

Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

No. 076

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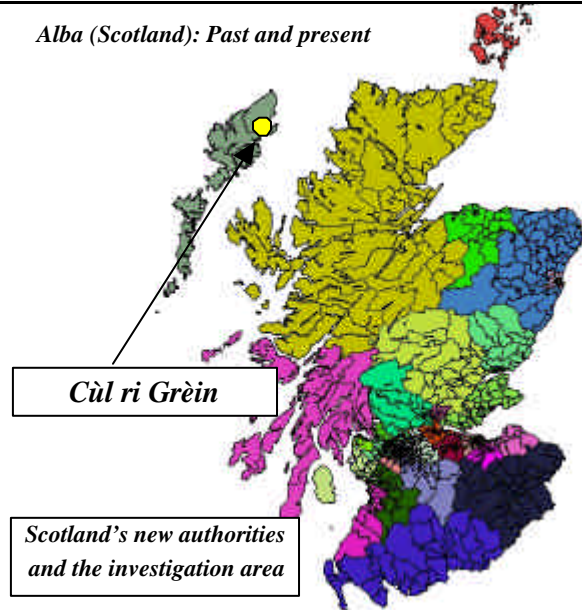
Area: *Leòdhas (Lewis): Cùl ri Grèin, Raon na Crèadha, Cnoc nan Gobhar & Steinis*
 (Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Coulregrein, Plasterfield, Goathill & Steinish)

Number of households: 42 **Population present at census night:** 191

Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 98.8 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Ross & Cromarty	Stornoway	Stornoway	18	1 – 8 (part)

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



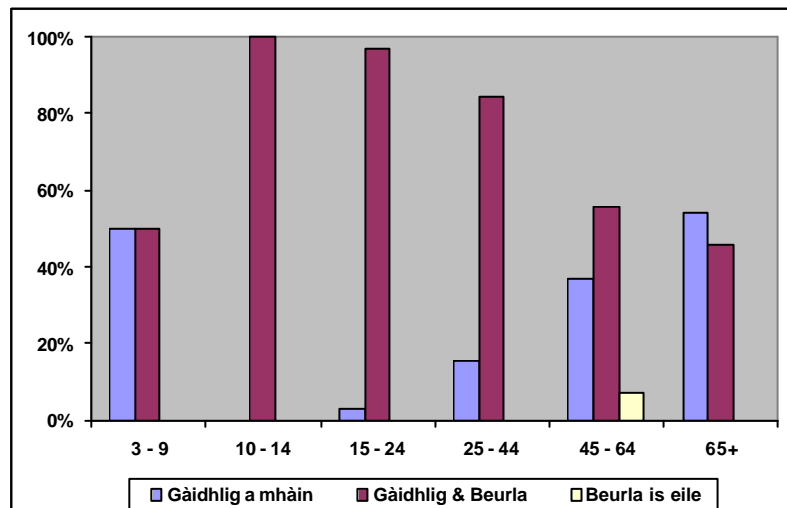
State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

The language was universally spoken in every household except one. The latter was the farm at Plasterfield House where two Lowlanders had made their home. The strength of the language was perhaps surprisingly high in a place on the doorstep of the largely “anglophile” society of *Steòrnabhagh*. But perhaps the use of Gàidhlig in the town was much more widespread as some sources would like people to believe.

A significant proportion of residents did not speak English. These monolingual speakers were mainly children below school age or members of the older generation.

Area description:

The townships and farms investigated are part of the northern outskirts of the harbour town of *Steòrnabhagh* (Stornoway) on the Hebridean island of *Leòdhas* (Lewis). The locations include the crofting hamlets of *Cùl ri Grein* (Coulregrein) and *Steinis* (Steinish) in addition to the (in 1891) farm houses at *Raon na Crèadha* (Plasterfield) and *Cnoc nan Gobhar* (Goathill). Almost everyone in these communities was occupied with crofting or farming at the time.



Age profile: Share of population speaking (1) Gàidhlig, (2) Gàidhlig & English, or (3) no Gàidhlig at all

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Area: *Leòdhas (Lewis): Cùl ri Grèin, Raon na Crèadha, Cnoc nan Gobhar & Steinis*

	Population enumerated				Usually resident population (3+)			
	Total	Aged 0-2	Deaf & dumb	Visitors etc. ³	Total [†]	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
Age								
Total	191	17	1	1	172	47	123	98.8 %
3-4	11		0	0	11	8	3	100 %
5-9	21		0	0	21	8	13	100 %
10-14	12		0	0	12	0	12	100 %
15-24	33		0	1	32	1	31	100 %
25-44	46		1	0	45	7	38	100 %
45-64	27		0	0	27	10	15	92.6 %
65+	24		0	0	24	13	11	100 %
Gender								
Female	100	9	0	1	90	35	54	98.9 %
Male	91	8	1	0	82	12	69	98.8 %
Place of birth								
Born in parish	163	17	1	0	145	40	105	100 %
In neighbouring parish[†]	14	0	0	1	13	4	9	100 %
Gaidhealtachd elsewhere²	10	0	0	0	10	3	7	100 %
Other places	4	0	0	0	4	0	2	50.0 %

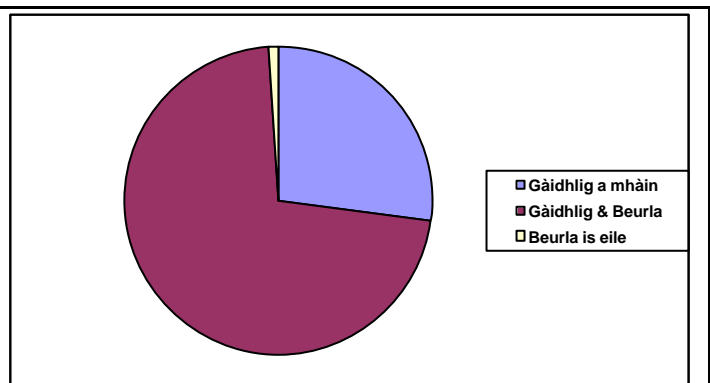
Notes:

¹ Parishes of Barvas, Lochs and Uig (all Ross & Cromarty).

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

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

⁴ Number of enumerated persons who were (1) older than 2 years of age, who were (2) not deaf & dumb and who (3) did not live only temporarily in the area.



Share of population speaking (1) Gàidhlig, (2) Gàidhlig & Beurla, or (3) no Gàidhlig at all

Background of Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profiles:

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

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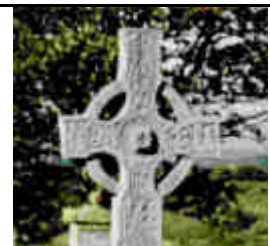
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Area: *Leòdhas (Lewis): Cùl ri Grèin, Raon na Crèadha, Cnoc nan Gobhar & Steinis*

	House-holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Cùl ri Grèin & Steinis</i>	42	172	47	123	98.8 %
Individual communities					
<i>Cùl ri Grèin</i> (Coulregrein)	21	85	28	57	100 %
<i>Raon na Crèadha & Cnoc nan Gobhar</i> (Plasterfield & Goathill)	5	19	2	15	89.5 %
<i>Steinis</i> (Steinish)	16	68	17	51	100 %
Language of parents					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	14	75	24	51	100 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	6	33	5	28	100 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	0	0	0	0	-
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	0	0	0	0	-
Households with no children (0-14)	22	64	18	44	96.9 %
Occupation of head of household					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	30	130	37	91	98.5 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	0	0	0	0	-
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	0	0	0	0	-
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	6	19	2	17	100 %
Living on private means	0	0	0	0	-
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	1	11	4	7	100 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	4	11	3	8	100 %
Remaining occupations	1	1	1	0	100 %

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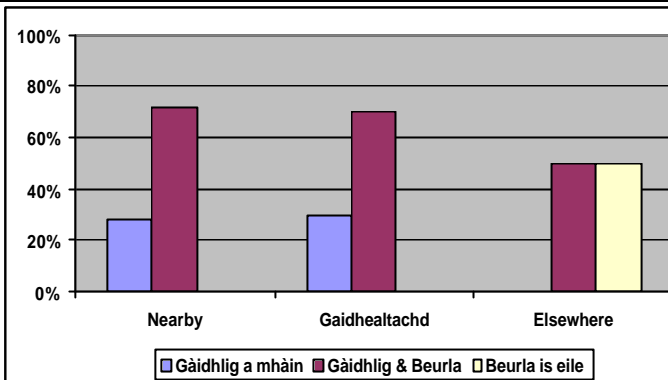
Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

All inhabitants born in the *Gaidhealtachd* spoke the traditional language. Roughly 30 % of them did not speak English. The two examples of residents with “no Gaelic” were Lowlanders.

Notes:

¹ Born either in Stornoway or in the adjacent parishes of Lochs, Barvas and Uig (all Ross & Cromarty).

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. There were just two persons enumerated as “not speaking Gaelic”. It was a farmer and his wife living at Plasterfield House. Both were born in non-*Gàidhlig* speaking areas in Aberdeenshire and Banffshire respectively.
2. In original census report terms the enumeration district in total had a population of 191 persons of all ages. 125 enumerated inhabitants spoke “Gaelic and English” and 49 persons were reported as monolingual *Gàidhlig* speakers. These figures lead to an “official” share of *Gàidhlig* speakers of 91.1 %. A comparison with the more realistic statistics of this fact-sheet reveals that this percentage was a considerable under-estimate of 7.7 % mainly caused by the inclusion of under-three olds and visitors in the official population base.