

## Cheer'ly Man

1. Whoa, haulee aye oh!

**Cheer'ly, man!**

Walk him up oh!

**Cheer'ly, man!**

Haulee, aye yeo!

Haulee, aye yeo!

**Cheer'ly, man!**

2. Oh to the cathead, aye oh!

**Cheer'ly, man!**

Oh ship for dead,

**Cheer'ly, man!**

Heavy as lead,

heavy as lead,

**Cheer'ly, man!**

3. Whoa, forty cocks

**Cheer'ly, man!**

Oh split her blocks

**Cheer'ly, man!**

Oh on the rocks,

Oh on the rocks

**Cheer'ly, man!**

4. Whoa, rouse an' shake 'er,

**Cheer'ly, man!**

Oh shake an' wake 'er

**Cheer'ly, man!**

Or we will make 'er,

Or we will make 'er

**Cheer'ly, man!**

### Notes

**Alternative titles:** Cheer'ly Man,  
Cheerly Man, Cheerily Man

Hear **Barbara Brown** sing this  
on YouTube at  
[youtu.be/3j\\_6TDUwx4g](https://youtu.be/3j_6TDUwx4g)

See the lovely cathead picture at  
[www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ship/images/cathead.jpg](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ship/images/cathead.jpg)

### Stan Hugill:

"Cheerily Man - a halyard shanty - is only just faintly removed from singin' out and is probably the most primitive, and one of the oldest of all these heaving and hauling songs of the sea."

### Some notes from the [Short Sharp Shanties](#) project

"A widespread and widely published shanty. **Short** told [Cecil] **Sharp** it was "One of the first chanties once invented and one I learned first" – this would have been on his first deep-sea voyage on the Promise to Quebec in 1857.

"**Dana**, Henry, in *Two Years Before the Mast*, speaks of Cheer'ly Men as being in common use in American ships of the 1830s.

"**Hugill** points out, "Never once does [Dana] mention the hoisting of a topsail or of a t'gallants'l, or of catting the anchor, without referring to the fact that Cheerily Man was the shanty with which they did the job."

... "Short gave Sharp only one verse... Hugill noted this is one of few shanties with four solos and four refrains. [Short] gives an interesting version with only three solos and refrains." The remaining verses come from Hugill's 'catting the anchor' version of the shanty - conceptual rather than narrative.

"**Chris Roche**, of the Shanty Crew, opines that Short's 3-refrain version would have been impossible to use as a working shanty. [Short Sharp Shanties project people] tend to think that, if used as a short-haul - particularly for a job like catting the anchor - it would have been no problem given the crew knowing the form."

### Notes on the words

**Cheer'ly** - lively. Used as an exhortation when work was to be done at speed. Its opposite is

**Catheads** - projecting pieces of timber near the bow which served as crane booms for hoisting the anchors to the rail (see image above).

**Catting the Anchor:** [Globalsecurity.org](http://Globalsecurity.org) says:

Once you raised the anchor and stowed the main cable, you needed to tie up the anchor to the cathead where it wouldn't swing free and damage the ship. Once raised, the anchors would then be secured to the catheads until they were ordered cast off again.

The anchor ring is catted by the large hook attached to the projecting cathead.

The "**Cat**" here is the tackle is used to raise the anchor from the waterline to the catheads. The cat tackle has a multiple block to aid in lifting the anchor up to the cathead.

Catheads may derive their name from the carvings or cast iron caps in the form of cats or lions. These decorative heads were often plated in gold, and were one of the few ornaments found on a warship.

For more information, see [www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ship/sail.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ship/sail.htm) where there is much more information about the age of sail..