

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 014

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Area: *Hacraig (Halkirk): Achadh Liabost, Ograinn Mòr, Ograinn Beag, Taobh Tunga Uarach, Caladal nan Gall, Leosag, Bràigh Shamhraidh & Taobh Tunga*

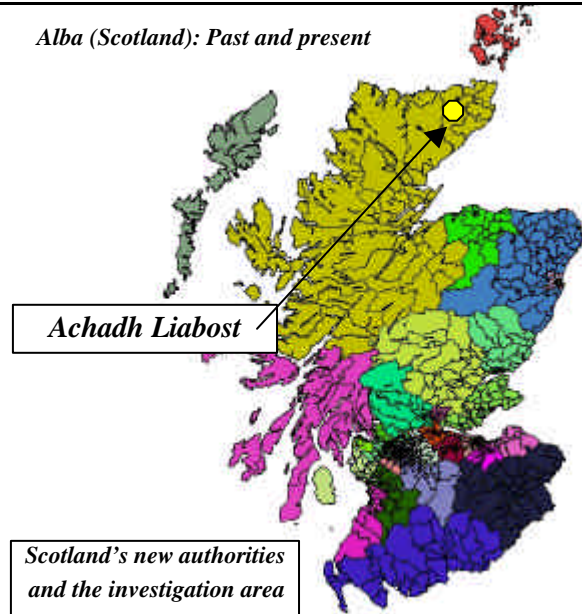
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Achlibster, Tongueside, Upper Tongueside, Scotscaelder Railway Station, Ogrinmore, Ogrinbeg, Leosag & Braehours)

Number of households: 35 **Population present at census night:** 179

Share of resident population (aged three years +) speaking Gàidhlig: 48.0 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Caithness	Halkirk	Halkirk	7 8	2(part)-3 1 – 8

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



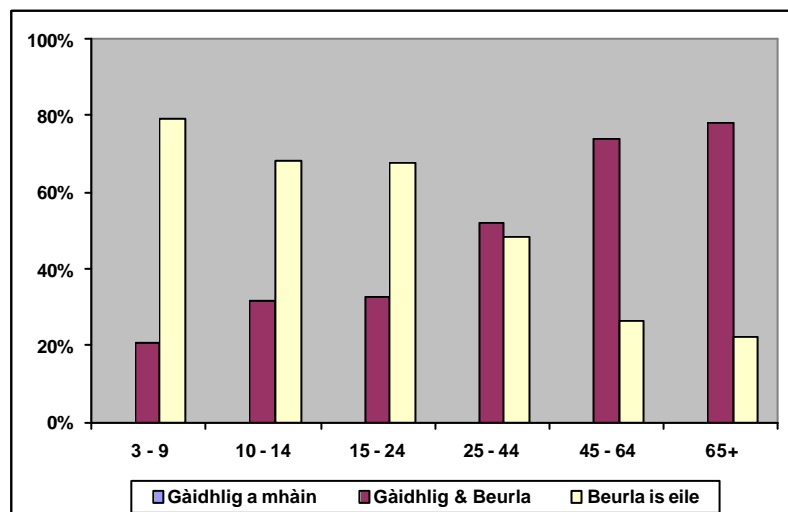
State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

Almost half of the usually resident population of this district still spoke Gàidhlig. This was true also for locally born persons – contrary to the widely held belief that the tongue was alien to the county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness).

Whereas older people were overwhelmingly Gàidhlig-speakers, only a minority of children spoke the traditional language. Men were more likely to speak Gàidhlig than women. The language was also very present among the farming families. The strongest Gàidhlig-speaking community in 1891 was the scattered hamlet of *Ograinn Mòr* (Ogrinmore).

Area description:

The district described is situated in the heart of the north-eastern Scottish county of *Gallaibh* (Caithness) in the parish of *Hacraig* (Halkirk). It encompasses a few scattered farming communities between *Achadh Liabost* (Achlibster) and *Ograinn Mòr* (Ogrinmore) south-west of the larger town of *Baile Theòrsa* (Thurso). Main occupations in the area were farming, agriculturally connected assistances and to a lesser extent also shepherding.



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 [†]	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	179	8	0	0	171	0	82	48.0 %
3-4	5		0	0	5	0	0	0.0 %
5-9	19		0	0	19	0	5	26.3 %
10-14	22		0	0	22	0	7	31.8 %
15-24	40		0	0	40	0	13	32.5 %
25-44	29		0	0	29	0	15	51.7 %
45-64	38		0	0	38	0	28	73.7 %
65+	18		0	0	18	0	14	77.8 %
Gender								
Female	87	3	0	0	84	0	36	42.9 %
Male	92	5	0	0	87	0	46	52.9 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	109	8	0	0	191	0	47	46.5 %
In neighbouring parish¹	59	0	0	0	59	0	31	52.5 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	4	0	0	0	4	0	4	100 %
Other places	7	0	0	0	7	0	0	0.0 %

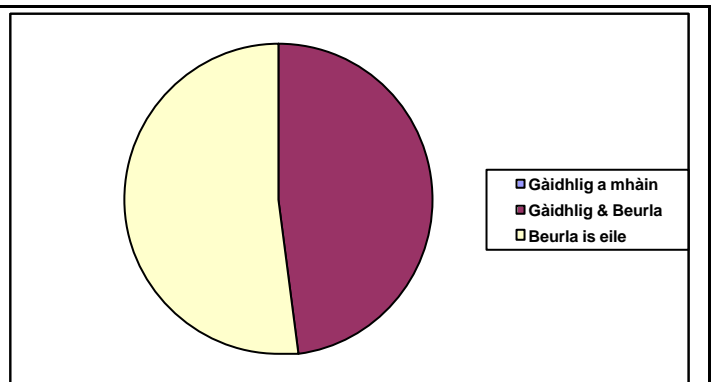
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Farr and Kildonan (Sutherland), Latheron, Bower, Reay, Watten and Thurso (all 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 & English, or (3) no Gàidhlig at all

Background of Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profiles:

The 1891 census was the first such enumeration exercise with an unequivocal language question. After more than 100 years the original census forms are publicly available for detailed analysis. During research concerned with the “Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Studies” a vast number of such local statistics have been gathered about the Gàidhlig speaking population of Scotland in that year. As many of these results could not be included in the reports these concise fact-sheets are a welcome way to publish some of the “local gems”. More information is provided at http://www.linguae-celticae.org/GLP_english.htm.

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	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Achadh Liabost & Ograinn Mòr</i>	35	171	0	82	48.0 %
Individual communities					
<i>Achadh Liabost</i> (Achlibster)	7	27	0	13	48.1 %
<i>Taobh Tunga & Caladal nan Gall</i> (Tongside & Scotscaider)	10	42	0	15	35.7 %
<i>Ograinn Mòr</i> (Ogrinmore)	18	102	0	54	52.9 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	11	71	0	38	53.5 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	4	17	0	9	52.9 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	3	16	0	3	18.8 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	4	22	0	1	4.5 %
Households with no children (0-14)	13	45	0	31	68.9 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	21	123	0	58	47.2 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	5	22	0	13	59.1 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	2	4	0	1	25.0 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	1	4	0	1	25.0 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	6	18	0	9	50.0 %
Remaining occupations	0	0	0	0	-

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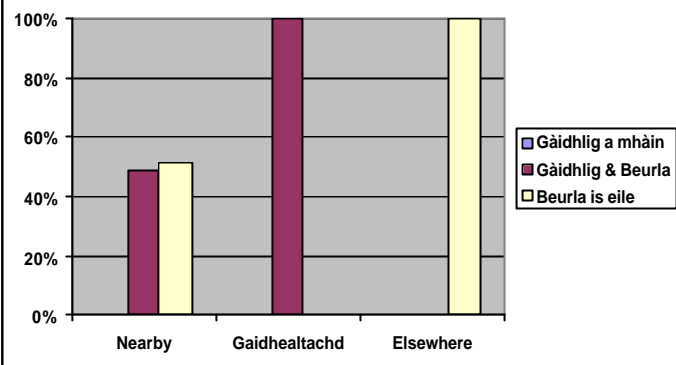
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

Almost 50% of nearby born residents spoke Gàidhlig. Those born in the wider *Gaidhealtachd* all spoke Gàidhlig. In contrast no-one of those with a birthplace elsewhere was found to speak the traditional language.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Halkirk or in the parishes of Farr, Kildonan (Sutherland), Reay, Bower, Latheron, Watten and Thurso (all 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. In original census report terms the district had a population of 179 persons of all ages. 59 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English”. This led to an “official” share of Gàidhlig speakers of 33.0 %. This figure was a very substantial under-estimate of 15.0 % compared with the more realistic figures taking into account only the usually resident population. The difference was mainly caused by the misinterpretation of a number of entries in the language column of the registration sheets. Marks like – “ “ – were apparently counted erroneously as “no entry” by the enumerator.