

## 9 SOUTH UIST to BENBECULA (2)

There is ample accommodation at and near the village of Loch Boisdale, but none is to be found at intermediate stages along this leg. It is therefore necessary to use accommodation at some distance from the end or beginning of each walk. For the walks that begin or end at Loch Eynort, Loch Skipport or Ouia, cars can be driven along public roads to each of these places. For the walk that ends at Rossinish, it is necessary to continue to the A865 at Market Stance (NF 806 535).

Although Charles walked all the way from Loch Eynort to Loch Skipport, much of this stage nowadays is along the main road, A865. Only the section from Loch Dobhrain to Loch Skipport will be described here. As Charles travelled by boat from Loch Skipport to Ouia, and from Ouia to Benbecula, this chapter does not describe a route over these stages.

### Loch Boisdale to Loch Eynort

*Landranger Maps: 31, 22*

*OS Maps Central Grid References:  
NF 790 220, NF 790 280*

The route begins along a narrow lane by the old school house (NF 784 202) on the A865 about a mile from the Loch Boisdale Hotel. After crossing a bridge, the route is due north, over gently rising moorland towards Loch Coragrimsaig and Loch Stulaval. These two lochs are then passed on their western shores. At the north end of Loch Stulaval, the route continues northwards along a wide valley, and past the tiny Loch Shuravat, before it bears left round the foot of Ben Shuravat. Once over the Hornary river, the terrain changes markedly into an expanse of flat open land, which was the pasture where Flora MacDonald was grazing her brother's cattle. Nowadays,

there are no cattle here. The land is simply used by crofters as a source of peat.

The next objective is due north for about two miles to Bealach Sheaval, which is climbed easily. Just below the crest, there are two rectangular piles of stones, that are obviously the remains of bothies. It seems very likely that one of these bothies is where Flora and Charles met. From the top of the bealach, the descent to Loch Eynort follows a stream down to the house at Unasary (NF 771 276).

*Distance: 6 miles (9 km)*

*Height of ascent: 260 feet (80 m)*

*Naismith time: 1 hour 56 mins*

### Loch Dobhrain to Hecla

*Landranger Map: 22*

*OS Maps Central Grid Reference:  
NF 800 340*

Loch Dobhrain (NF 767 345) is right against the west side of the A865, about eight miles from the end of the causeway between Benbecula and South Uist. The immediate objective is the bealach between Ben Corodale and Hecla. The route begins at a track off to the east, opposite the house between the north end of Loch Dobhrainn and the bridge over the Abhainn Roag. After about two hundred yards, the track veers right, and it is necessary to take to the heather on the left. There is then a long march among the peat hags round the foot of Maola Breac to two lochans on the far side of Glen Dorchay. From there, a steep climb by the side of a stream leads to the bealach.

The cave in which Charles and O'Neil sheltered, while they waited for MacEachain to return, is quite close to the bealach. A rather indistinct path descends south-west from the bealach towards Glen Usinish, and

passes directly below a rock outcrop about twenty yards above a stream. The cave is conspicuous beneath an overhanging boulder with a rocky platform immediately in front of it. The climb to the summit of Hecla can be started from the cave up steep, but easy, slopes.

*Distance: 4 miles (6 km)*

*Height of ascent: 1980 feet (600 m)*

*Naismith time: 2 hours 12 mins*

## Hecla to Loch Skiport

*Landranger Map: 22*

*OS Maps Central Grid Reference:*

*NF 800 370*

The view north from Hecla, looks down to Loch Skiport. The most interesting descent is to follow the north-east of the ridge of Hecla all the way round to Beinn na h-Aire and on to Maol Martaig. The descent continues in a north-westerly direction.

After two miles over rough undulating ground, it reaches the road on the south side of Loch Skiport.

*Distance: 4 miles (6 km)*

*Height of ascent: 100 feet (30 m)*

*Naismith time: 1 hour 15 mins*

## Ouia to Market Stance

*Landranger Map: 22*

*OS Maps Central Grid References:*

*NF 830 480, NF 850 540*

The route, which is exactly the same as that, which Charles had used two weeks previously, goes from Ouia to Rossinish, and Rossinish to Market Stance. Both these stages have already been described in Chapter 7.

*Distance: 10 miles (16 km)*

*Height of ascent: 170 feet (50 m)*

*Naismith time: 3 hours 12 mins*

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## Gaelic Place Name Details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Translation</i>
Maola Breac	mill a brehk	speckled bare hill

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