

Hog's eye Man

1. The hog's eye man is the man for me
He comes sailin' from across the sea

**With the hog's eye !
Row the boat ashore with the
hog's eye
Row the boat ashore with the
hog's eye Oh
She wants the hog's eye man!**

2. He came to the shack where his
Sally did dwell,
He knocked on the door and he rang
her bell,

**With the hog's eye !
Row the boat ashore with the
hog's eye
Row the boat ashore with the
hog's eye Oh
She wants the hog's eye man!**

3. Who's been here since I been gone,
A big buck sailor* with his sea-boots on
with the hog's eye ...

4. Sally in the garden siftin' sand,
And the hog-eye man sittin' hand
in hand.
with the hog's eye ...

5. The hog's eye man is the man for me
He was raised in Tennessee,
with the hog's eye ...

6. Sally in the garden pickin' peas,
With the hair on her head* hangin'
down to her knees.
with the hog's eye ...

7. Sally's in the kitchen mixin' duff
The cheeks of her face* go
chuff chuff chuff
with the hog's eye ...

8. The hog's eye man is the man for me
He comes sailin' from across the sea

**With the hog's eye!
Row the boat ashore with the
hog's eye
Row the boat ashore with the
hog's eye oh!
She wants the hog's eye man!**

This version: Geoff **Higginbottom** on the CD: *Island in the sun*

YouTube versions are nearly all railroad navy work-songs, rather than sea shanties. (They have a common heritage)

Compare the above with a hybrid version by **Hog-eye Navvy** at youtu.be/mqaS14B1DGc?t=30



Herzog, Yftach: *Feeding the pigs*,
taken at Sighnaghi, Georgia, 2007.
from [wikimedia](#).

Other popular verses

Fetch me down my riding cane
I'm off to see my darling Jane.

A hog-eye ship, and a hog-eye crew
Hog-eye mate and a skipper too.

Alternative choruses for lines 2 & 3:

Steady on the jib, with a hog's eye
or
Railroad navy with a hog-eye
(especially in the US)

Notes:

A **capstan** shanty, possibly also used at the pumps.

Alternative Titles: Hawks eye man, Hog's eye man, Hog-eye man, Ox-eye man.

Notes on the words

Recordings and written versions of this shanty have been bowdlerised. In a folk, maritime, or shanty festival you may hear something more explicit than written here

Hogseye - no-one can say for certain; see below

Big buck sailor - sometimes big buck navy, or big buck nigger

Hair on her head - not on her head! sometimes rendered as her black curly hair

Duff - dough, pastry

Cheeks of her face - no, not on her face!

What have the collectors written?

A L Lloyd, '*Farewell Nancy*', 1964, sleeve notes:

Though familiar to British seamen, this song... was probably made in America. It's still a favourite there evidently, for the folklorist Vance **Randolph** found several versions current among Missouri hill-folk nearly a thousand miles from the sea. Alas, Randolph's versions remain in manuscript, locked away in a Sex Research Institute in Indiana. My version - *melody, at least* - was taken down in the 1860s.

Meaning of Hog's eye ...

A **hog** - an old fashioned device for cleaning weed off a ships bottom, a sort of broom made of twigs trapped between 2 planks.

To hog (or hogging) - the condition of a ship when the bow and stern have drooped

(reverse of sagging).

Hog-Eyes - derogatory name for a barge used in California at the time of the 1849 gold rush, ie before the coming of the railways - see below

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

"The notorious Hogseye man ...Terry devotes several paragraphs trying to explain why it wasn't decent and what the hidden meaning of the term hogseye was in the minds of dirty old sailors but he doesn't explain a thing.

"**Whall**, "*Seamen of the old school*", plainly states that hog-eye was a type of barge invented for the newly formed overland trade which used the canals and rivers of America at the time of the Gold Rush (1850 onwards). A "ditch-hug" was a sarcastic phrase used by American deep-waterman to denote sailors of inland waterways such as the Mississippi and Missouri as opposed to foreign going Johns.

"[I think] Terry got his words mixed – he was thinking of Dead-eye and not Hog-eye, the former having both a nautical and an obscene significance. Nevertheless the solo parts were indecent, and a large amount of camouflaging was necessary before this song could be made public.

Captain W.B. **Whall**, *Ships, Sea songs and Shanties*, 1913:

"This shanty dates from 1849-50. At that time gold was found in California.

"There was no road across the continent, and all who rushed to the goldfields, with few exceptions, went in sailing ships round the Horn, San Francisco being the port they made for. This influx of people and increase in trade brought railway building to the front; most of the "navvies" were negroes. But until the roads were made there was a great business carried on by water, the chief vehicles being **barges, called "hog-eyes"**. The derivation of the name is unknown to me. The sailor in a new trade was bound to have a new shanty, and this song was the result.

"Much of this shanty is on printable; but it was so very much in evidence in the days of shanties that a collection would be imperfect without it."