

The Smuggler

Ian McCalman found words and tune in an old book, made some changes to the tune and added verses. It first appears on The McCalman's 1975 album Smuggler¹³. The words we use came via John Hancox formerly of KPS and are more 'English' than the Scottish version. Original with first line "The boat rides south o' Ailsa Craig," in Smith, Scottish Minstrel (1st edn. (1820-24) Vol V p.89; 4th edn. Vol V p.77. Roud ID: X5982 (no Roud number).

The boat rides South on the early tide in a wan and noble light
There's thirty men in Lendle Cove with lanterns burning bright
And there's thirty horses in Hazle hole with their halters o'er their heads
You ken this night upon your life if willing waters keep

Chorus

*Smugglers drink of the Frenchmen's wine
And the darkest night is the smugglers' time
Away we run from the Excise Man
It's a smuggler's life for me it's a smugglers life for me*

And we don't lie in a cosy bed nor cattle we do tend
For we don't live a lawful life nor live with lawful men
For what's the use of homely goods or a good wife for your bride
It's a sly drink at the waters edge and your fancy full of wine

And I may lie in a cold prison cell with a price upon my head
But my heart is now with the gallant crew that plough the angry sea
The bitter gales the tightest sails and the sheltered bay our port
It's a wayward life it's the smugglers life it's the joy of the smugglers call

And when the blast of dawn comes up and our cargo's safely stowed
Like sinless saints to church we'll go as martyrs to our cause
And there's Champagne wine for communion wine and the parson drinks it too
With a sly wink prays "Forgive these men for they know not what they do"

¹³ <https://mccalmans.bandcamp.com/track/smuggler>