

## Liverpool Judies

1. From Liverpool to 'Frisco a-rovin' I went,  
For to stay in that country was my good  
intent.  
But drinking strong whiskey like other damn  
fools,  
Oh, I was very soon shanghaied back to  
Liverpool.

**And it's row (row) row bullies, row!  
Them Liverpool judies have got us  
in tow.**

2. I shipped in the Alaska lying out in the  
Bay,  
We was waitin' for a fair wind to get  
underway.  
The sailors on board they was all sick  
and sore,  
They'd drunk all their whiskey and couldn't  
get no more.

**And it's row (row) row bullies, row!  
Them Liverpool judies have got us  
in tow.**

3. One night off Cape Horn I will never  
forget,  
And it's oh but I sigh when I think of it yet.  
We was goin' bows under her sailors all wet,  
She was runnin' twelve knots with her  
main skys'l set.

**And it's row (row) row bullies, row!  
Them Liverpool judies have got us  
in tow.**

4. Well, along comes the mate in 'is jacket  
of blue.  
He's lookin' for work for the matelot's to do.  
It's up "Fore tops'l halyards!" he loudly  
does roar,  
And it's lay aloft Paddy! You son-of-a-whore!

**And it's row (row) row bullies, row!  
Them Liverpool judies have got us  
in tow.**

5. Now soon we are sailin' way on to the  
Line,  
When I think of it now, well, we had a good  
time.  
The sailors box-haulin' them yards all  
around  
To catch that flash clipper, the  
Thatcher MacGowan.

**And it's row (row) row bullies, row!  
Them Liverpool judies have got us  
in tow.**

6. Well now we've arrived back in  
Bramley Moor Dock,  
And all the flash judies to the pier-head do  
flock.  
The barrel's run dry and me six quid  
advance,  
And I think it's high time for to get up and  
dance.

**And it's row (row) row bullies, row!  
Them Liverpool judies have got us  
in tow.**

7. Here's a health to our Captain,  
where'er he may be,  
He's a devil on land and a bucko at sea,  
And as for the first mate, the lousy ol' brute,  
We hope when he dies straight to hell  
he'll skyhoot.

**And it's row (row) row bullies, row!  
Them Liverpool judies have got us  
in tow.**

The Spinners sing this at  
<https://youtu.be/yMTLwKBhHPo>,



Here is a still photo by Terry  
Brown, from his video at  
[youtu.be/Dtmzv2dV0cA](https://youtu.be/Dtmzv2dV0cA),  
*The Spinners - Liverpool Judies*

**Notes:**

**Capstan** shanty, popular on Liverpool ships!

**Alternative Titles:** Liverpool judies, Roll bullies roll, Row bullies row, Roll Julia roll, Towrope girls.

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

[This Shanty] probably dates from the 1840s, since it was popular in the western ocean packets.

Two different themes were common and three tunes were used, with slight variance of these tunes among different sailor groups like those of the Tyne, Liverpool, Bristol Channel, London et cetera.

**Notes on the words**

**Row bullies row** - sometimes roll bullies roll.

**Bullies** - fellow-sailors

**Liverpool judies** - normally mean young girls ... but here it is a metaphorical reference to the **tide** that pulls the ships up the Mersey to Liverpool.

**Got us in tow** - the phrase '**Towrope Girls**' was a common one in the days of sail. When a ship was homeward bound with a favourable wind someone would remark :

'Aye, the gals 'ave got 'old of our towrope, me hearties!'

They girls were a sort of magnet, supposedly pulling with sailors and their ship towards the land. [Hugill (ibid)]

**Packet** - packet ship, delivering mail.

**Fore tops'l halyards** - halyards (ropes) to pull the topsail yards on the fore mast.

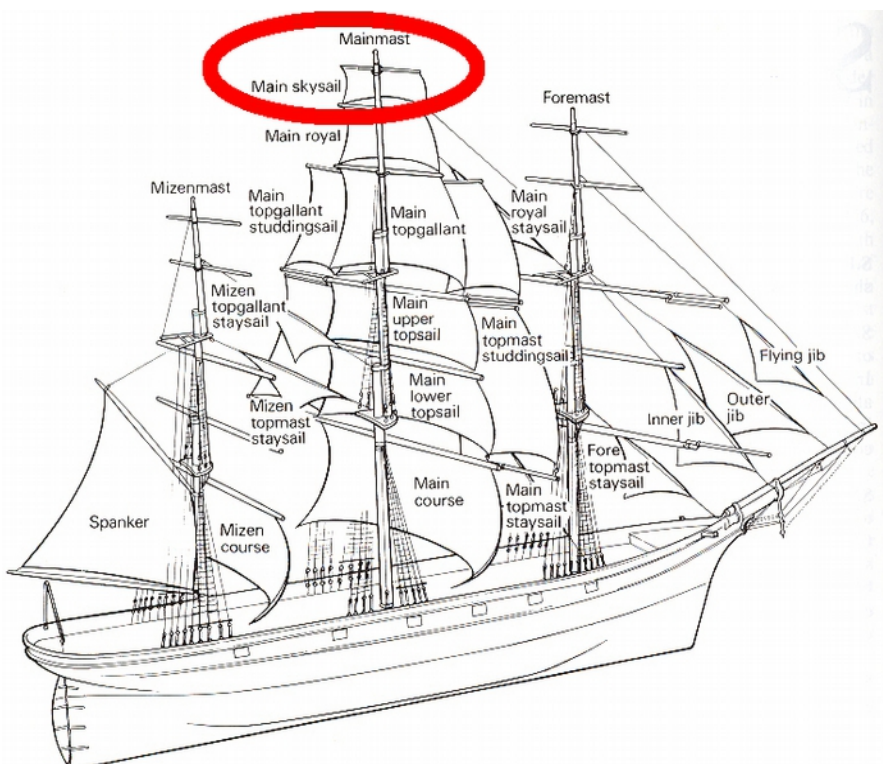
**Main skys'l** - skysail on the mainmast (see below)

**Skysail** - The sail set next above the royal in a square-rigged ship, the sixth sail in ascending order from the deck, its two tacks secured to the ends of the yard on which the royal is set. Like the royal, it is a light-weather sail, set only when the wind is steady and favourable.

The **main skysail** is circled in the sail plan below.

The author of [skysail.com](http://skysail.com) gives the sail plan below and the definition from the [\*The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea\*](#).

**Box-haul** - To turn a square-rigged ship about on the heel by bracing the sails aback. / to bring (a square-rigger) onto a new tack by backwinding the foresails and steering hard round.



<-- The **skys'l** or **skysail**

Nick **Burke**,  
Sail plan,  
from [skysail.com](http://skysail.com),