

The Skye Bridge



The Story of Bonnie Prince Charlie and Flora MacDonald, is regarded as one of the most romantic in Scottish History.

Flora MacDonald is famously known for helping Bonnie Prince Charlie escape from Scotland after the defeat of the Jacobites in the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

*“ Speed bonnie boat like a bird on the wing,
Over the sea to Skye,
Carry the lad that’s born to be King,
Over the sea to Skye...”*

So goes the famous Skye Boat Song, which owes its origins to the daring mission of mercy undertaken by Flora, a young Highland woman who risked her life out of compassion for a fugitive Prince who had staked everything on a bid to win a kingdom and lost.

But sorry they didn’t use this bridge

This bridge construction started in 1992 built by the Scottish company Miller, but designed by a German engineering company DYWIDAG Systems International in collaboration with civil engineering firm Arup.

The main bridge is a concrete arch, supported by two piers. This connects Skye to the small island called Eilean Bàn, the rest of the bridge is level across to the mainland. The total distance across is 1.5 miles (2.4km). The main arch is about 35m high (30m clearance for boats on high tide).

Eilean Bàn (White Island) is the small island upon which the main arch of the bridge rests. The island has a 21m high lighthouse just below the bridge arch. The lighthouse keepers (before automation in the 1960s) stayed in the cottages on the Island. These cottages were then purchased by Gavin Maxwell who is best remembered for his work with otters. Maxwell did many interesting things including writing wildlife books, his most famous being "The Ring of Bright Water".

These days the island is a wildlife reserve being managed by the Bright Water Trust. One of the cottages is now the Maxwell museum. This is a reconstruction of Maxwell's 40ft living room, containing original artefacts, recreated by Virginia McKenna of the Born Free foundation