



The Skye Boat Song

Slow Air

Trad.

A

1 2 3 4

B

5 6 7 8

C

9 10 11 12

13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20

Speed Bon - ny boat like a bird on the wing, on - ward the sail - lers cry.
Car - ry the lad that is born to be king, o - ver the sea - to skye.

Skye Boat Song

The text of the song gives an account of how Bonnie Prince Charlie, disguised as a serving maid, escaped in a small boat after the defeat of his Jacobite rising of 1745, with the aid of Flora MacDonald. The song draws on the motifs of Jacobitism although it was composed nearly a century and a half after the episode it describes. It is often supposed that it describes Charles's flight from the mainland, but this is unhistorical. The only time Charles was in Skye was when he left Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides to avoid the increasingly thorough Government searches.



Prince Charles escapes by boat to the Isle of Skye after his defeat at the Battle of Culloden, 1745.

