

## Mingulay Boat Song

**Heel y' ho, boys,  
Let her go, boys,  
Bring her head round into the weather,  
Heel y' ho, boys,  
Let her go, boys,  
Sailing homeward to Mingulay.**

1. What care we how white the Minch is?  
What care we for wind or weather?  
Let her go boys! every inch is  
Sailing homeward to Mingulay.
2. Wives are waiting by the pier head,  
Or looking seaward, from the heather;  
Pull her round, boys, then you'll anchor  
'Ere the sun sets on Mingulay.
3. Ships returnin', heavy laden  
Mothers holdin' bairns a-cryin'  
We'll return, though, when the sun sets  
We'll return home to Mingulay.



### Outer Hebrides UK relief location map

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Hear **Fisherman's friends** sing this rowing song at [youtu.be/IOxRfeYHWfM](https://youtu.be/IOxRfeYHWfM)



The western cliffs, Mingulay, near to Dùn Mhiùghlaigh. The stack of Arnamuil is in the centre and Bagh na h-Aioneig to on the left.

"Western cliffs of Mingulay" by Tony Kinghorn. Licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons - <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

### Notes:

The Mingulay Boat Song was written in 1928 by Sir [Hugh Robertson \(1874–1952\)](#), who arranged and conducted songs for his Glasgow choir.

However it is in the style of Hebridean work songs and the tune is based upon part of an old Gaelic song Creag Guanach, "Oran na Comhachaig" from Brae Lochaber, in the Scottish highlands. [\[Wikipedia\]](#)

### Place names

**Mingulay** - Scottish island in the Outer Hebrides, 12 miles south of Barra (see map). It has been uninhabited since 1912 and has been owned by the National Trust for Scotland since 2000; it is of course a haven for bird life.

Mingulay written in gaelic is Miughalaigh.

This should be pronounced either "Minch Gala" [ Ian Chandler, Mudcat] or "Miew-haligh" [\[Akerbeltz, gaelic linguist, Wikipedia\]](#)  
Note that wikipedia mis-quotes the song chorus.

**Minch** - the treacherous body of water between the Outer Hebrides or Western Isles and the rest of Scotland, including the Inner Hebrides.

**How white the Minch is...** refers poetically to rough sea (cf white horses).