

## Billy Boy

**1. Where ha' ye bin all the day, my boy,  
Billy Boy?**  
**Where ha' ye bin all the day, me charmin'  
Billy Boy?**

I've been walkin' on the quay,  
with me charmin' Nancy Grey

**Nancy kittl'd me fancy, oh, me charmin'  
Billy Boy!**

2. And did you take her for a ride, my boy,  
Billy Boy?

**And did you take her for a ride, me  
charmin' Billy Boy?**

Yes, I took her for a ride,  
and a little more beside,

**Nancy kittl'd me fancy, oh, me charmin'  
Billy Boy!**

3. Can she cook a bit o' steak, my boy, Billy  
Boy?

**Can she cook a bit o' steak, me charmin'  
Billy Boy?**

She can cook a bit o' steak,  
aye, an' make a gairdle cake,

**Nancy kittl'd me fancy, oh, me charmin'  
Billy Boy!**

4. Can she make an Irish stew, my boy, Billy  
Boy?

**Can she make an Irish stew. me charmin'  
Billy Boy?**

She can make an Irish stew, aye, an'  
"Singin' Hinnies" too

**Nancy kittl'd me fancy, oh, me charmin'  
Billy Boy!**

5. Can she lie close unto thee, my boy, Billy  
Boy?

**Can she lie close unto thee, me charmin'  
Billy Boy?**

She can lie close unto me,  
like the bark is to the tree,

**Nancy kittl'd me fancy, oh, me charmin'  
Billy Boy!**

6. Can she make a feather bed, my boy, Billy  
Boy?

**Can she make a feather bed, me charmin'  
Billy Boy?**

She can make a feather bed,  
fit for any sailor's head

**Nancy kittl'd me fancy, oh, me charmin'  
Billy Boy!**

7. And is she fit to be your wife, my boy,  
Billy Boy?

**Is she fit to be your wife, me charmin'  
Billy Boy?**

Aye, she's as fit to be me wife  
as the fork is to the knife

**Nancy kittl'd me fancy, oh, me charmin'  
Billy Boy!**

8. Where ha' ye bin all the day, my boy,  
Billy Boy?

**Where ha' ye bin all the day, me  
charmin' Billy Boy?**

I've been walkin' on the quay,  
with me charmin' Nancy Grey

**Nancy kittl'd me fancy, oh, me charmin'  
Billy Boy!**

[as sung by **Salt of the Earth**, on CD  
*Tomorrow's Tide*]



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### Notes:

**Capstan** shanty, taken from a Northumbrian folk song. The shanty would have had verses added - or removed - according to the length of the job.

This version: **Salt of the Earth**, CD *Tomorrow's Tide*

(I cannot find a recording with the other tune - perhaps only this one became a shanty.)

**Terry**, Richard Runciman, 1921, *The Shanty Book, Sailor Shanties*) gives four verses, the rest, he says, being too Rabelasian to print.

1. Where ha' ye bin all the day, Billy Boy, Billy Boy?  
**Where ha' ye bin all the day, me Billy Boy?**  
I've been walkin' all the day,  
with me charmin' Nancy Grey  
**And me Nancy kittl'd me fancy, oh, me charmin' Billy Boy!**

2. And is she fit to be yer wife, Billy Boy, Billy Boy?  
Aye, she's as fit to be me wife  
as the fork is to the knife

3. Can she cook a bit o' steak, Billy Boy, Billy Boy?  
She can cook a bit o' steak,  
aye, an' make a gairdle cake.

4. Can she make an Irish stew, Billy Boy, Billy Boy?  
She can make an Irish stew?  
Aye, an' "Singin' Hinnies" too.

### Notes on the words

**Kittled** - tickled

**Gairdle cake** - girdle cake or griddle cake

**Singing Hinnies** - a species of Sally Lunn teacake only larger. Usually plentifully besprinkled with currants, in which case it is designated by pitmen as "Singin' Hinnies wi' smaea co fizzors" (small coal fizzers.)