

U3A Shanties Group **Fire Down Below (Just a village maiden)**

1. She was just a village maiden with
red and rosy cheeks,

To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!

She went to church and Sunday School
and sang this anthem sweet,

Oh there's fiyer down below.

2. The passon wuz a misery, so scraggy an'
so thin,

To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!

Set he, 'Look 'ere, you shellbacks, if yer lead
a life of sin,'

Oh there's fiyer down below.

3. He took his text from Malachi an' he
pulled a weary fayice,

To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!

Oh, I took french leave an' I sailed away,
and now I've fell from grace.

Oh there's fiyer down below.

4. This passon had a daughter who was
sweet as sugar candy.

To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!

I said to her, "Us sailors would make lovers
neat an' handy."

Oh there's fiyer down below.

5. She set to me, "You sailors is a bunch o'
bloomin' liars,

To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!

An' ail of yous is bound ter Hell, ter feed
the flamin' fyers."

Oh there's fiyer down below.

6. She wuz a very naughty girl this passon's
only daughter,

To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!

She went down to a creek for to wash her
locks in water.

Oh there's fiyer down below.

7. The fiyer down below, me lads, is very
hot an' jolly,
But the fiyer there's not 'arf so 'ot as my
sweet clipper Polly.

8. There's fiyer all around us, boys--it's
playin' hide an' seek,

To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!

It's tryin' to find a space, m' lads, where it
can find some sleep.

Oh there's fiyer down below.

9. There's fiyer in the cabin, boys, and in
the galley too,

To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!

But there's no fiyer in the fo'c'sle an' it's cold
as is the crew.

Oh there's fiyer down below.

10. There's fiyer in the galley an' it's runnin'
down below,

There's fiyer in the bosun's pipe-it's time for
us to go.

11. If the rotten boats won't hold us when it's
time for us to go,

We'll complain to Havelock Wilson when we
gits him down below.

12. There's fiyer up, there's fiyer up,
there's fiyer down below,

To me way, hay, hee, high, ho!

There's bonnie lassies waiting us in Liverpool
you know

Oh there's fiyer down below.

The trio **Jenkins Ear Shantymen** sing this -
the **non-indented** verses at youtu.be/KmLaZRnjn8g



priest, by [melwe](https://melwe.com), from
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Notes

There are at least four other shanties with a refrain
of Fire Down Below.

This is the last **Pump** shanty to be sung aboard a
British square-rigger. It was sung by the
shantyman **Stan Hugill**, aboard **The Garthpool**,
a week before she was wrecked in the Cape
Verde Islands in October 1929.

Stan Hugill, in *Shanties from the Seven Seas*,
1994, gives five different shanties named Fire
Down Below (p377-381). This one is the first and
he calls it Fire Down Below (a), hence the name I
have used for this file.

Fire was a very serious threat aboard a wooden
ship and very much feared. However, clearly the
fire mentioned in this song is aboard the girl and
the sailor, not aboard the ship at all.