

## Bully in the Alley

Verse 1 and Chorus:

**So help me Bob I'm bully in the alley  
(Way, hey, bully in the Alley) □  
Help me Bob I'm bully in the alley  
(Bully down in Shinbone AI)**

1. Sally is a girl that I love dearly,  
**(Way, hey, bully in the alley)**  
Sally is the girl that I spliced nearly  
**(Bully down in Shinbone AI)**
2. For seven long years I courted Sally,  
**(Way, hey, bully in the alley)**  
But all she did was dilly dally,  
**(Bully down in Shinbone AI)**
3. I bought her silks, I bought her laces  
**(Way, hey, bully in the alley)**  
I took out to all of the places  
**(Bully down in Shinbone AI)**
4. I'll leave home and I'll be a sailor  
**(Way, hey, bully in the alley)**

### Notes

Halyard shanty

**Other names:** Bully in the Alley, Help me Bob,

### Notes on the words

**Bully** - Bully is normally used to mean a fellow-sailor.  
Could 'bully' be a synonym for 'drunk'? it could equally be synonymous with 'bullish' (aggressive) which, in Short's version, might account for leaving your jacket in an alley after taking it off for a fight.  
[\[MainlyNorfolk.info\]](#)

**Shinbone AI** - a place often referred to in negro songs. There are Shinbone Alleys in Longboat Key, Florida, St. George's, Bermuda, in Antigua, in Pittsburgh and probably more.

**Hugill, Stan, 1994, *Shanties from the Seven Seas*:**

This shanty is of Negro origins. I came across it in the West Indies. ...It may have been one used originally by cotton screwers.

1. So 'elp me bob, I'm bully in the alley  
Way-ay-ay, ay-ay-ay, bully in the alley  
So 'elp me bob, I'm bully in the alley  
Bully down in Shinbone al.
2. Sally am de gal down in our alley  
Sally am de gal that I spliced nearly.
3. I'll leave my Sal an' I'll go a-sailin'  
I'll leave my Sal an' go a-whalin'.

I'll leave home and ship aboard a-whaler  
**(Bully down in Shinbone AI)**

5. When I get home, then I'll marry Sally  
**(Way, hey, bully in the Alley)**  
We'll have kids and we'll count' em by the tally  
**(Bully down in Shinbone AI)**

**So help me Bob I'm bully in the alley  
(Way, hey, bully in the Alley)  
Help me Bob I'm bully in the alley  
(Bully down in Shinbone AI)**

**Yarmouth Shantymen** at Halifax Nova Scotia sing this version (32s in) <https://youtu.be/3CAuMEX8l4E>

Other popular verses :

Sally is a girl down in our alley  
Sally is a girl in Shinbone Alley

Gonna visit my Sal as often as I'm able  
I hope I get there before I slip my cable

My informant "Harry Lauder" told me that from verse 3 onwards improvisation was the thing.



**Hugill, Stan: *Hauling on the Foresheet*  
"Haul on the bowline - the bowline - HAUL"  
from *Shanties from the Seven Seas*, 1994.**

**Brown, Tom: *Short, Sharp, Sharp Shanties*, 2012**

"There are three other shanties of this title in the **Carpenter** collection, with first lines that seem to be related:

1. Edward Robinson of Sunderland - John Brown's body in the alley
2. Cptn. Robinson of Sunderland - I lost my jacket in the alley
3. Mr. Forman of Leith, Edinburgh - I lost my coat in Story's Alley."