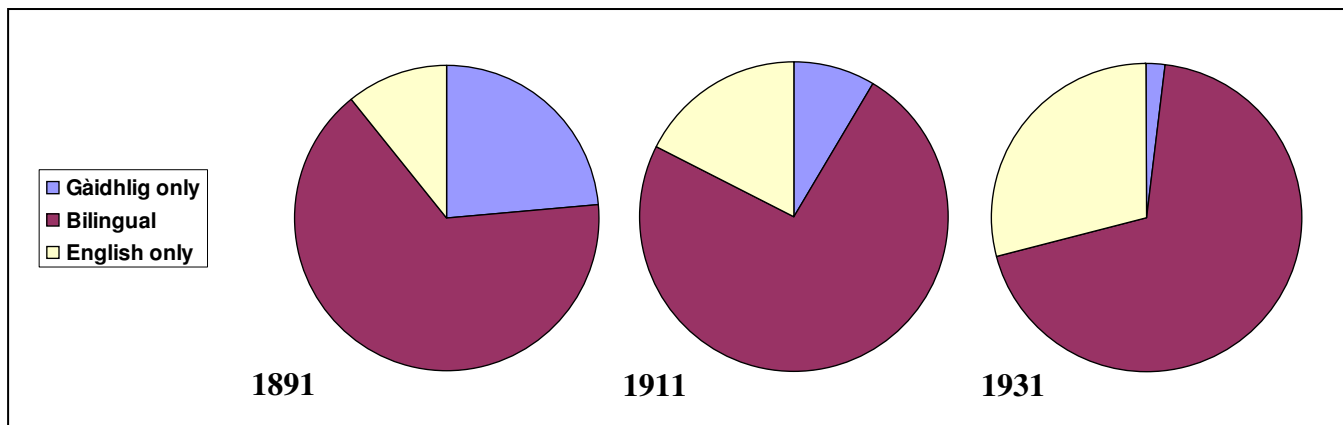


Fig. 3: Share of population speaking Gàidhlig and/or English in the study area according to census results in 1891, 1911 and 1931

Number of persons and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in selected districts of Àird nam Murchan– 1881 - 1901					
Area <sup>6</sup>	All persons speaking Gàidhlig <sup>7</sup>			Monolingual share of all Gàidhlig-speakers <sup>8</sup>	
	1881 <sup>9</sup>	1891	1901	1891	1901
Mùideart (Moidart)	555 <b>81.4 %</b>	523 <b>91.9 %</b>	437 <b>85.0 %</b>	184 <b>35.2 %</b>	100 <b>22.9 %</b>
Eilean Siùna (Isle of Shuna)	112 <b>94.9 %</b>	89 <b>85.6 %</b>	76 <b>89.4 %</b>	23 <b>25.8 %</b>	7 9.2 %
Ath Tharracaill (Acharacle)	683 <b>93.9 %</b>	537 <b>83.3 %</b>	582 <b>74.0 %</b>	244 <b>45.4 %</b>	103 <b>17.7 %</b>
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan)	866 <b>95.1 %</b>	722 <b>93.5 %</b>	578 <b>89.2 %</b>	253 <b>35.0 %</b>	163 <b>28.2 %</b>
Sròn an t-Sithein (Strontian)	635 <b>91.6 %</b>	538 <b>87.6 %</b>	456 <b>87.9 %</b>	49 9.1 %	38 8.3 %
Ach'a'Phubuil (Achaphubuil)	230 <b>88.1 %</b>	212 <b>74.1 %</b>	218 <b>87.6 %</b>	14 6.6 %	29 <b>13.3 %</b>
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour)	252 <b>88.4 %</b>	199 <b>71.8 %</b>	206 <b>93.2 %</b>	7 3.5 %	9 4.4 %
Ceann Gheàrr Loch (Kingairloch)	87 <b>80.6 %</b>	75 <b>71.0 %</b>	54 <b>70.1 %</b>	2 2.7 %	3 5.6 %
A'Mhorbhairn (Morvern)	714 <b>86.2 %</b>	644 <b>78.5 %</b>	562 <b>77.0 %</b>	95 <b>14.8 %</b>	49 8.7 %

Table 1: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig and all Gàidhlig-speakers as share of population in Àird nam Murchan according to local census data from 1881 to 1901

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiastic parish/registration district/ burgh/town/village/island or part thereof.

<sup>7</sup> Percentages of Gàidhlig-speakers above 50 % are denoted in bold figures.

<sup>8</sup> Percentages of persons speaking “Gaelic only” which exceed 10 % are shown in bold figures.

<sup>9</sup> Speaking “habitually” Gàidhlig.





Number of persons and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in selected districts of <i>Loch Abar an Iar</i> – 1881 - 1901					
Area <sup>10</sup>	All persons speaking Gàidhlig <sup>11</sup>			Monolingual share of all Gàidhlig-speakers <sup>12</sup>	
	1881 <sup>13</sup>	1891	1901	1891	1901
<i>Cnòideart</i> (Knoydart)	404 <b>88.2 %</b>	366 <b>88.2 %</b>	269 <b>87.1 %</b>	64 <b>17.5 %</b>	41 <b>15.2 %</b>
<i>Mòrar a Tuath</i> (North Morar)	462 <b>95.3 %</b>	405 <b>91.2 %</b>	460 <b>70.7 %</b>	162 <b>40.0 %</b>	160 <b>34.8 %</b>
<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig)	1,055 <b>92.9 %</b>	1,023 <b>92.2 %</b>	901 <b>83.5 %</b>	407 <b>39.8 %</b>	211 <b>23.4 %</b>
<i>Eilean Eige</i> (Isle of Eigg)	259 <b>89.0 %</b>	215 <b>92.3 %</b>	193 <b>91.5 %</b>	59 <b>27.4 %</b>	67 <b>34.7 %</b>
<i>Eilean nam Muc</i> (Isle of Muck)	41 <b>80.4 %</b>	40 <b>83.3 %</b>	38 <b>90.5 %</b>	4 <b>10.0 %</b>	1 2.6 %
<i>Eilean Rùm</i> (Isle of Rum)	76 <b>85.4 %</b>	39 <b>73.6 %</b>	81 <b>54.4 %</b>	2 5.1 %	3 3.7 %
<i>Canaidh &amp; Sannda</i> (Canna & Sanday)	106 <b>89.1 %</b>	80 <b>80.8 %</b>	75 <b>80.6 %</b>	14 <b>17.5 %</b>	25 <b>33.3 %</b>

**Table 2: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig and all Gàidhlig-speakers as share of population in *Loch Abar an Iar* according to local census data from 1881 to 1901**

The almost Draconian “English only” education policy since the 1872 Education Act had severe implications on the attitudes of many pupils in later life. As parents they often switched to English as home language to prevent their children to speak Gàidhlig. A questionnaire sent out by *An Comunn Gàidhealach* to schools in 1936 gave a fitting example of attitudes in West Lochaber (MacKinnon, 1974): “The majority of Gaelic-speaking parents are averse to speaking Gaelic to their children; they discourage the use of it so that their children have very imperfect English and no Gaelic. ... There exists an animus against the language. The more efficiency I show in teaching Gaelic, the more I am disliked by the parents. Parents object to Gaelic as a waste of time.” Considering this brainwashing exercise it is no wonder why the language was not transmitted to the next generation to a large extent.

<i>Àird nam Murchan &amp; Loch Abar an Iar</i>						
Subject \ Census	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Gàidhlig-speakers (3 years +)	7,057	6,131	5,697	5,056	4,247	3,561
Percentage of total population	91.4 %	86.8 %	82.4 %	78.3 %	70.4 %	67.8 %

**Table 3: Number of Gàidhlig-speakers (3 years and over) in *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan) and *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber) and percentage of total population speaking Gàidhlig during 1881-1931**

<sup>10</sup> Ecclesiastic parish/registration district/ burgh/town/village/island or part thereof.

<sup>11</sup> Percentages of Gàidhlig-speakers above 50 % are denoted in bold figures.

<sup>12</sup> Percentages of persons speaking “Gaelic only” which exceed 10 % are shown in bold figures.

<sup>13</sup> Speaking “habitually” Gàidhlig.



But not all developments during this period had such a negative impact on the public perception of the language. In 1936 for example the enthusiastic couple of Margaret and John Lorne Campbell bought the island of *Canaidh* (Canna) to find a home base for their *Gàidhlig* collection activities. Margaret Fay Campbell (nee Shaw), a professionally trained musician, had collected songs in *Uibhist a Deas* (South Uist) between 1929 and 1935. The collection of her husband dated back to 1936 on *Barraigh* (Barra), where he pioneered the use of sound equipment to record the *Gàidhlig* song and storytelling tradition of his homeland, *Uibhist a Deas* and *Alba Nuadh* (Nova Scotia) in Canada. The Campbell home on this tiny island developed into a centre of *Gàidhlig* excellence in later years and the library on *Canaidh* was to become the most important source for scientific work on the subject.

## 2.2 Developments in the late 20th century (Census 1951–2001)

The disruption by the war and its aftermath had a particular impact on the economic situation in the remoter parts of the Highlands. Many men did not return from war, others had to leave home to earn a living. Whole families left the area and increasingly newcomers from the lowland cities or further away moved in looking for scenery and a quieter life style. The increased mobility of the population was also to have a certain influence on the linguistic balance.

The 1951 census gave clear evidence of the disrupting impact of the war times on the language – *Gàidhlig* was spoken by just half of the population compared with more than two thirds in 1931. Nevertheless the civil parishes of *Àird nam Murchan* and *Arasaig & Mùideart* as well as the island group around *Eige* (Eigg) and *Canaidh* (Canna) remained predominantly *Gàidhlig*-speaking. The census in 1961 registered a further decline in numbers. Only five persons in the area were recorded who spoke *Gàidhlig* but not English (tables 14 to 18). From 1961 onwards the available local information on census data became more and more detailed and it is possible to look at strengths and weaknesses with more awareness: Table 19 provides this possibility. Three areas remained above the 50 % mark in 1971: *Àird nam Murchan* (the western part of the civil parish of same name), *Suaineart* (area around *Sròn an t-Sithein*: Strontian) and *Mùideart* (Moidart).

<i>Àird nam Murchan &amp; Loch Abar an Iar</i>						
Subject \ Census	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
<i>Gàidhlig</i> -speakers (3 years +)	2,261	1,711	1,225	1,007	725	590
Percentage of total population	50.5 %	41.7 %	31,6 %	26.2 %	17.8 %	14.5 %

**Table 4: Number of *Gàidhlig*-speakers (3 years and over) in *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan) and *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber) and percentage of total population speaking *Gàidhlig* during 1951-2001**

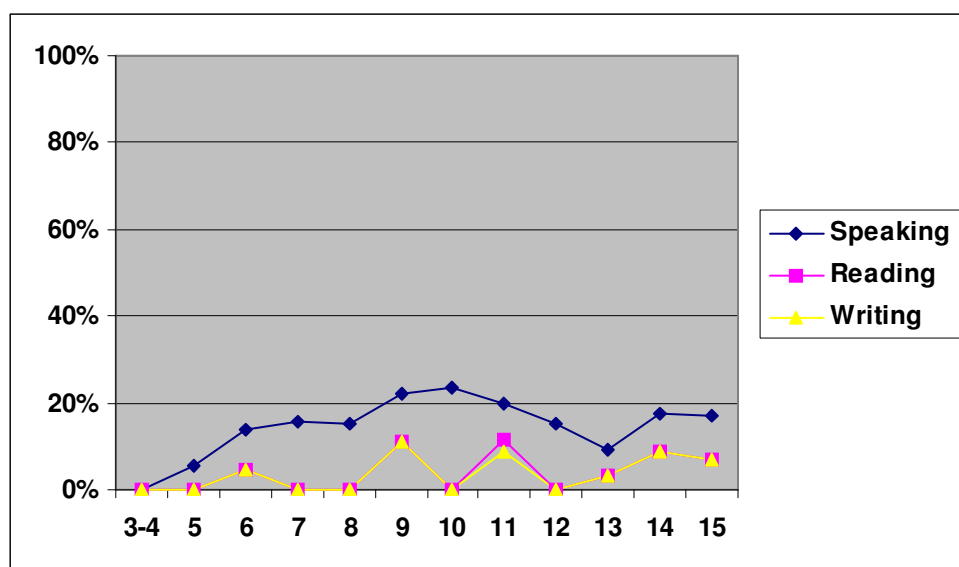
A report on *Gàidhlig*-speaking schoolchildren (Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1961) underlines this relative strength of the language. The Ardnamurchan school district was reported as one of only two remaining mainland areas<sup>14</sup> in 1957 where a significant number of children was recorded with *Gàidhlig* as first (or preferred) language. In the 12 schools considered 36 out of 179 primary school children were first language *Gàidhlig*-speakers (20.1 %). 38 pupils were attending the two nursery years of P1 and P2 with 7 as first language *Gàidhlig*-speakers, a further 9 pupils could speak *Gàidhlig* as second language. A total 21 nursery pupils could understand *Gàidhlig* (55.3 %). There are no detailed data available for the rest of the area but it is very likely to assume that most of the 30 pupils in Lochaber school district recorded as first language speakers were recorded in *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber). However, they must have been a very tiny minority.

<sup>14</sup> The other example was the Lochcarron school district which includes *A'Chomraich* (Applecross) – cf. Vol. 09.



Educational provision for *Gàidhlig* in those days (if any) was generally confined to those pupils who came from *Gàidhlig*-speaking homes. The use of the language was driven by the desire to ease their starting problems in school. As soon as these pupils had a small command of English their mother tongue was discarded as a teaching medium. The report also sheds some light on the use of the language generally: *Gàidhlig* was used as the main community language in three of the twelve school catchments in the Ardnamurchan school district. In another two communities English and *Gàidhlig* were used both. But English was the language of the playground in all but one instance. The primary school stages were in all schools mainly taught through English although half of the P1 and P2 teachers were themselves *Gàidhlig*-speakers. In only two schools was a period set aside for teaching *Gàidhlig* as a subject and no subjects were taught in *Gàidhlig* only. The seven first language pupils in the primary stages all came from *Gàidhlig*-speaking homes. Those 31 children with English as first language had a mixed parental background: 5 of them had both of their parents as *Gàidhlig*-speaking and further 13 came from families where one of the parents spoke the language. The 9 children with *Gàidhlig* as second language did in all probability originate from these bilingual families.

Later censuses presented a further sharp decline in the number of *Gàidhlig*-speaking persons in the region; this was in essence due to the ageing of the language community. *Gàidhlig*-speaking homes in the area were rare and far between and the educational system was not even providing second language provision for the vast majority of pupils. In figures 5 and 6 the language intensity is presented for different age groups for each region (see also tables 21 and 23). The educational impact on *Gàidhlig*-language maintenance is highlighted by fig. 4 below concerning children aged between 3 and 15 for the census in 1981 in *Àird nam Murchan*: At that time literacy in *Gàidhlig* was poor and educational provision was inadequate. Similar figures for *Loch Abar an Iar* are not possible to present because only a few young aged speakers were recorded in 1981.



**Fig. 4: Percentage of children able to speak, read or write *Gàidhlig* in different age groups in 1981 – Area of *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan)**

Since the 1970's a growing interest and concern appeared regarding the state and very future of the language. Local pressure on the authorities led to the erection of bilingual road signs and the teaching of *Gàidhlig* as a second language in the primary schools of *Àird nam Murchan*. The music & art courses of the *Fèisean* movement gave also prominent place to the *Gàidhlig* language, prime example being the *Fèis na Garbh Chrìochan* based in *Ath Tharracail*: The local *Mòd* (founded as early as the 1930s) turned every year into a focal point of community life where the language went to the fore year after



year. Nonetheless in 1991 language transmission was found to be very weak in those 59 families where all adults were *Gàidhlig*-speaking in the whole of *Loch Abar*. In only 45 % of these households the dependent children also spoke *Gàidhlig* and in a further 5 % some of those children did so (General Register Office, 1994).

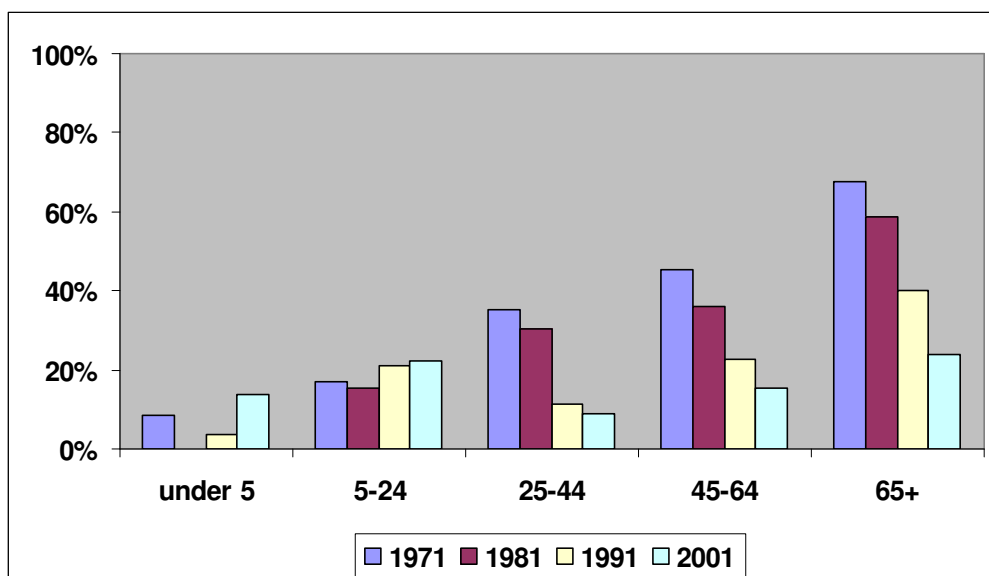


Fig. 5: Percentage of *Gàidhlig*-speakers in different age groups between 1971 and 2001 – Area of *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan)<sup>15</sup>

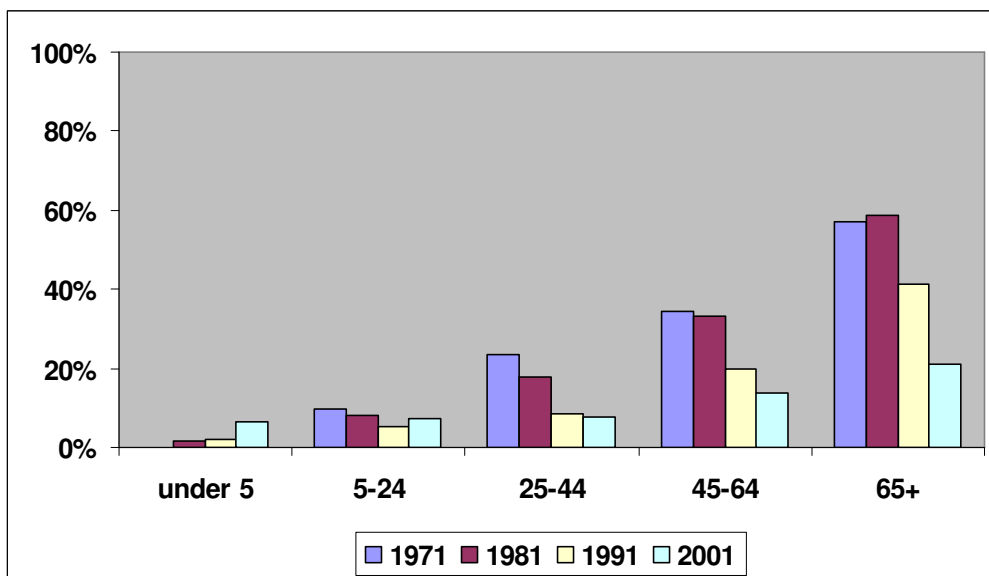


Fig. 6: Percentage of *Gàidhlig*-speakers in different age groups between 1971 and 2001 – Area of *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber)

The introduction of *Gàidhlig*-medium education in two primary schools (*Ath Tharracaill* – Acharacle and *Mòrar*) and the associated growth of *Gàidhlig* pre-school groups and nurseries, however, did not start before the 1990’s. This can easily be seen in fig. 5 above. In age groups “under 5” and “5 to 24” the percentage of speakers increased in *Àird nam Murchan*. In *Loch Abar an Iar* the “under 5” category showed some increase in percentage but overall the language is still losing ground fast.

<sup>15</sup> Under 5: *Gàidhlig* abilities in the age group 3-4 until 1991, in 2001 in all age groups 0-4.



There are still some pockets of relatively high Gàidhlig-speaking intensity especially in *Àird nam Murchan* where roughly a third of the population could speak the language in the last three census enumerations. Tables 20 and 22 interestingly provide local detail for the years 1981, 1991 and 2001. Even in 1981 more than half of the inhabitants were Gàidhlig-speaking on the island of *Canaidh* (82.3 %) and in the mainland communities of *Cnòideart* (57.1 %), *Port Uairce* (54.9 %) and *Àird Tobha & Ath Tharracaill* (54.0 %). Until today the language held out particularly well around *Ath Tharracaill* (Acharacle); major decreases had to be recorded in former strongholds around *Cill Chomhghain* (Kilchoan) and *Sròn an t-Sithein* (Strontian) and in the whole of *Loch Abar an Iar*.

### 2.3 Development of literacy in Gàidhlig between 1971 and 2001

Information on another aspect of language use became available from 1971 onwards: Census questions were introduced on the ability to read or write Gàidhlig (see tables 5 and 6 below).

The results of 1971 confirmed that the language had been largely passed on as a spoken language; literacy was neither desired nor aimed for in the educational system since 1872. The only important reason to achieve literacy in Gàidhlig in those days – the membership in Protestant denominations (notably the Free Church) with their emphasis on Gàidhlig as church language - was not strongly represented in the area.

	Number of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to read Gàidhlig				Percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to read Gàidhlig			
	1971	1981	1991	2001	1971	1981	1991	2001
<i>Àird nam Murchan</i> (Ardnamurchan)	265	245	188	201	43.4 %	46.8 %	46.2 %	60.2 %
<i>Loch Abar an Iar</i> (West Lochaber)	150	147	100	117	32.6 %	37.6 %	38.2 %	56.0 %

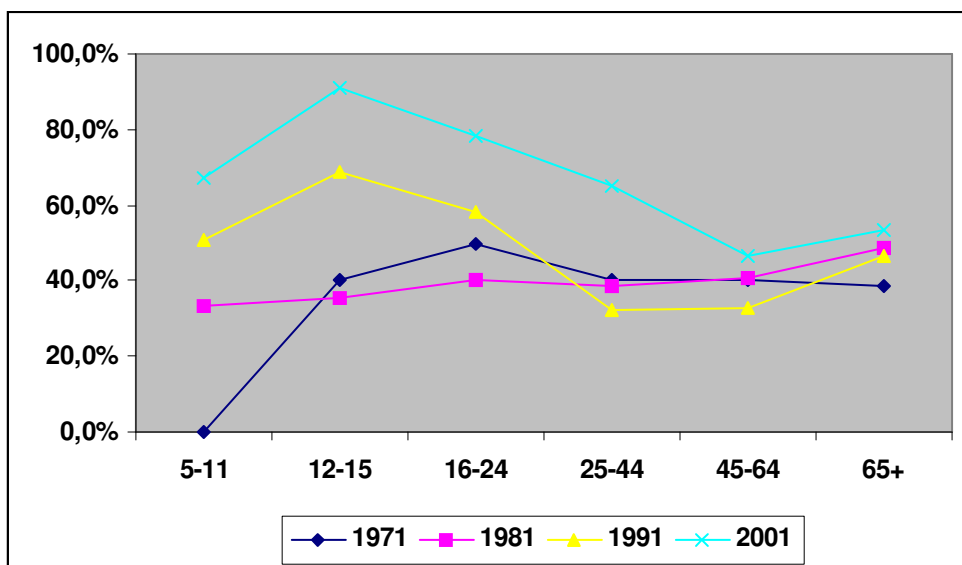
Table 5: Number of people able to read Gàidhlig and Gàidhlig readers as a percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers for both areas (1971-2001)

	Number of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to write Gàidhlig				Percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to write Gàidhlig			
	1971	1981	1991	2001	1971	1981	1991	2001
<i>Àird nam Murchan</i> (Ardnamurchan)	140	148	133	155	23.0 %	28.2 %	32.7 %	46.4 %
<i>Loch Abar an Iar</i> (West Lochaber)	80	83	67	97	17.2 %	21.5 %	25.6 %	46.4 %

Table 6: Number of people able to write Gàidhlig and Gàidhlig writers as a percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers for both areas (1971-2001)

Later census results though saw a rising percentage of literacy in the language with more people able to write Gàidhlig in 2001 than in 1971. This was a result of improved school education and the more recent phenomenon of adults learning the language in evening classes or at home. Fig. 7 outlines this clearly with a marked increase in reading abilities since 1981.





**Fig. 7: Persons able to read Gàidhlig as a percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers for both areas in different age groups (1971-2001)**

Census results about the school age generation indicate especially an improved educational status of the language. In 1971 a few children aged between 5 and 14 were able to read the language in *Àird nam Murchan*, in *Loch Abar an Iar* there were virtually no school children with reading ability enumerated. The reading capability increased considerably until 2001 when 58 of 76 speakers in *Àird nam Murchan* could read the language in the age group of 5 to 15 (76.3 %), the comparable figure for *Loch Abar an Iar* was 24 of 32 children (75.0 %).



### 3 The Situation of 2001 in Focus

Census results for 2001 were the most comprehensive and detailed information base ever provided for Scotland. This was also true for the inclusion of questions on *Gàidhlig* language knowledge. Two new aspects were introduced:

1. Persons were asked whether they were "able to understand spoken Gaelic".
2. Children under the age of 3 were enumerated regarding their language abilities.

The following sections will describe generally the distribution of language abilities (inter-generational and community by community) and the specific conditions of the younger age groups in local primary school catchments.

#### 3.1 General overview: *Gàidhlig* language capabilities in 2001

Comparing both areas – *Àird nam Murchan* and *Loch Abar an Iar* – the language shows in some aspects positive signs but with considerably different intensity. Special consideration will be given to educational aspects in section 3.2 dealing with the young generation in school catchments. In general the following conclusions may be drawn from the 2001 census information:

***Àird nam Murchan:*** Looking at the language abilities according to the year of birth (fig. 8) there is still certainly a bias towards the older generation. By far the highest percentages are found in the generation born before World War I. Table 7 underlines the progress made in the young age groups with a sharp increase of *Gàidhlig*-speaking children in the pre-school ages of 3 and 4 since 1991. Even more striking is the comparison between the age cohort of 3 to 24 and the total population. Persons able to understand, speak or read *Gàidhlig* are found to be more frequent below the age of 16 than in the population as a whole. This is a very important precondition for the prospective viability of the language community. The intensity of language knowledge is quite variable: The small area statistics provide information on census output areas – the smallest spatial resolution available for interpretation (tables 20 and 24). Here the part of population able to speak the language ranged from roughly 6 % in *An t-Sailean* (Salen) to some 46 % in neighbouring *Ath Tharracaill* (Acharacle). The corresponding figures for the “understands spoken Gaelic” category vary between around 10 % in *Àird Tòirinis* (Ardtornish) and more than 54 % in *Ath Tharracaill*.

Looking at the overall picture (fig. 10) three quarters of the population live in neighbourhoods where between 20 % and 35 % know at least some *Gàidhlig* and in 8 % of neighbourhoods the language is even stronger. Literacy levels in the area are still on the increase but remain comparably low with around 60% of *Gàidhlig*-speakers able to read and just below 50 % able to write the language. 6 children below the age of 3 (10.3 %) were recorded with some knowledge of *Gàidhlig* (2001 being the first census to enumerate language ability in this age group). Returns came from output areas *Àird Tobha* (Ardtoe), *Cill Chomhghain* (Kilchoan) and *Gleann Uige* (Glenuig). The new category of “understanding spoken Gaelic” in 2001 did show 151 persons (7.8 %) in the area who were competent in at least some aspects of the language in addition to the 335 (17.0 %) *Gàidhlig* speakers.

***Loch Abar an Iar:*** The picture is less encouraging for this region. The language abilities according to the year of birth of respondents (fig. 9) are still much higher in the grand-grand-parental generation than in younger age groups. However, because virtually no children had been recorded as *Gàidhlig*-speaking in 1991 there has been a remarkable increase for those aged 3 to 11. Table 8 shows that this was not enough to provide a positive difference of percentages between the young and the total population.



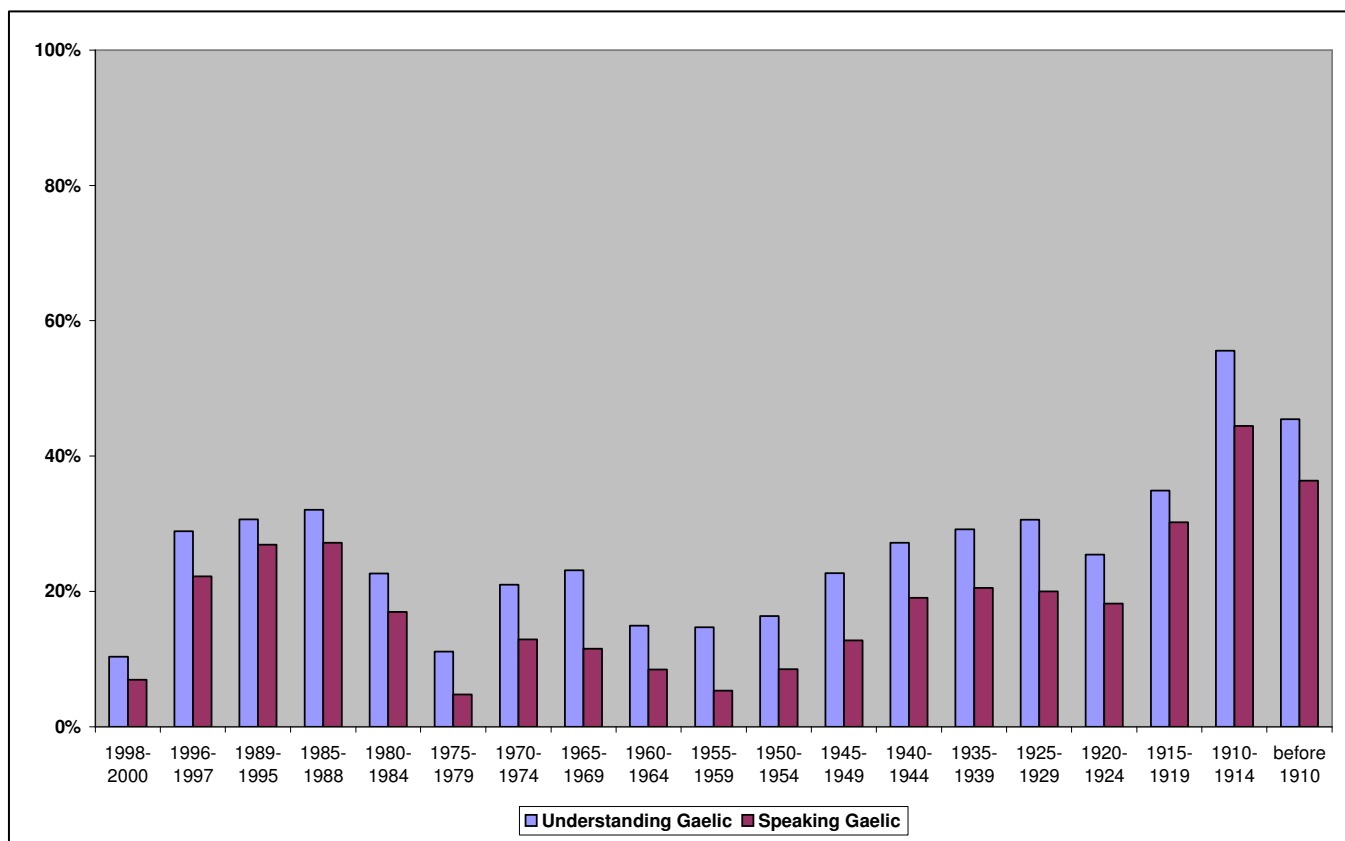


Fig. 8: Percentage of population able to understand or speak Gàidhlig and year of birth – area of Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) according to Census 2001

Age group	2001				1991		Diff. 2001 – 1991		
	Knowing <sup>16</sup> Gàidhlig		Able to speak & read Gàidhlig		Able to speak Gàidhlig				
0-2	6	10.3 %	0	0.0 %	4	6.9 %	n/a	n/a	n/a
3-4	13	28.9 %	2	4.4 %	10	22.2 %	2	3.5 %	+18.7 %
5-11	57	30.6 %	33	17.7 %	50	26.9 %	49	26.7 %	+0.2 %
12-15	33	32.0 %	25	24.3 %	29	28.2 %	23	28.0 %	+0.2 %
16-24	19	16.4 %	10	8.6 %	12	10.3 %	30	13.5 %	-3.2 %
3-24	122	27.1 %	70	15.6 %	101	22.4 %	104	19.1 %	+3.3 %
All ages	486	24.8 %	201	10.2 %	335	17.0 %	406	21.1 %	-4.1 %
Difference		+2.3 %		+5.4 %		+5.4 %		-2.0 %	

Table 7: Knowledge of Gàidhlig in younger age groups in Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) in 2001 and 1991

<sup>16</sup> Persons able to understand spoken Gàidhlig and/or able to speak, read or write Gàidhlig.





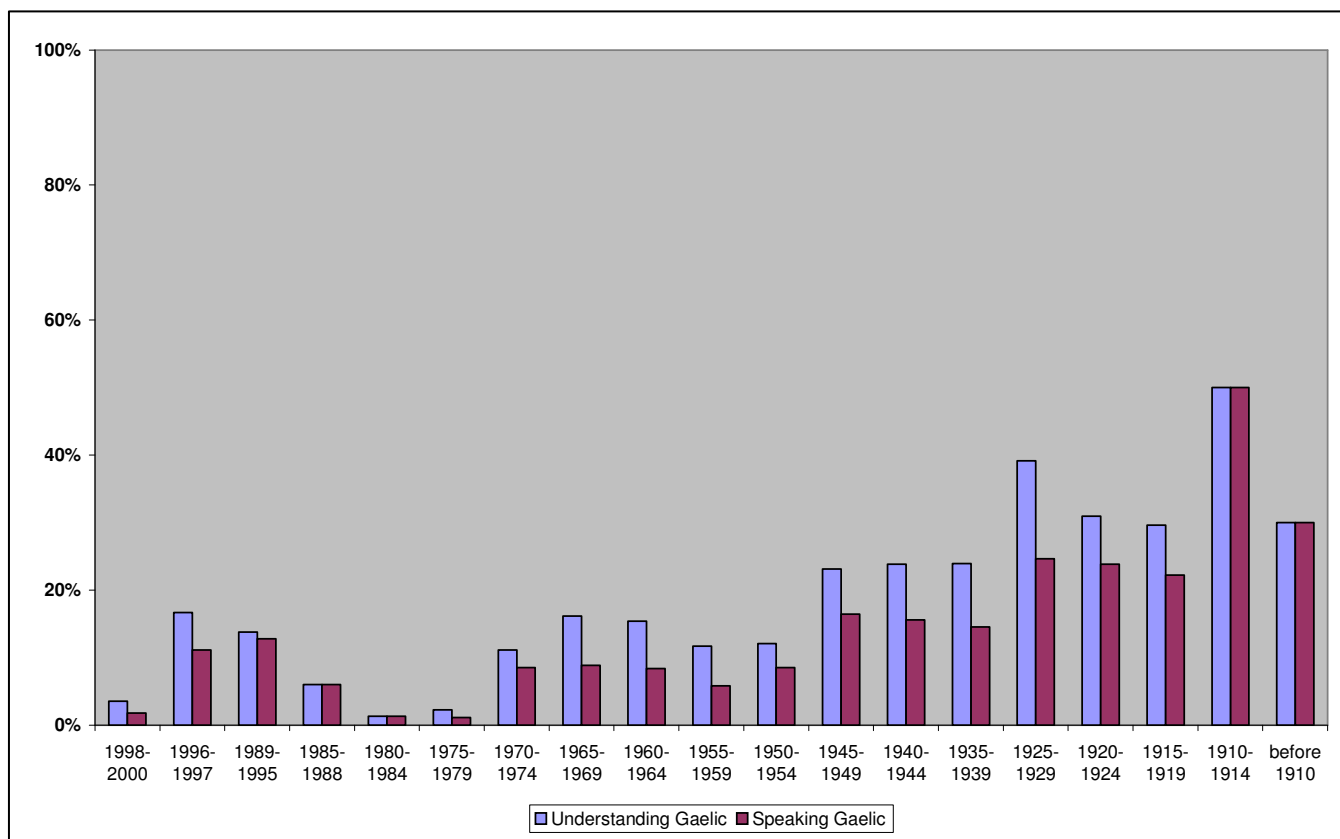


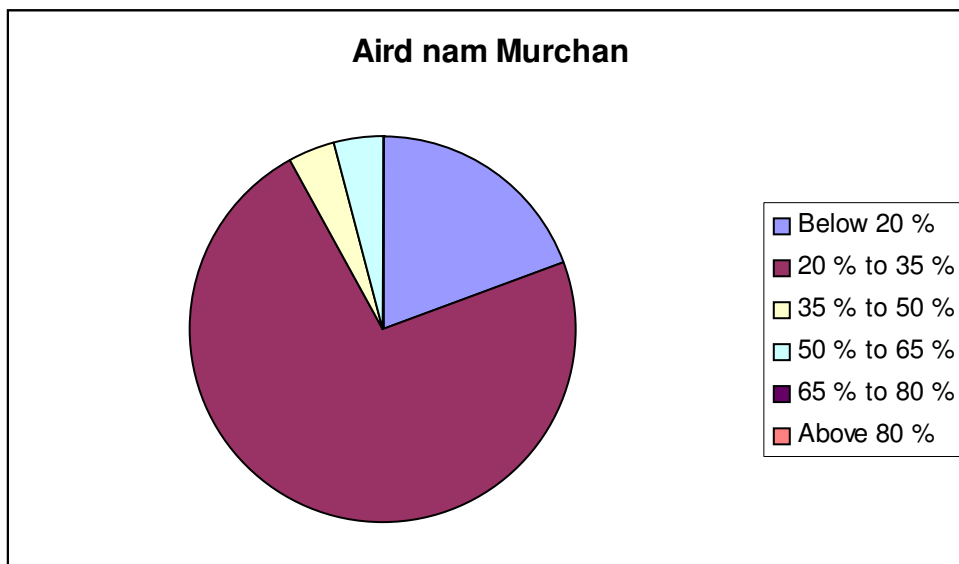
Fig. 9: Percentage of population able to understand or speak Gàidhlig and year of birth – area of Loch Abar an Iar (West Lochaber) according to Census 2001

Age group	2001				1991		Diff. 2001 – 1991		
	Knowing <sup>17</sup> Gàidhlig		Able to speak & read Gàidhlig		Able to speak Gàidhlig				
0-2	2	3.6 %	0	0.0 %	1	1.8 %	n/a	n/a	n/a
3-4	9	16.7 %	1	1.9 %	6	11.1 %	1	2.1 %	+9.0 %
5-11	28	13.8 %	18	8.9 %	26	12.8 %	3	1.5 %	+11.3 %
12-15	6	6.0 %	6	6.0 %	6	6.0 %	9	7.6 %	-1.6 %
16-24	3	1.8 %	1	0.6 %	2	1.2 %	18	7.3 %	-6.1 %
3-24	46	8.8 %	26	5.0 %	40	7.7 %	31	5.2 %	+2.5 %
All ages	306	16.6 %	117	6.3 %	209	10.9 %	261	14.3 %	-3.4 %
Difference		-7.8 %		-1.3 %		-3.2 %		-8.1 %	

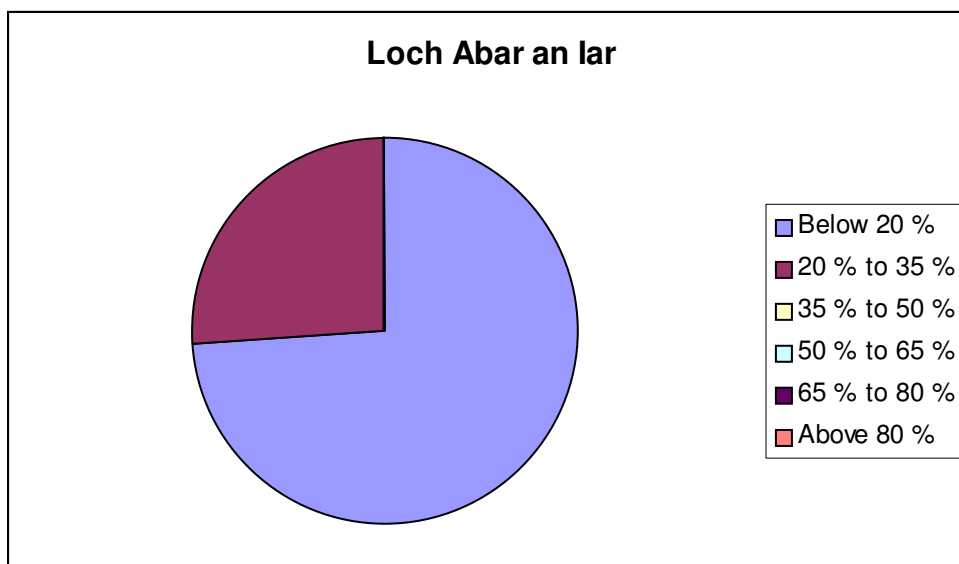
Table 8: Knowledge of Gàidhlig in younger age groups in Loch Abar an Iar (West Lochaber) in 2001 and 1991

<sup>17</sup> Persons able to understand spoken Gàidhlig, or able to speak, read or write Gàidhlig.





**Fig. 10:** Share of population living in neighbourhoods (census output areas) with different intensity of language knowledge in *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan) according to Census 2001



**Fig. 11:** Share of population living in neighbourhoods (census output areas) with different intensity of language knowledge in *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber) according to Census 2001

Small area statistics underline also a large variation of language abilities between communities (tables 21 and 25). The part of population able to speak the language ranged from roughly 5 % in some parts of *Malaig* to some 18 % around *Mòrar*. The corresponding figures for the “understands spoken Gaelic” category vary between around 7 % and 25 % respectively in those two locations. In this area only in every fourth neighbourhood more than 20 % of the population knew some *Gàidhlig* in 2001 (fig. 11). Literacy levels are lower than in *Àird nam Murchan* (56% of *Gàidhlig*-speakers able to read and 46 % able to write the language). Only two children below the age of 3 were recorded with some knowledge of *Gàidhlig* in 2001. Returns came from output areas in *Malaig* (Mallaig). The category of “understanding spoken Gaelic” in 2001 gave additional 97 persons (5.7 %) in the area who were at least competent in some aspects of the language in addition to the 209 (10.9 %) *Gàidhlig*-speakers.



### 3.2 Children with knowledge of Gàidhlig in primary school catchments

Aggregating the small area statistics for the catchment areas of local primary schools provides an interesting avenue to investigate the influence of local authority and parental attitudes towards Gàidhlig. It is possible to calculate numbers and percentages for different age groups and for the purpose of this investigation they have been attributed to pre-school age (0-4), primary school age (5-11) and secondary school age (12-15). As an additional indicator a column is provided in table 9 with the age group of 24-35 which is meant to represent the language abilities of possible parents.

Knowledge of Gàidhlig (Census 2001) in Selected Primary School Catchment Areas								
Primary School(s)	“Pre-School“ Age 0-4		“Primary“ Age 5-11		“Secondary“ Age 12-15		“Parents“ Age 25-34	
<i>Eige, Rùm, Canaidh, Eilean nam Muc</i> (Eigg, Rum, Canna & Muck)	1	11.1 %	4	26.7 %	--	--	3	12.0 %
Malaig & Inbhir Iodh (Mallaig & Inverie)	8	13.6 %	9	9.0 %	--	--	22	15.2 %
<i>Mòrar</i> (Morar)	2	13.3 %	10	40.0 %	3	20.0 %	7	20.6 %
<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig)	--	--	5	10.0 %	2	8.0 %	3	8.6 %
<i>Ath Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle)	13	32.5 %	26	57.8 %	14	37.8 %	19	31.7 %
<i>Cill Chomhghain &amp; Gleann Borbhdail</i> (Kilchoan & Glenborrodale)	2	25.0 %	7	21.9 %	3	37.5 %	5	27.8 %
<i>Sròn an t-Sithein</i> (Strontian)	3	17.6 %	5	20.8 %	1	7.1 %	9	20.9 %
<i>Ard Ghobhar</i> (Ardgour)	--	--	11	29.7 %	2	25.0 %	5	20.0 %
<i>Achadh a`Phùbail</i> (Achaphubuil)	1	9.1 %	7	36.8 %	4	22.2 %	2	10.5 %
<i>Loch Alainn</i> (Lochaline)	--	--	1	3.5 %	9	50.0 %	3	11.1 %

**Table 9: Number and percentage of persons with knowledge of Gàidhlig in selected age groups for primary school catchment areas according to the census 2001**

Looking at the various age groups within the school catchment population the following statements can be provided:

- **Pre-school children:** The first *cròileagan* in the area was established in *Ath Tharracaill* in 1992. In later years pre-school provision was slowly spreading until 2001 when local authority Gàidhlig-medium nurseries in *Ath Tharracaill* and *Malaig* as well as *cròileagan* in *Arasaig*, *Mòrar* and *Ath Tharracaill* were available. The pre-school children with some knowledge of Gàidhlig in the 2001 census were distributed over the area following roughly the same geographical pattern.



- **Primary school children:** A visiting teacher of *Gàidhlig* as a second language was traditionally provided in the primary schools in *Àird nam Murchan* by Highland Council. This service was withdrawn, however, in the late 1990's and only in some schools education under the GLPS scheme was planned later. There was no second language provision in other schools of the investigation area. Besides this *Gàidhlig*-medium education took off in *Ath Tharracaill* in 1992 and *Mòrar* in 1993. Also active in the period of interest were three *Sràdagan* groups for children of primary school age in *Mòrar*, *Ath Tharracaill* and on the island of *Eige*. All in all 22 children attended GME in *Ath Tharracaill* and 27 in *Mòrar* in the 2000/2001 school year. Looking at the census results the 24 children with some knowledge of *Gàidhlig* in the catchments of *Arasaig*, *Malaig* and *Mòrar* represent the *Gàidhlig*-medium pupils very accurately. In other words: virtually no other child knew something of the language. 26 children were counted in the catchment area of *Ath Tharracaill*; this is also a good measure of GME influence. The remaining primary school children enumerated as "knowing some Gaelic" may be outcome of second language educational efforts at some schools.
- **Secondary school children:** The whole area has been served by three different secondary schools until 2002. The northernmost primary school catchments (including *Ath Tharracaill*) were served by Mallaig High School. *Loch Alainn* pupils generally went to Tobermory High School on the Isle of Mull and the remaining pupils experienced their secondary education in Lochaber High School in Fort William. Educational provision of the language was very uneven. In Mallaig High School only *Gàidhlig*-medium pupils got instruction in the language whereas in Lochaber High School some second language provision was provided together with *Gàidhlig*-medium education. In contrast in Tobermory High School *Gàidhlig* as a second language was taught to virtually all pupils in stages S1 and S2. Overall census results follow this overall trend very accurately. In the school term of 2000/2001 (*Comunn na Gàidhlig*, 2002) there were 13 pupils in Mallaig High school in S1 and S2 who were educated as fluent speakers (coming all from GMUs in the area).
- **Parents:** Contrary to some expectations knowledge of *Gàidhlig* was not absent in the age group of prospective parents (taken here as 24-35 for practical reasons). Percentages ranged from 8 % to 31 % and corresponded very tightly with those of children with *Gàidhlig* knowledge.

A very positive development should be mentioned at the end of this section. Caused by the intensive presence of pro-*Gàidhlig* activities in the whole catchment area (from *Mùideart* to *An t-Sailean*) both number and percentage of *Gàidhlig*-speakers had increased in *Ath Tharracaill* since 1991! Table 10 provides positive reading for those who have not yet lost hope on the language.

<b><i>Gàidhlig</i>-speaking population in catchment area of <i>Bun-sgoil Ath Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle Primary School)</b>		
Census 1981	145	36.3 %
Census 1991	131	22.1 %
Census 2001	142	22.4 %

**Table 10: Number and percentage of persons able to speak *Gàidhlig* in the catchment area of *Bun-sgoil Ath Tharracaill* (Acharacle Primary School) according to census results from 1981 – 2001**



## 4 Future Perspectives

The *Gàidhlig*-speakers enumerated in 2001 and their associated language skills will form the basis on which future developments have to be built upon. In this Highland area there is still a remnant *Gàidhlig*-speaking group (say the grandparent generation) who could pass over even their community dialect to the local children. There are many interested parents (whether *Gàidhlig*-speaking or not) who are keen to open up a bilingual future for their children. Some educational infrastructure exists although the problem of finding suitable teachers is evident as ever. Looking at the level of language knowledge (table 11) the situation in the *Àird nam Murchan* area was definitely positive in 2001. The language viability indicator (LVI<sup>18</sup>) shows a positive sign towards the younger generation and the language community indicator (LCI<sup>19</sup>) stays at a level (above 30 %) where the language cannot be ignored completely in community life. In *Loch Abar an Iar* the situation is different and the language community has a strong bias towards the older generation.

Area	Knowledge of <i>Gàidhlig</i> in 2001					
	Young age (0-24)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	Born in Scotland (Language community indicator)
<i>Àird nam Murchan</i> (Ardnamurchan)	128	25.2 %	492	24.3 %	+ 0.9 %	32.6 %
<i>Loch Abar an Iar</i> (West Lochaber)	48	8.3 %	308	16.2 %	- 7.9 %	17.7 %
<i>In comparison:</i> <i>Gaidhealtachd</i> (Highland)	7.0 %		8.9 %		- 1.9 %	10.0 %

**Table 11: Intergenerational viability and *Gàidhlig*-speakers born in Scotland in *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan) and *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber) in comparison with the whole *Gaidhealtachd* (Highland) local authority according to census data of 2001**

The picture in individual census output areas (OA) is similar. There is no location north of *Mùideart* which has a positive LVI. The areas with strongly “viable” language populations are concentrated around *Ath Tharracail* and a few are scattered in the parishes of *Ard Ghobhar* (Ardgour) and *A’Mhorbhairn* (Morvern) on a much lower LCI. Most prominent highlight is the OA of *Ath Tharracail* (taking in *Ceann Tràgha* and *Airigh Bheagaig*) with an LVI of +27.0 % and an LCI of 62.7 %.

Developments after the 2001 census provided some additional positive impetus to the situation of *Gàidhlig* in the communities of *Àird nam Murchan*. On the educational side the new secondary school *Àrd Sgoil Àird nam Murchan* started in *Sròn an t-Sithein* (Strontian) in 2002. It caters for all pupils of the peninsula providing a comprehensive education for *Gàidhlig*-medium pupils and a consistent approach to second language tuition with compulsory language teaching in stage S1.

<sup>18</sup> LVI: The “Language Viability Indicator” is a measure of the prospective reproductivity of language speakers in a community. It is here defined on the basis of knowledge of *Gàidhlig* in the census and is calculated by the difference of percentages between the age group below 25 years of age and the total population.

<sup>19</sup> LCI: The “Language Community Indicator” is a measure of the relative strength of the language in the “local” population. It is calculated here by taking the values for *Gàidhlig* knowledge only for those who were born in Scotland. This is a rough estimation as many who are born in Scotland come from English speaking homes but nevertheless it is a better approximation of language strength than looking simply at the resident population.



In addition a part-time trial of Gàidhlig-medium education was started at *Cill Chomhghain* (Kilchoan) with four children in P1 in the 2001/2002 school year. Moreover all English-medium pupils in the primary schools of *Ath Tharracaill*, *Sròn an t-Sithein* and *Cill Chomhghain* started to take part in the GLPS scheme for Gàidhlig learners and later this provision was extended to other primary schools in *Àird nam Murchan*. The attendance of the two Gàidhlig-medium day nurseries at *Ath Tharracaill* and *Malaig* is still significant with 16 children for example enrolled in the 2003/2004 session. The overall temporal evolution of Gàidhlig-medium primary education is depicted in fig. 12 for the period 1992-2005.

**In conclusion:** The situation of Gàidhlig in *Àird nam Murchan* and *Loch Abar an Iar* is still precarious although not without signs of recovery.

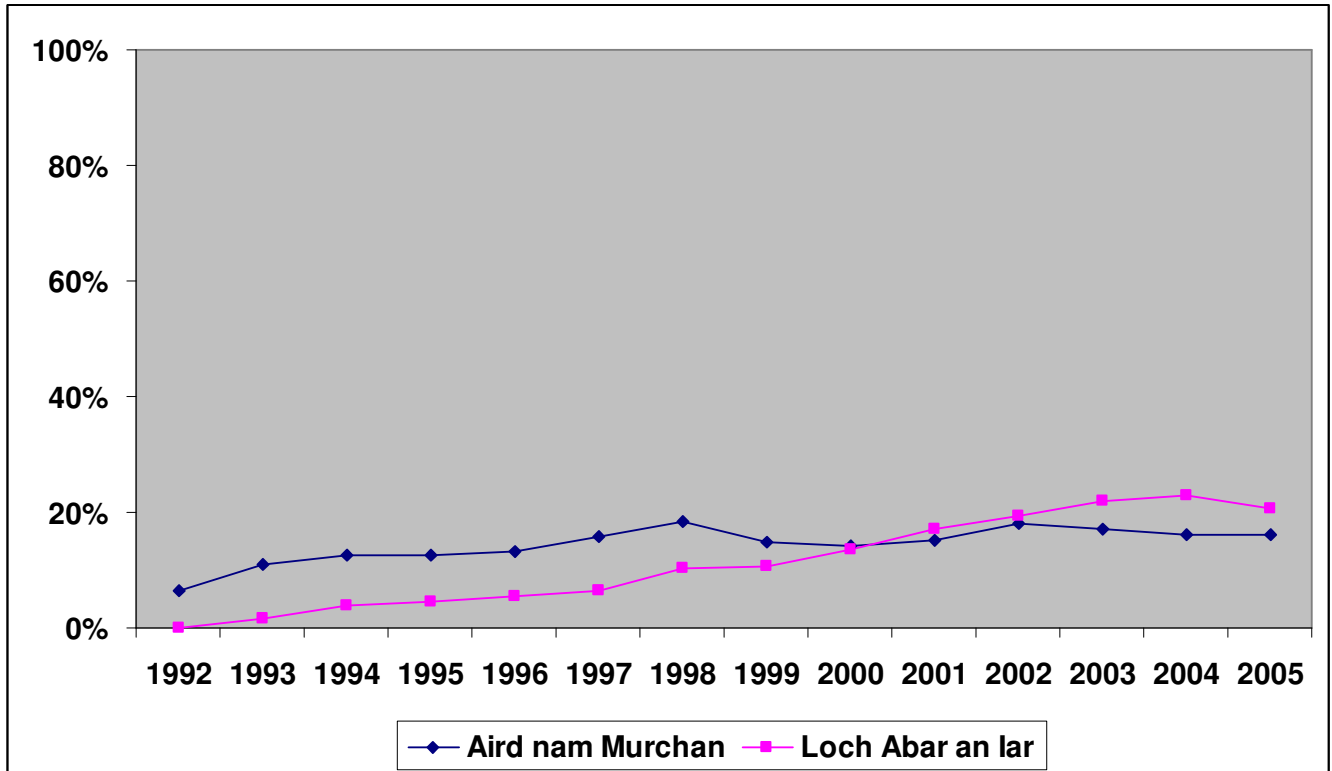


Fig. 12: Share of primary school children attending Gàidhlig-medium classes in *Àird nam Murchan* and *Loch Abar an Iar* (September 1992 – September 2005)<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Gaelic Dept, University of Strathclyde.



## I. Supplementary Tables

Census	Civil Parish					
	Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan)	Àird Ghobhar <sup>21</sup> (Ardgour)	A' Mhorbhairn (Morvern)	Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn (Small Isles)	Arasaig & Mùideart (Arisaig & Moidart)	Gleann Eilg (Glenelg) <sup>22</sup>
1881	2,123	569	714	482	1,722	1,453
1891	1,797	486	644	374	1,511	1,371
1901	1,616	478	571	387	1,414	1,231
1911	1,338	434	489	323	1,280	1,192
1921	1,142	359	363	340	1,045	998
1931	947	358	315	210	861	870
1951	632	163	209	139	545	573
1961	473	132	131	97	407	471
1971	345	95	100	80	245	360
1981	328	97	62	45	177	298
1991	219	80	57	24	146	199
2001	190	60	43	22	88	187

**Table 12: Number of Gàidhlig-speakers (aged 3 years and over) for the six civil parishes in the area according to census data from 1881 to 2001**

Census	Civil Parish					
	Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan)	Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour)	A' Mhorbhairn (Morvern)	Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn (Small Isles)	Arasaig & Mùideart (Arisaig & Moidart)	Gleann Eilg (Glenelg)
1881 <sup>23</sup>	93.6 %	87.4 %	86.2 %	87.8 %	93.8 %	90.8 %
1891	88.3 %	72.6 %	78.5 %	92.3 %	91.2 %	91.2 %
1901	82.7 %	87.4 %	78.2 %	77.0 %	84.3 %	81.9 %
1911	86.8 %	74.1 %	70.5 %	81.6 %	81.5 %	71.4 %
1921	83.4 %	66.7 %	61.5 %	65.6 %	76.0 %	60.7 %
1931	83.1 %	70.3 %	68.5 %	74.7 %	73.3 %	51.5 %
1951	66.7 %	43.9 %	45.4 %	64.7 %	54.4 %	38.6 %
1961	61.3 %	44.1 %	31.0 %	57.1 %	45.9 %	30.4 %
1971	45.1 %	30.2 %	25.0 %	47.1 %	36.3 %	24.3 %
1981	38.5 %	26.2 %	18.2 %	37.8 %	24.7 %	20.7 %
1991	23.7 %	18.5 %	16.8 %	17.0 %	17.9 %	14.0 %
2001	18.0 %	13.5 %	13.6 %	16.8 %	11.9 %	12.4 %

**Table 13: Gàidhlig-speakers (aged 3 years and over) as percentage of total population for the six civil parishes in the area according to census data from 1881 to 2001**

<sup>21</sup> Ardgour was established as civil parish after 1891. Figures given are for the respective area of three ecclesiastic parishes.

<sup>22</sup> The northern part of Glenelg parish lies now in the area of Lochalsh (Vol. 09). It is not considered in this study except in tables 10 to 12 to enable historical comparison.

<sup>23</sup> The 1881 census question was concerned with „habitually“ speaking Gaelic.



Gaelic and Gaelic only in 1881 and 1891: Àird nam Murchan <sup>24</sup>	Total Popula- tion	Gàidhlig and Eng- lish	Gàidhlig but no English
Census/Selected Area			
<b>1881 (Speaking “habitually” Gaelic)</b>	<b>3,738</b>	<b>3,400</b>	
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) CP	2,269	2,123	
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour) CP	651	569	
A’Mhorbhairn (Morvern) CP	818	708	
----- Villages and islands (included in the above) ---			
Eilean Carna (Isle of Carna)	7	7	
Eilean Fritheal (Friel-House Island)	1	1	
----- Ecclesiastic parishes (differing from areas above) ---			
Àth Tharracaill (Acharacle) – southern portion only	737	683	
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan)	911	866	
A’Mhorbhairn (Morvern)	758	653	
Baile a’Chaolais & Àird Ghobhar (Ballachulish & Ardgour) – western part	282	252	
Lios Mòr (Lismore) – western mainland portion only	108	87	
Cill Mhàilidh (Kilmallie) – south-western mainland portion only	261	230	
Sròn an t-Sithein (Strontian)	691	635	
----- Census registration districts (differing from areas above) ---			
Àth Tharracaill (Acharacle) – southern portion only	725	675	
Suaineart (Sunart)	633	582	
A’Mhorbhairn (Morvern)	828	714	
<b>1891</b>	<b>3,522</b>	<b>2,261</b>	<b>664</b>
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) CP	2,034	1,251	546
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour) CP	670	463	23
A’Mhorbhairn (Morvern) CP	818	547	95
----- Villages and islands (included in the above) ---			
Eilean Carna (Isle of Carna)	10	3	7
----- Ecclesiastic parishes (differing from areas above) ---			
Àth Tharracaill (Acharacle) – southern portion only	656	293	244
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan)	775	469	253
A’Mhorbhairn (Morvern)	749	483	95
Baile a’Chaolais & Àird Ghobhar (Ballachulish & Ardgour) – western part	277	192	7
Lios Mòr (Lismore) – western mainland portion only	107	73	2
Cill Mhàilidh (Kilmallie) – south-western mainland portion only	286	198	14
Sròn an t-Sithein (Strontian)	674	546	49
----- Census registration districts (differing from areas above) ---			
Àth Tharracaill (Acharacle) – southern portion only	645	293	244
Suaineart (Sunart)	614	489	49
A’Mhorbhairn (Morvern)	820	549	95

**Table 14: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig in 1881 and 1891 – selected areas (civil and ecclesiastic parishes, census registration districts or inhabited islands) in Àird nam Murchan**

<sup>24</sup> Civil parishes of Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan), Ard Ghobhar (Ardgour) and A’Mhorbhairn (Morvern).





<b>Gaelic and Gaelic only between 1901 and 1971: Àird nam Murchan</b>	Total Popula- tion	Gàidhlig and Eng- lish	Gàidhlig but no English
<b>Census/Selected Area</b>			
<b>1901</b>	3,231	2,271	394
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) CP	1,954	1,312	304
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour) CP	547	437	41
A'Mhorbhairn (Morvern) CP	723	515	49
----- Villages and islands (included in the above) ---			
Eilean Carna (Isle of Carna)	7	7	-
----- Ecclesiastic parishes (differing from areas above) ---			
Àth Tharracaill (Acharacle) – southern portion only	798	488	103
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan)	648	415	163
A'Mhorbhairn (Morvern)	672	471	46
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour)	470	386	38
Lios Mòr (Lismore) – western mainland portion only	77	51	3
Sròn an t-Sithein (Strontian)	566	460	41
----- Census registration districts (differing from areas above) ---			
Àth Tharracaill (Acharacle) – southern portion only	787	479	103
Suaineart (Sunart)	519	418	38
A'Mhorbhairn (Morvern)	730	522	49
Baile a'Chaolais & Àird Ghobhar (Ballachulish & Ardgour) – western part	221	197	9
Cill Mhàilidh (Kilmallie) – south-western mainland portion only	249	180	29
----- Electoral divisions (differing from areas above) ---			
A'Mhorbhairn (Morvern)	728	520	49
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan)	1,326	816	262
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour)	547	437	41
Suaineart (Sunart)	621	492	42
<b>1911</b>	2,822	2,076	185
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) CP	1,542	1,191	147
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour) CP	586	414	20
A'Mhorbhairn (Morvern) CP	694	471	18
<b>1921</b>	2,497	1,794	70
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) CP	1,369	1,085	57
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour) CP	538	350	9
A'Mhorbhairn (Morvern) CP	590	359	4
<b>1931</b>	2,108	1,573	47
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) CP	1,139	907	40
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour) CP	509	354	4
A'Mhorbhairn (Morvern) CP	460	312	3
<b>1951</b>	1,779	995	9
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) CP	948	623	9
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour) CP	371	163	-
A'Mhorbhairn (Morvern) CP	460	209	-
<b>1961</b>	1,421	733	3
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) CP	700	471	2
Àird Ghobhar (Ardgour) CP	299	131	1
A'Mhorbhairn (Morvern) CP	422	131	-
----- County council electoral divisions (differing from areas above) ---			
Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) CCED	525	344	2
Àird Ghobhar & Suaineart (Ardgour & Sunart) CCED	474	258	1
<b>1971</b>	1,478	540	*

**Table 15: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig between 1901 and 1971 – selected areas (civil and ecclesiastic parishes, census registration districts, electoral divisions or inhabited islands) in Àird nam Murchan**



Gaelic and Gaelic only in 1881 and 1891: <i>Loch Abar an Iar</i> <sup>25</sup>	Total Popula- tion	Gàidhlig and Eng- lish	Gàidhlig but no English
Census/Selected Area			
<b>1881 (Speaking “habitually” Gaelic)</b>	3,987		3,657
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg) CP	1,601		1,453
<i>Arasaig &amp; Mùideart</i> (Arisaig & Moidart) CP	1,836		1,722
<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn</i> (Small Isles) CP	550		482
----- Inhabited islands (included in the above) ---			
<i>Eilean Seona</i> (Isle of Shuna)	118		112
<i>Eilean Eige</i> (Isle of Eigg)	291		259
<i>Eilean Rùm</i> (Isle of Rum)	89		76
<i>Eilean Canaidh</i> (Isle of Canna)	57		46
<i>Eilean Sanndaigh</i> (Isle of Sanday)	62		60
<i>Eilean nam Muc</i> (Isle of Muck)	51		41
----- Ecclesiastic parishes (differing from areas above) ---			
<i>Àth Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle) – northern portion only	499		480
<i>Àird nam Murchan</i> (Ardnamurchan) – northern portion only	1,337		1,242
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg)	1,164		1,069
<i>Cnòideart</i> (Knoydart)	437		384
----- Census registration districts (differing from areas above) ---			
<i>Àth Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle) – northern portion only	700		667
<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig)	1,136		1,055
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg)	658		587
<i>Cnòideart</i> (Knoydart)	458		404
<i>Mòrar a Tuath</i> (North Morar)	485		462
<b>1891</b>	3,541	2,155	1,051
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg) CP	1,503	956	415
<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn</i> (Small Isles) CP	436	295	79
<i>Arasaig &amp; Mùideart</i> (Arisaig & Moidart) CP	1,602	904	557
----- Villages and islands (included in the above) ---			
<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig) Vi	154	115	33
<i>Eilean Seona</i> (Isle of Shuna)	104	66	23
<i>Eilean Eige</i> (Isle of Eigg)	233	156	59
<i>Eilean Rùm</i> (Isle of Rum)	53	37	2
<i>Eilean Canaidh</i> (Isle of Canna)	40	27	-
<i>Eilean Sanndaigh</i> (Isle of Sanday)	62	39	14
<i>Eilean nam Muc</i> (Isle of Muck)	48	36	4
----- Ecclesiastic parishes (differing from areas above) ---			
<i>Àth Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle) – northern portion only	492	288	150
<i>Àird nam Murchan</i> (Ardnamurchan) – northern portion only	1,110	616	407
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg)	1,088	654	351
<i>Cnòideart</i> (Knoydart)	383	281	56
----- Census registration districts (differing from areas above) ---			
<i>Àth Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle) – northern portion only	673	405	207
<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig)	929	499	350
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg)	644	411	169
<i>Cnòideart</i> (Knoydart)	420	302	64
<i>Mòrar a Tuath</i> (North Morar)	444	243	162

**Table 16: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig between 1881 and 1891 – selected areas (civil and ecclesiastic parishes, census registration districts or inhabited islands) in *Loch Abar an Iar***

<sup>25</sup> Parishes of *Arasaig & Mùideart* (Arisaig & Moidart), *Gleann Eilg* (Glenelg) and *Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn* (Small Isles).



<b>Gaelic and Gaelic only between 1901 and 1931: <i>Loch Abar an Iar</i><sup>26</sup></b>	Total Popula- tion	<i>Gàidhlig</i> and Eng- lish	<i>Gàidhlig</i> but no English
<b>Census/Selected Area</b>			
<b>1901</b>	<b>3,675</b>	<b>2,340</b>	<b>692</b>
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg) CP	1,503	953	278
<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn</i> (Small Isles) CP	455	289	96
<i>Arasaig &amp; Mùideart</i> (Arisaig & Moidart) CP	1,678	1,096	318
----- Villages and islands (included in the above) ---			
<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig) Vi	319	219	42
<i>Eilean Seona</i> (Isle of Shuna)	85	69	7
<i>Eilean Eige</i> (Isle of Eigg)	211	126	67
<i>Eilean Rùm</i> (Isle of Rum)	149	78	3
<i>Eilean Canaidh</i> (Isle of Canna)	49	21	13
<i>Eilean Sanndaigh</i> (Isle of Sanday)	44	29	12
<i>Eilean nam Muc</i> (Isle of Muck)	42	37	1
----- Ecclesiastic parishes (differing from areas above) ---			
<i>Àth Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle) – northern portion only	412	289	53
<i>Àird nam Murchan</i> (Ardnamurchan) – northern portion only	1,266	807	265
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg)	543	426	77
<i>Cnòideart</i> (Knoydart)	932	500	201
----- Census registration districts (differing from areas above) ---			
<i>Àth Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle) – northern portion only	599	406	107
<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig)	1,079	690	211
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg)	543	426	77
<i>Cnòideart</i> (Knoydart)	309	228	41
<i>Mòrar a Tuath</i> (North Morar)	652	299	160
----- Electoral divisions (differing from areas above) ---			
<i>Gleann Garadh</i> (Glengarry) – western portion only	28	27	-
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg)	824	627	118
<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig)	1,599	920	356
<i>Mùideart</i> (Moidart)	698	475	122
<b>1911</b>	<b>3,637</b>	<b>2,459</b>	<b>336</b>
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg) CP	1,670	1,067	125
<i>Arasaig &amp; Mùideart</i> (Arisaig & Moidart) CP	1,571	1,100	180
<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn</i> (Small Isles) CP	396	292	31
<b>1921</b>	<b>3,536</b>	<b>2,228</b>	<b>155</b>
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg) CP	1,643	950	48
<i>Arasaig &amp; Mùideart</i> (Arisaig & Moidart) CP	1,375	963	82
<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn</i> (Small Isles) CP	518	315	25
<b>1931</b>	<b>3,146</b>	<b>1,884</b>	<b>57</b>
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg) CP	1,690	844	26
<i>Arasaig &amp; Mùideart</i> (Arisaig & Moidart) CP	1,175	838	23
<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn</i> (Small Isles) CP	281	202	8

**Table 17: Number of persons speaking *Gàidhlig* between 1901 and 1931 – selected areas (civil and ecclesiastic parishes, villages, census registration districts or inhabited islands) in *Loch Abar an Iar***

<sup>26</sup> Parishes of *Arasaig & Mùideart* (Arisaig & Moidart), *Gleann Eilg* (Glenelg) and *Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn* (Small Isles).



<b>Gaelic and Gaelic only between 1951 and 1971: Loch Abar an Iar</b>	Total Popula- tion	Gàidhlig and Eng- lish	Gàidhlig but no English
<b>Census/Selected Area</b>			
<b>1951</b>	2,703	1,246	11
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg) CP	1,486	571	2
<i>Arasaig &amp; Mùideart</i> (Arisaig & Moidart) CP	1,002	537	8
<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn</i> (Small Isles) CP	215	138	1
<b>1961</b>	2,606	973	2
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg) CP	1,549	469	2
<i>Arasaig &amp; Mùideart</i> (Arisaig & Moidart) CP	887	407	-
<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn</i> (Small Isles) CP	170	97	-
----- County council electoral divisions (differing from areas above) -----			
<i>Gleann Eilg</i> (Glenelg) CCED	405	196	-
<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig) CCED	925	179	-
<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig) CCED	857	376	2
<i>Mùideart</i> (Moidart) CCED	249	121	-
<b>1971</b> <sup>27</sup>	2,309	685	*

**Table 18: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig between 1951 and 1971 – selected areas (civil parishes and county council electoral divisions) in Loch Abar an Iar**

<b>Number of persons and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in former County Council Electoral Divisions (Inverness-shire &amp; Argyll) (Population aged 3 years and over)</b>						
<b>Area</b>	<b>1961/71 Code</b>	<b>1961</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>2001</b>
<i>Mùideart</i> (Moidart)	MU	121 51.7 %	80 50.0 %	37 30.3 %	50 22.3 %	38 18.5 %
<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig)	AR	286 47.3 %	165 33.7 %	117 25.3 %	93 16.9 %	50 9.3 %
<i>Mòrar</i> <sup>28</sup> (Morar)	MO	92 46.0 %	60 29.3 %	79 30.1 %	42 18.7 %	45 16.2 %
<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig)	MA	179 20.6 %	160 18.3 %	150 16.0 %	102 10.2 %	91 9.6 %
<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn</i> (Small Isles)	SI	97 62.6 %	80 50.0 %	45 37.8 %	24 17.0 %	22 17.2 %
<i>Àird nam Murchan</i> (Ardnamurchan)	AM	346 65.9 %	245 50.5 %	211 39.2 %	148 25.5 %	145 20.9 %
<i>Suaineart</i> <sup>29</sup> (Sunart)	SU	127 59.9 %	95 40.1 %	117 43.8 %	71 23.1 %	45 12.5 %
<i>Àird Ghobhar</i> (Ardgour)	AG	132 46.3 %	95 32.4 %	97 26.2 %	80 18.5 %	60 13.8 %
<i>A'Mhorbhairn</i> (Morvern)	MV	131 32.8 %	100 26.3 %	62 18.2 %	57 16.8 %	43 14.0 %

**Table 19: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig and all Gàidhlig-speakers as share of population (aged three years and over) for pre-1975 county council electoral divisions and some sub-areas (1961 to 2001)**

<sup>27</sup> Due to rounding of figures to the nearest 0 and 5 it is impossible to provide „Gaelic only“ numbers in 1971.

<sup>28</sup> Difference between county council electoral divisions (Moidart and Arisaig) and a civil parish (Arisaig & Moidart).

<sup>29</sup> Difference a county council electoral division (Ardgour & Sunart) and a civil parish (Ardgour).



Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers <sup>30</sup>							
Àird nam Murchan							
Map No	Census output area <sup>31</sup>	1981		1991		2001	
01	<i>Gleann Uige</i> (Glenuig)	14	19.4 %	15	11.1 %	19	15.1 %
02	<i>Dail nam Breac</i> (Dalnabreck)	23	46.0 %	35	39.3 %	20	26.0 %
03	<i>Àird Tobha</i> (Ardtoe)	74	54.0 %	20	26.0 %	22	28.2 %
04	<i>Ath Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle)			27	33.3 %	39	46.4 %
05	<i>Àird Seileadh</i> (Ardshealach)	34	27.0 %	34	18.4 %	32	23.7 %
06	<i>An t-Sailean</i> (Salen)					7	6.5 %
07	<i>Gleann Bhorghdail</i> (Glenborrodale)	16	18.3 %	25	19.8 %	26	17.5 %
	<i>Port Uairce</i> (Portuairk)	28	54.9 %				
08	<i>Cill Chomhghain</i> (Kilchoan)	58	43.7 %	42	37.5 %	22	15.6 %
09	<i>Rèiseapol</i> (Resipol)	47	40.6 %	35	28.9 %	14	9.9 %
10	<i>Sròn an t-Sithein</i> (Strontian)	70	46.3 %	36	19.4 %	31	14.2 %
11	<i>Achadh a'Phùbail</i> (Achaphubuil)	29	17.7 %	31	16.1 %	27	14.0 %
12	<i>Àird Ghobhar</i> (Ardgour)	50	31.2 %	33	19.6 %	6	10.3 %
13	<i>Clò Mhuilinn</i> (Clovullin)					20	14.6 %
14	<i>Ceann a'Gheàrr Loch</i> (Kingairloch)	18	34.0 %	16	29.1 %	7	12.1 %
15	<i>Na Drimnean</i> (Drimnin)	23	33.9 %	14	26.4 %	14	23.3 %
16	<i>Àird Tòirinis</i> (Ardtornish)	7	8.6 %	10	9.9 %	8	9.1 %
17	<i>Loch Alainn</i> (Lochaline) a	32	18.5 %	33	18.6 %	7	10.5 %
18	<i>Loch Alainn</i> (Lochaline) b					14	13.7 %

**Table 20: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers for the census output areas in Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) according to data from 1981 to 2001**

Àird nam Murchan: Gàidhlig-speaking in Age Groups (1971-2001)								
Age group	1971		1981		1991		2001	
<b>0-2</b> <sup>32</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	6.9 %
<b>3-4</b>	5	8.3 %	0	0.0 %	2	3.5 %	10	31.3 %
<b>5-24</b>	65	17.1 %	72	15.2 %	102	21.0 %	91	22.4 %
<b>25-44</b>	140	35.4 %	129	30.2 %	65	11.5 %	44	8.9 %
<b>45-64</b>	190	45.2 %	138	36.0 %	117	22.7 %	103	15.4 %
<b>65 +</b>	200	67.8 %	196	58.9 %	120	40.0 %	83	23.9 %
<b>Total (3 years and over)</b>	610	39.4 %	524	31.2 %	406	21.1 %	331	16.9 %
<b>Born in Scotland</b>	n/a	n/a	505	37.7 %	390	26.2 %	310	23.3 %

**Table 21: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups in Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) between 1971 and 2001**

<sup>30</sup> Population base in 1981 and 1991 were respondents aged 3 years and over; in 2001 figures are related to the total population.

<sup>31</sup> Information on data for individual census output areas may not be available for every census to prevent the disclosure of individuals. A more detailed list of all locations in each output area is to be found in section IV.

<sup>32</sup> Information only available since 2001.



Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers <sup>33</sup>									
<i>Loch Abar an Iar</i>									
Map No	Census output area	1981		1991		2001			
51	<i>Eilean Canaidh</i> (Isle of Canna)	14	82.3 %	26	20.8 %	22	16.8 %		
	<i>Eilean Rùm</i> (Isle of Rum)	0	0.0 %						
	<i>Eilean Eige</i> (Isle of Eigg)	24	42.1 %						
	<i>Eilean nam Muc</i> (Isle of Muck)	7	36.8 %						
52	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig) 1a	29	11.3 %	8	4.8 %	9	5.6 %		
53	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig) 1b			14	12.3 %	12	10.6 %		
54	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig) 2a			33	16.8 %	8	5.7 %	10	9.5 %
55	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig) 2b					9	9.3 %	6	7.8 %
56	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig) 3a	58	14.2 %	19	10.0 %	17	10.1 %		
57	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig) 3b			16	7.7 %	15	8.8 %		
58	<i>Cnòideart</i> (Knoydart)	12	57.1 %	27	31.0 %	23	14.8 %		
	<i>Caolas Mhòrair</i> (Kylesmorar)	18	32.1 %						
59	<i>Mòrar</i>	79	30.1 %	18	16.8 %	32	18.5 %		
60	<i>Mòrar &amp; Bràigh Garbh</i> (Bracara)			24	20.3 %	13	12.4 %		
61	<i>Borghdal</i> (Borrodale)	49	27.9 %	25	15.1 %	10	7.4 %		
62	<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig)					11	12.4 %		
63	<i>Cùl na Ceapaich</i> (Keppoch)	44	32.1 %	45	21.7 %	19	13.8 %		
64	<i>Inbhir Ailleart</i> (Inverailort)	11	17.2 %	6	9.2 %	4	6.8 %		
65	<i>Gleann Fhionghain</i> (Glenfinnan)	13	15.3 %	16	13.9 %	6	5.1 %		

**Table 22: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers for the census output areas in *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber) between 1981 and 2001**

<i>Loch Abar an Iar: Gàidhlig-speaking in Age Groups (1971-2001)</i>								
Age group	1971 <sup>34</sup>		1981		1991		2001	
<b>0-2</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1.8 %
<b>3-4</b>	*	---	1	1.7 %	1	2.1 %	6	11.1 %
<b>5-24</b>	55	9.8 %	48	7.9 %	30	5.3 %	34	7.3 %
<b>25-44</b>	95	23.5 %	84	18.0 %	46	8.3 %	43	7.8 %
<b>45-64</b>	150	34.5 %	131	33.3 %	80	19.9 %	68	13.6 %
<b>65 +</b>	160	57.1 %	145	58.7 %	103	41.4 %	57	21.0 %
<b>Total (3 years and over)</b>	460	26.5 %	391	20.2 %	261	14.3 %	208	11.3 %
<b>Born in Scotland</b>	n/a	n/a	388	23.3 %	245	15.0 %	184	12.4 %

**Table 23: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups in *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber) according to data from 1971 to 2001**

<sup>33</sup> Statistical base in 1981 and 1991: Population aged 3 years and over; in 2001: The total population.

<sup>34</sup> Numbers in 1971 were rounded to the nearest 0 or 5. The \* for the age group between 3 and 4 means less than three Gàidhlig-speaking children and possibly zero.



Map No.	Output Area	Knowledge of Gàidhlig in 2001					
		Young age (0-24)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	Born in Scotland (Language community indicator)
01	<i>Gleann Uige</i> (Glenuig)	14	42.4 %	31	24.6 %	<b>+ 17.8 %</b>	<b>35.4 %</b>
02	<i>Dail nam Breac</i> (Dalnabreck)	5	35.7 %	26	33.8 %	<b>+ 1.9 %</b>	<b>48.0 %</b>
03	<i>Àird Tobha</i> (Ardtoe)	4	25.0 %	28	35.9 %	<b>- 10.9 %</b>	<b>47.4 %</b>
04	<i>Ath Tharracaill</i> (Acharacle)	18	81.8 %	46	54.8 %	<b>+ 27.0 %</b>	<b>67.2 %</b>
05	<i>Àird Seileach</i> (Ardshealach)	15	37.5 %	42	31.1 %	<b>+ 6.4 %</b>	<b>41.4 %</b>
06	<i>An t-Sailean</i> (Salen)	4	14.3 %	13	12.2 %	<b>+ 2.1 %</b>	<b>17.5 %</b>
07	<i>Gleann Bhorghdail</i> (Glenborrodale)	6	17.1 %	34	22.8 %	<b>- 5.7 %</b>	<b>39.0 %</b>
08	<i>Cill Chomhghain</i> (Kilchoan)	7	21.2 %	40	28.4 %	<b>- 7.2 %</b>	<b>36.9 %</b>
09	<i>Rèiseapol</i> (Resipol)	3	10.3 %	27	19.0 %	<b>- 8.7 %</b>	<b>27.0 %</b>
10	<i>Sròn an t-Sithein</i> (Strontian)	10	22.2 %	45	20.6 %	<b>+ 1.6 %</b>	<b>25.7 %</b>
11	<i>Achadh a'Phùbail</i> (Achaphubuil)	12	20.0 %	48	24.9 %	<b>- 4.9 %</b>	<b>27.6 %</b>
12	<i>Àird Ghobhar</i> (Ardgour)	4	36.4 %	13	22.4 %	<b>+ 14.0 %</b>	<b>25.0 %</b>
13	<i>Clò Mhuilinn</i> (Clovullin)	8	19.1 %	30	21.9 %	<b>- 2.8 %</b>	<b>29.9 %</b>
14	<i>Ceann a'Gheàrr Loch</i> (Kingairloch)	3	15.8 %	7	12.1 %	<b>+ 3.7 %</b>	<b>17.2 %</b>
15	<i>Na Drimnean</i> (Drimnin)	3	33.3 %	16	26.7 %	<b>+ 6.7 %</b>	<b>50.0 %</b>
16	<i>Àird Tòirinis</i> (Ardtornish)	5	17.9 %	9	10.2 %	<b>+ 7.6 %</b>	<b>12.5 %</b>
17	<i>Loch Alainn a</i> (Lochaline)	4	14.3 %	21	20.6 %	<b>- 6.3 %</b>	<b>26.2 %</b>
18	<i>Loch Alainn b</i> (Lochaline)	3	18.8 %	16	23.9 %	<b>- 5.1 %</b>	<b>27.0 %</b>

**Table 24: Intergenerational viability and Gàidhlig-speakers born in Scotland in Àird nam Murchan (Ardnamurchan) according to census data of 2001**



Map No.	Output Area	Knowledge of Gàidhlig in 2001					
		Young age (0-24)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	Born in Scotland (Language community indicator)
51	<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn</i> (Small Isles)	6	17.7 %	31	23.7 %	<b>- 6.0 %</b>	<b>25.3 %</b>
52	<i>Mallaig 1a</i> (Mallaig 1a)	4	6.7 %	11	6.8 %	<b>- 0.1 %</b>	<b>7.3 %</b>
53	<i>Mallaig 1b</i> (Mallaig 1b)	1	2.9 %	21	18.6 %	<b>- 15.7 %</b>	<b>21.2 %</b>
54	<i>Mallaig 2a</i> (Mallaig 2a)	1	4.4 %	14	13.3 %	<b>- 8.9 %</b>	<b>13.1 %</b>
55	<i>Mallaig 2b</i> (Mallaig 2b)	1	4.2 %	10	13.0 %	<b>- 8.8 %</b>	<b>15.4 %</b>
56	<i>Mallaig 3a</i> (Mallaig 3a)	3	5.8 %	22	13.0 %	<b>- 7.2 %</b>	<b>13.5 %</b>
57	<i>Mallaig 3b</i> (Mallaig 3b)	5	7.5 %	28	16.4 %	<b>- 8.9 %</b>	<b>17.3 %</b>
58	<i>Cnòideart</i> (Knoydart)	3	6.1 %	26	16.8 %	<b>- 10.7 %</b>	<b>18.6 %</b>
59	<i>Mòrar</i> (Morar)	11	23.4 %	44	25.4 %	<b>- 2.0 %</b>	<b>23.6 %</b>
60	<i>Mòrar &amp; Bràigh Garbh</i> (Morar & Bracara)	4	18.2 %	25	23.8 %	<b>- 5.6 %</b>	<b>26.8 %</b>
61	<i>Borghdal</i> (Borrodale)	1	1.9 %	11	8.1 %	<b>- 6.2 %</b>	<b>11.1 %</b>
62	<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig)	2	8.3 %	19	21.4 %	<b>- 13.1 %</b>	<b>25.7 %</b>
63	<i>Cùl na Ceapaich</i> (Keppoch)	4	10.3 %	25	18.1 %	<b>- 8.2 %</b>	<b>21.7 %</b>
64	<i>Inbhir Ailleart</i> (Inverailort)	1	5.3 %	9	15.3 %	<b>- 10.0 %</b>	<b>16.7 %</b>
65	<i>Gleann Fhionghain</i> (Glenfinnan)	1	3.1 %	12	10.3 %	<b>- 7.2 %</b>	<b>15.3 %</b>

**Table 25: Intergenerational viability and Gàidhlig-speakers born in Scotland in Loch Abar an Iar (West Lochaber) according to census data of 2001**





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### III. Some Valuable Comments about Census Information

The interpretation of census figures (derived statistics in particular) is not as straightforward as the pure numbers might suggest. The author has taken great pains to compare like with like and the calculated tables with greatest geographical detail and age group information as possible. But the differences of census questions, enumeration districts and information details between years are quite substantial. It is therefore very important to notice the following facts:

1. Questions on *Gàidhlig* have been raised in census enumerations in Scotland since 1881. In this first instance, however, it was asked whether the person "speaks Gaelic habitually" and the information was provided by the enumerator. From 1891 onwards this wording was changed into "speaks Gaelic" and the information was given by the head of the household. Accordingly direct comparison of the results of 1881 and later years is not possible.
2. Until 1971 it was asked whether the person "speaks Gaelic and English" or "speaks Gaelic but not English" (Gaelic only). Due to the simple necessity to survive in an English dominated society and the considerable impact of the school system in fact all *Gàidhlig*-speaking people were forced to become bilingual – with the notable exceptions of pre-school children and very old people. **These "Gaelic only" persons did not, however, present those who had *Gàidhlig* as their natural and preferred language nor were they the only mother tongue speakers.** This was already highlighted after the census 1911 by comments given by the then registrar general and the superintendent of statistics in the county report on Inverness (Census Office, Scotland, 1912): "*When discussing the statistics of the Gaelic-speakers of Argyll we expressed an opinion that the reduction in the number of persons speaking Gaelic but unable to speak English should not be taken as a proof that the use of the language was being discontinued, and after making a similar study of statistics of the Gaelic-speakers of the islands of Inverness, we are in a position to repeat that opinion. One fact alone seems to justify such an expression, and that is that fully three-fourths of the children of less than school age, more than three but less than five, speak Gaelic exclusively. Such a condition seems possible only when Gaelic is the language habitually spoken in the homes, and this seems conclusive evidence of its wide and habitual use.*" Due to the ever increasing presence of English in the *Gàidhlig* community (mixed language marriages, in-migration of English only speakers, radio and television) more and more children under the age of 5 became bilingual and the census question proved to be irrelevant after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Because of the very small numbers involved and the ambiguity of the question no census enumeration took place after 1971 on persons who spoke *Gàidhlig* but no English.
3. No data are available on persons speaking *Gàidhlig* outside Scotland in the rest of the United Kingdom. Census returns are, however, recorded in Canada where the *Gàidhlig* language survived as a community language in a few locations of the province of *Alba Nuadh* (Nova Scotia) well into the 1940s.
4. During World War II no census was taken. Therefore no figures are available for 1941.
5. In 1971 the wording was changed from "speaks Gaelic" into "is able to speak Gaelic". This resulted in areas with low density of speakers in a substantial increase of *Gàidhlig*-speakers counted compared with 1961. These were essentially those who could speak *Gàidhlig* but did not have the opportunity to use it. In strongly *Gàidhlig*-speaking areas those who were able to speak *Gàidhlig* were also using the language. So in the islands and on the western seaboard the figures should have remained comparable with previous censuses.
6. In 1981 the population basis was changed from persons present on census night to usually resident persons. In the light of increased mobility of the population this change was inevitable.
7. From 1971 onwards additional questions were asked on the ability of people to read *Gàidhlig* or to write *Gàidhlig*.



8. In 2001 another question was introduced on the ability of a person to understand spoken *Gàidhlig*. This may have had an influence on some people with only a small command of the language to record themselves as being able to understand rather than able to speak the language. Without this choice some of them might have enlisted themselves or their children as *Gàidhlig*-speaking in order to be counted at all. This may explain the small decrease of speakers in the age group of 3 to 4 despite the strong efforts by the *cròileagan* movement in the preceding decade.
9. Additionally in 2001 for the first time all children under the age of 3 were recorded with their knowledge of *Gàidhlig*. In previous enumerations these children were not counted or (in 1891 and 1901) only a few children were enumerated in this age group. In many census publications percentages were calculated by using the enumerated *Gàidhlig*-speaking population (aged 3 years and over) on the basis of the total population. This led to slightly lower percentages than actually existed.
10. Census counts are not strictly exact. Apart from inevitable small enumeration errors the census authorities have introduced measures to keep returns anonymous. For example in 1971 figures in tables were rounded to the nearest 0 or 5. This fact represented a major obstacle in using small area statistics for further evaluation because of the small numbers involved. Comparable measures were taken in later censuses but with smaller overall “uncertainties“ of +/- 1 in general.
11. All census material used and reproduced in this study is Crown Copyright. The use of this material in this study has been allowed under the licence no. C02W0003665.
12. Further information may be obtained by contacting the General Register Office for Scotland at <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk>.



## IV. List of Census Output Areas with Numbers and Placenames

The following lists provides detailed information on all postcode names included in individual census output areas and shows the abbreviations/numbers defining output areas in census statistics between 1961 and 2001.

Census Output Areas in <i>Àird nam Murchan</i>				
Map No.	Census output area	Area Codes		
		1961 1971	1981 1991	2001
01	<i>Gleann Uige, Smiorasaraidh, Ceann Loch Mhùideirt, Rois Bheinn &amp; Eilean Seona</i> (Glenuig, Smirisary, Kinlochmoidart, Roshven & Shona)	MU	23AP01	60QT001325
02	<i>Dail nam Breac, Mìogharraidh, A'Mhòinteach &amp; Langal</i> (Dalnabreac, Mingarrypark, Moss & Langal)		23AM08	60QT000160
03	<i>Àird Tobha &amp; Bun Seileadh</i> (Ardtoe & Shielfoot)	AM	23AM10	60QT000161
04	<i>Ath Tharracaill, Ceann Tràgha &amp; Airigh Bheagaig</i> (Acharacle, Kentra & Arivegaig)			60QT000162
05	<i>Àird Seileadh</i> (Ardshealach)		23AM05	60QT001741
06	<i>An t-Sailean, Bàgh Laga &amp; Rubh' an t-Sionnaich</i> (Salen, Laga Bay & Rubh' an t-Sionnaich)			60QT001740
07	<i>Gleann Bhorghdail, Port Uairce, Ocal, Gleann Mòr &amp; Bàgh Sanna</i> (Glenborrodale, Portuairk, Ockle, Glenmore & Sanna Bay)		23AM01 23AM03	60QT000158
08	<i>Cill Chomhghain, Mìogharraidh, Ormsaig Bheag &amp; Ormsaig Mhòr</i> (Kilchoan, Mingarry, Ormsaigbeag & Ormsaigmore)		23AM02	60QT000157
09	<i>Rèiseapol, Ath na h-Eilde &amp; Àird nan Stang</i> (Resipol, Anaheilt & Ardnastang)	SU	23AM06	60QT000159
10	<i>Sròn an t-Sithein</i> (Strontian)		23AM0	60QT001464
11	<i>Garbhan, An Dubh Uisge, Trioslaig, Achadh a'Phùbail &amp; Blathach</i> (Garvan, Duisy, Treslaig, Achaphubuil & Blaich)	AG	23AJ03	60QT000146
12	<i>Àird Ghobhar</i> (Ardgour)		23AJ02	60QT001461
13	<i>Clò Mhuilinn &amp; Inbhir Scarbhdail</i> (Clovullin & Inverscaddle)			60QT001460
14	<i>Ceann Gheàrr Loch, Lìdeasdal &amp; Inbhir Sannda</i> (Kingairloch, Liddesdale & Inversanda)		23AJ01	60QT000145
15	<i>Fasgadh, Fionnairigh &amp; Na Drimnean</i> (Fasgadh, Fiunary & Drimnin)	MV	23AB01	60QT000137
16	<i>Àird Tòirninis, Loch Teacuis &amp; Loch Alainn</i> (Ardtornish, Loch Teacuis & Lochaline)		23AB02 23AB03	60QT001320
17	<i>Loch Alainn</i> (Lochaline)		23AB04	60QT001454
18	<i>Loch Alainn</i> (Lochaline)			60QT001455

**Table A-1: List of locations within individual census output areas and official numbers for different census dates for *Àird nam Murchan* (Ardnamurchan) – 1961-2001**



Census Output Areas in <i>Loch Abar an Iar</i>				
Map No.	Census output area	Area Codes		
		1961 1971	1981 1991	2001
51	<i>Na h-Eileanan Tarsainn = Eilean Canaidh, Eilean Sann-daigh, Eilean Rùm, Eilean Eige &amp; Eilean nam Muc</i> (Small Isles = Canna, Sanday, Rùm, Eigg & Muck)	SI	23AW01 23AT01 23AT02 23AU02	60QT001326
52	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig)	MA	23AS01A	60QT000464
53	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig)		23AS01B	60QT000465
54	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig)		23AS02A	60QT000466
55	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig)		23AS02B	60QT000467
56	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig)		23AS03A	60QT000468
57	<i>Malaig</i> (Mallaig)		23AS03B	60QT000469
58	<i>Cnòideart, Caolas Mhòrair, An Tairbeart, Malaig Bheag &amp; Glas na Ceàrdaich</i> (Knoydart, Kylesmorar, Tarbet, Mallaig-veag & Glasnacardoch)		23AS04 23AS05	60QT000168
59	<i>Mòrar, Gleann nan Crois &amp; Port na Luchaig</i> (Morar, Glenancross & Portnaluchaig)	MO	23AR01	60QT000166
60	<i>Mòrar &amp; Bràigh Garbh</i> (Morar & Bracara)			60QT000167
61	<i>Arasaig, Borbhdal, Beasdal &amp; Druim nan Darach</i> (Arisaig, Borrodale, Beasdale & Druimindarroch)	AR	23AQ01	60QT001465
62	<i>Arasaig</i> (Arisaig)			60QT001466
63	<i>Cùl na Ceapaich &amp; Arasaig</i> (Back of Keppoch & Arisaig)		23AQ02	60QT000165
64	<i>Inbhir Ailleart &amp; Cùil Darach</i> (Inverailort & Cuildarroch)		23AP02	60QT000164
65	<i>Gleann Fhionghain, Meobal, Sgamadal &amp; Poll Loch</i> (Glenfinnan, Meoble, Scamodale & Polloch)		23AN01	60QT000163

**Table A-2: List of locations within individual census output areas and official numbers for different census dates for *Loch Abar an Iar* (West Lochaber) – 1961-2001**



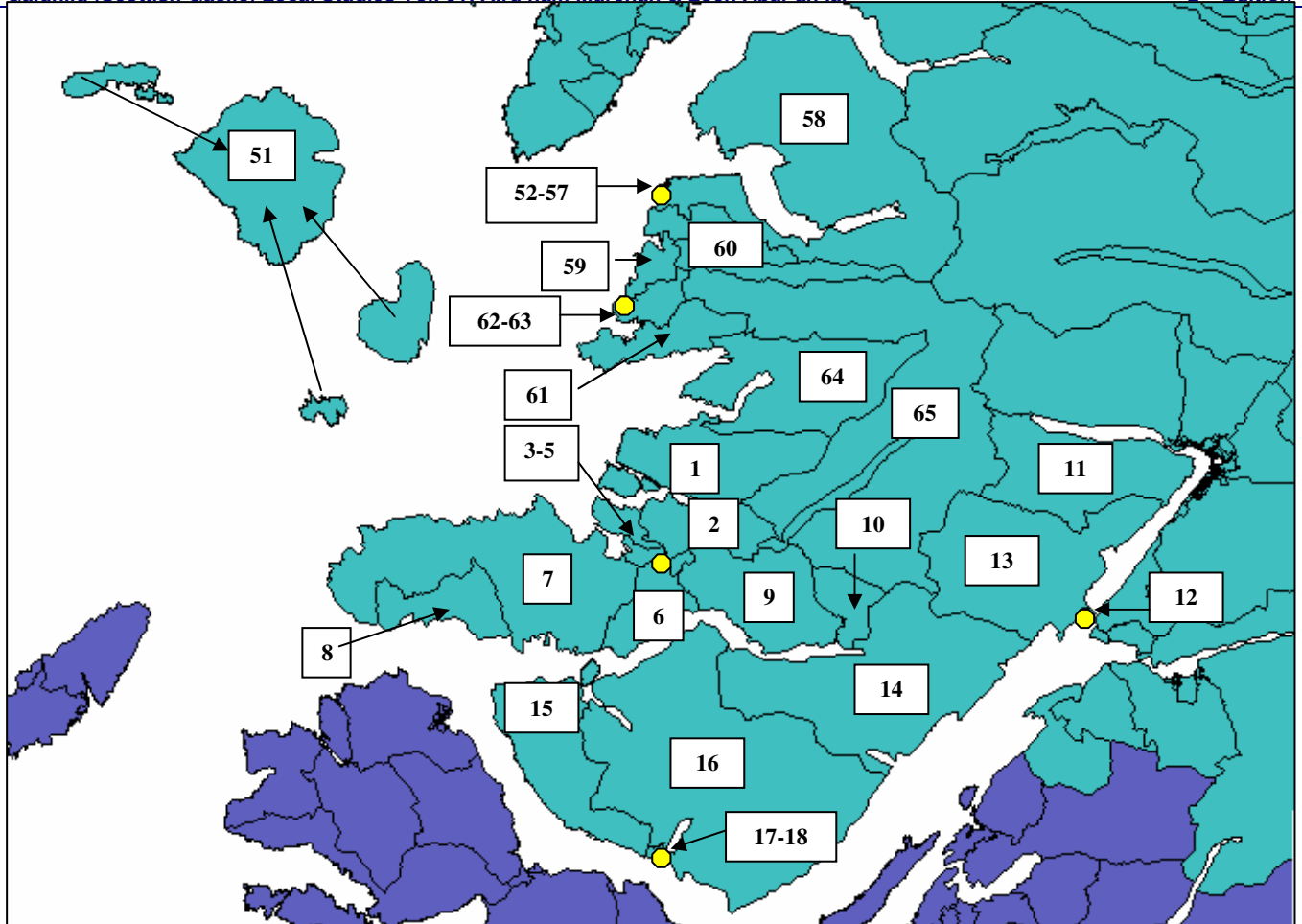


Fig. 13: Overview map of census output areas in Àird nam Murchan and Loch Abar an Iar (numbers correspond to the map reference in tables A-1 and A-2)<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Digital boundaries courtesy of Ordnance Survey as part of the Geography Products provided by GROS for the 2001 census.





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## VII. List of Abbreviations

There are a number of abbreviations used in the text which might not be known by every reader. Therefore this short list intends to facilitate better understanding:

CCED	County council electoral division
CP	Civil parish
CNSA	<i>Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich</i> : Gaelic playgroup association
<i>Comhairle nan Eilean</i> (CNE) – later: <i>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar</i> (CNES)	Official name of the Western Isles Council, the local government body of the Outer Hebrides (with abbreviations)
<i>Cròileagan</i>	Gaelic-speaking playgroup
Fèis	Local art festival with normally some Gaelic courses
GLPS	“Gaelic Language for the Primary School”: Course as introduction of Gaelic as second language
GME	Gàidhlig-medium education
GMU	Gàidhlig-medium unit: Class(es) with Gàidhlig-medium education but as part of an English medium school
GROS	General Register Office for Scotland
LVI	Language viability indicator
LCI	Language community indicator
<i>Mòd</i>	Gaelic language gathering (conversation, song and music) comparable to the Welsh Eisteddfod
n/a	Information is not available
OA	(Census) output area: the smallest enumeration unit on which census data are available
P1	Primary school year 1
P2	Primary school year 2
S1	Secondary school year 1
S2	Secondary school year 2
<i>Sgoil Araich</i>	Gaelic-speaking nursery school
<i>Sràdagan</i>	Gaelic-speaking clubs for primary school children
Vi	Village according to census definition in 1881, 1891 and 1901



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