[**corsair2k3**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/82-corsair2k3/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 167 posts

([IP: 24.91.202.2](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.91.202.2)) ·

[Posted March 28, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=42678) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=42678)

Greetings,

This is a partial continuation of another topic that needs to be split--homosexuality and pedophilia being, in my opinion, separate phenomena.

As to homosexuality among pirates:

I've done a lot of reading in primary sources for the 18th century, and am of the opinion that homosexuality was somewhat less closeted among pirates than among the RN--or the population at large for that matter.

This is not to say that I accept the thrust (pardon the pun) of either Turley or Burg's arguments. Both fall victim to the assumption that human needs are constant and must find an outlet. They presume that, given the absence of women, pirate shps must therefore have resembled certain areas of San Francisco on Saturday night.

I am of the opinion that one cannot extrapolate the present era's obsession with personal physical gratification in general--and sex in particular--without a lot more evidence than has survived. And the argument that men and women of the 18th-century were simply more reticent about that area of life ain't a-gonna cut it with me. Putting forth a historical hypothesis that RELIES on absence of evidence is flummery.

Having said that, there is some good evidence for homosexuality among pirates--aside from Culliford, who was mentioned in the original thread, Stede Bonnet was almost certainly gay. I have my suspicions about Roberts.

As to matelotage: while this institution may or may not have included the practice of homosexuality, it is clear that it was not exclusively a homosexual institution or practice--since it is explicitly mentioned that matelots would even share a woman.

Regards,

The Corsair

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=edit)

[**'Salem Bob'**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1090-salem-bob/)

* Deck Hand
* 
* 
* Member
* 87 posts

([IP: 165.121.129.204](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=165.121.129.204)) · · 

[Posted March 30, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=42946) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=42946)

 corsair2k3 said:

Greetings,

...Stede Bonnet was almost certainly gay. I have my suspicions about Roberts.

As to matelotage: while this institution may or may not have included the practice of homosexuality, it is clear that it was not exclusively a homosexual institution or practice--since it is explicitly mentioned that matelots would even share a woman.

Regards,

The Corsair

Ahoy Corsair,

Thats a pretty definitive statement about an ephemeral phenomenon ( a person dead Three Centuries sexuality). Could you please enlighten us with some solid documentation or evidence for that?

From the last little bit, I believe you are working toward this question by assuming an answer before examining all the evidence.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=42946)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_42946_menu)

[**corsair2k3**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/82-corsair2k3/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 167 posts

([IP: 24.91.202.2](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.91.202.2)) · · 

[Posted March 30, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=42961) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=42961)

Greetings,

Aside from some anomalous behavior reported during the blockade of the Virginia Capes in the early fall of 1717, the following testimony by pirate boatswain Ignatius Pell is part of the transcript of Stede Bonnet's trial:

"[Thomas Nichols] "did not fight; and if one that Major Bonnet loved very well, had not been shot down by his Side, he [=Boonet] had blowed his [=Nichols'] Brains out; for he had his Pistol ready."

IMO. this accounts for the "...some Discomforts he found in a married State" as reported in the GHP

Regards,

The Corsair

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=42961)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_42961_menu)

[**'Salem Bob'**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1090-salem-bob/)

* Deck Hand
* 
* 
* Member
* 87 posts

([IP: 165.121.147.177](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=165.121.147.177)) · · 

[Posted March 30, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=42966) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=42966)

 corsair2k3 said:

Greetings,

Aside from some anomalous behavior reported during the blockade of the Virginia Capes in the early fall of 1717, the following testimony by pirate boatswain Ignatius Pell is part of the transcript of Stede Bonnet's trial:

"[Thomas Nichols] "did not fight; and if one that Major Bonnet loved very well, had not been shot down by his Side, he [=Boonet] had blowed his [=Nichols'] Brains out; for he had his Pistol ready."

IMO. this accounts for the "...some Discomforts he found in a married State" as reported in the GHP

Regards,

The Corsair

Ahoy corsair,

It seems pretty thin evidence on the ground for me.

Our own society looks oddly on strong male friendships (often based round warfare) that were not sexual in nature in previous eras, and assumes homosexuality, because our society does not have, and does not encourage such friendships. Strong male friendships between peers sharing danger is a commonplace of tribal societies - in most cases without the 'taint' of homosexuality attached (with notable exceptions that are famous, such as the Sacred Band of Thebes). Northern European Societys share this common trait, it's origins in the war band of tribal chieftans. The Boucanier Matelog would clearly seem to be in this tradition.

Most moderns would not understand the companionship of Rolanz and Olivier, who were never presented during the era of chansons as both being anything other than heterosexual. Couple that with a functional illiteracy of previous societies, some modern scholars have (especially those pushing political or social agendas), and you end up with such proposterous pronouncements of homosexuality for notable figures such as Richard I (not understanding the Medieval custom of royalty symbolicaly sharing a bed, nor the commonplace of multiple people of the same gender in a bed solely for the purpose of sleeping, beds being a scarcer commodity, and centeral heating being nonexistant - people can sleep in a bed without any sex occuring - just ask some long married couples regarding this... :) ), who never had the remotest hint of such a charge against him by any contemporary, before or after his death. Please note, an enemy - of which he had many - could have used such an accusation as a strong weapon against him. Edward II of England (documentably a homosexual) was politically ruined, lost his throne, and ultimately his life - in part due to his political failures, but in largest part due to his lifestyle.

I truely do believe some pirates were homosexual, but I also strongly believe that there is no reason to suspect that any higher rate of homosexuality than is or was ever present in the general population - approximately 2-3%

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=42966)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_42966_menu)

[**corsair2k3**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/82-corsair2k3/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 167 posts

([IP: 24.91.202.2](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.91.202.2)) · · 

[Posted March 30, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=42971) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=42971)

 Quote

I will grant you that his preference is not proven.

The possibility of a strong nonsexual friendship is what leads me to talk in terms of "almost certain" rather than "absolutely certain"

The trouble is, the 18th century was pretty reticent about expressions of emotion of any sort. In fact, if this were a quote from the Age of the Troubadors, or the 19th-century Romantics, I'd think nothing of it. But, in my opinion, an 18th-century witness would be likelier to say something to the effect that Had not Bonnet's good friend been shot..." if the relationship in question were simple friendship. The use of "loved" is, for this period, awfully strong.

But your mileage might vary.

In any case, I strongly agree with you that there's no evidence showing that homosexuality was any more prevalent among pirates than it might have been among the general population.

On the other hand, the incidence of homosexual encounters might have been somewhat higher aboard ship than ashore--as the good Dr. Johnson noted, there's lots of similarities between ships and gaols.

Given the statistics you cite, and taking into account that there were probably more than 300 captains active between 1680 and 1730, it's interesting that we've only identified only a handful of pirates who were probably homosexual--again, I lean toward attributing this more to that era's reticence about such matters than anything else

Regards,

The Corsair

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=42971)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_42971_menu)

[**HarborMaster**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/970-harbormaster/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,446 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Centralia Wa and Cebu Philippines
* Interests:Scuba Diving ., Shooting ., Drinking ., Cannons ., Motorcycling . I hope I didn't , leave out anything important.

([IP: 24.18.65.163](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.18.65.163)) · · 

[Posted March 31, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=42985) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=42985)

Here is a little quote I found.....,

After you read it.., you must read it understanding that back in the good ol days of Piracy..., (This is a Pirate forum., its why we are here .., we like the whole pirate persona) Such individuals found performing sodomy and or other lewd acts .,were commonly hanged after trial., other misfortunates and or misfits had been flogged until dead in stocks and some even mistaken?.,for witches or other crimes against the church., as reason to eliminate homosexuals from society.., thus ridding the communities of what they considered to be scum?., It wasnt taught at jr high school levels to the children.., that its o.k.?..., and not many parents had to try to explain to there children why things were looking queer? It just was not tolerated., and in the closet it went !!!!!

I am not saying my opinions here., and I do have some., however I am saying., in the days of the pirate., society didnt really tolerate it...., truly it was a differant world....., a world apparently most here are drawn too.

A quote I found while researching this recent topic .. due to the boards recent forum s on the subject.

I come next to our modern Sodomites, and here I cannot but wish, that we could imitate the Dutch in one thing, who in such Cases make both the Trials and Punishments of such Sort of Criminals, to be done with all the Privacy possible, that may consist with Justice; and as the Reasons they have for it are very good, so the Reasons, why I wish it so here, are as good, and much the same.

First, The open Trials of such Cases are accompany’d with so many publick Indecencies, such immodest and obscene Expressions, as are both offensive to the Ears of the Virtuous, and serve but to excite and gratifie the corrupted Appetites of the Vicious.

HarborMaster

**Edited March 31, 2004 by HarborMaster**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=42985)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_42985_menu)

[**dasNdanger**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

([IP: 138.89.231.228](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=138.89.231.228)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173597) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173597)

Rumba said I can try this...but everyone hasta play nice, k?? 

A while ago Rumba and I were on a forum about the Royal Navy, and the buggery discussion came up there. Now that particular site was mostly visited by women, and so we only had the female perspective on the matter (with little documentation) and the majority of ladies swore that at sea, no man or cabin boy (or goat for that matter) was safe.

However, I had a different perspective. In reading through naval documents (the few that addressed the situation), I found that buggery was a serious offense, even punishable by death. I started questioning that it was a 'given' that every sailor broke down at some point in a voyage, and took to buggery. Sure, this stuff 'happens', and during that age it may have been so hushed up we'd never know the truth. But certainly there is some sort of documentation and, perhaps, as men - you could share your thoughts on the matter in a respectable and mature manner... \*trying to keep the corks down tight in EVERYONE'S weevil cans\*

On one site, I found this comment, "Despite the reputation that fuels much gay fantasy that shipmates are also bunkmates, close male to male homosocial camaraderie seems more likely in the majority of cases: pirate shipmates were united in common cause against lawful merchant ships, Royal Navy law enforcement and other marauders."

I tend to lean towards this opinion, but I would like to know what sort of factual information and documentation there is...as well as to get a male perspective on the subject.

das

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173597)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173597_menu)

[**CaptainCiaran**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2026-captainciaran/)

* Pyrate Legend
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,597 posts
* Location:36 degrees north, 79 degrees west
* Interests:Gay pirate from North Carolina interested in all things piratical (especially pirates associated with NC), lighthouses, seashore, travel, and folklore.<br><br>Captain of the fine vessel, The Cabin Buoy<br>Divine Caretaker of The Confessional Closet<br>Patron Extraordinaire at the Tsunami Kate<br>Loyal Lookout aboard the Watch Dog

([IP: 71.111.224.202](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=71.111.224.202)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173606) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173606)

Okay, so I'll go first, since I be the token queer pirate here in the Pub. Arr.

First of all, I think that it be difficult fer us to transport our 21st century morals, attitudes and thoughts on the subject of buggery to 16th, 17th, and 18th century society. Sexual secrecy was certainly much more the case then than now. Today gay men and women, as well as bisexuals, or people who simply enjoy sex with their own gender are much more visible, especially in all forms of media.

I do believe that buggery existed on pirate and naval ships. However, I do not believe that 'every man broke down at some point' and engaged in male to male sex. In fact, I would guess the number who did to remain low, but yet higher than the norm because of the long times at sea. I think one area of today that we can compare is the prison population, which has a much higher degree of same sex activity than the general population. Common sense should prevail here that if guys are locked up or kept together for very long periods of time, the temptation (for those who could be tempted) to engage in such activity would be greater. If one believes that people are simply not 100% straight or 100% gay, but are somewhere at different points on a scale of attraction, then it becomes much easier to believe that, yes, some people could engage in sexual activity with the same sex under certain circumstances, while others would not.

I do NOT believe that the fear of punishment or the Law would have deterred many men. How much did sodomy laws, even in this country, deter such sexual activity? In the height of desire or passion, people will follow nature more often than not.

One other thought about piracy and sodomy that comes to mind as I type is that, of course, pirates were not the sweet little Johnny Depp characters from the movies, but were more often scoundrels, criminals, misfits. I think if ye take an element of men who were from such a mix, combine that with periods of drinking and carousing, and throw in not having sex for long periods of time, living in tight quarters and possessing a 'devil be damned' attitude, ye might get a man who is a little more willing to engage in mischievous behaviour.

One resource that folks might like to read is the book, "Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition" by B. R. Burg. NYU Press. It's a bit of a scholarly read, but quite interesting.

Cheers, mates.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173606)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173606_menu)

[**hurricane**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/32-hurricane/)

* Pyrate Legend
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,672 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Seattle, Washington
* Interests:Songs of a nautical nature, wine, rum, rum punch, Henry Morgan and Krimson Kat.

([IP: 72.40.18.212](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=72.40.18.212)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173613) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173613)

This was covered in the Sea Rover's Practice and I think the position was accurate.

According to the author, homosexual activity aboard a ship was no more widespread than in society. The vast majority of sailors either took care of it the traditional way or remained celebate until their return to shore when they would whore the night away or wear out their wife or girlfriend upon their return.

I seriously doubt that sailors or pirates sought out homosexual relationships just because they couldn't get any at sea. Without being too graphic, the hand is a mighty fine substitute in times of need and doesn't carry any of the complications.

The term matelot is often mistaken to infer the conjugal relationship between two sailors or pirates. But that is misconstrued. In fact, when one married the matelot had visitation rights to the wife when the other was away.

So, I would caution against making a generalization that men at sea were more promiscuous than those ashore.

-- Hurricane

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173613)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173613_menu)

[**dasNdanger**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

([IP: 138.89.231.228](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=138.89.231.228)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173621) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173621)

So far, what you are saying here is the way I feel about it - yeah, it happened, but not as widespread as some folks would like to think. Interestingly, it seems that most women have the opposite view, that men are dogs and will ...well...you know...with whomever or whatever is handy.

I think that a lot of people confuse male camaraderie with sexual attraction. Heck - I'm a huge rugby fan, I just LOVE watching those sweaty, smelly blokes jumping on one another, however, I know that the vast majority are straight. Male camaraderie is perhaps as confusing to women as female friendships are confusing to men. I mean, has any man ever figured out why women have to go to the restroom in herds?? (Personally, I haven't figgered that one out either...)

Now - there ARE straight men who will engage in buggery without thinking of themselves as 'gay'. In such instances it's often a case of domination, or drunkenness! LOL - I must say, my favorite joke is still the two straight guys waking up in bed together after a night of boozing, and looking at each other with those wildly suspicious and horrified expressions!! LOL...great gag...

Anywho - back to the subject at hand. I'm interested in hearing what others have to say...

das

**Edited February 22, 2006 by dasNdanger**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173621)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173621_menu)

[**kass**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1603-kass/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,526 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Easton, Pennsylvania
* Interests:Historical Clothing from the 14th through 18th centuries. Getting all the niggling details right. Dressing up and having fun with my similarly-obsessed friends. :)

([IP: 65.78.123.159](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=65.78.123.159)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173632) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173632)

Okay, I'm a woman with an opinion. But unlike most thing I post about, I don't have the documentation to back this up.

I have two reasons why I believe buggery was no more prevalent among sailors than among men ashore.

Number One: In the period we're studying, homosexuality was thought of as an abberation, almost a mental illness. Even if kept secret, the self-hate involved with the practice must have been immense. Remember that homosexuality was a crime in England punishable by a jail sentence and hard labour until the 20th century.

Number Two: Unlike the other women you've run into, Das, I don't think men are sex-crazed animals who have to screw something in lieu of women or their heads will pop off. Besides, ever been on a ship in the open ocean or fighting a foe likely to kill you? There is so much to worry about that I'm sure "getting some" is the least of one's worries! 

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173632)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173632_menu)

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

([IP: 4.245.30.179](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=4.245.30.179)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173634) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173634)

Just a testimonial from 4 years in the U.S Navy. Yes it happened, no it wasn't prevailant. I was aware of who was and who wasn't. They didn't bother me, nor I them. When it came time to do our duty, we all relied on each other to do what we were trained to do, for the mutual benefit of our survival. We, as a species, have made amazing progress in math, science, medicine, and technology, but as humans, very little of human nature has changed between the now, and peolple of Aristotles time. Just my humble oppinion.

Capt. Bo

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173634)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173634_menu)

[**Red Maria**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/15-red-maria/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,057 posts

([IP: 209.223.156.194](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=209.223.156.194)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173637) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173637)

According to *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates* by Robert C. Ritchie Robert Culliford, the bane of Captain Kidd's existance was openly gay and even had a 'grand consort' by the name of John Swann. (see page 124).

Ritchie gives instances of homosexual ity among pirates on pages 123-124.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173637)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173637_menu)

[**Fox**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,569 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

([IP: 82.26.116.238](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=82.26.116.238)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173661) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173661)

 Quote

One resource that folks might like to read is the book, "Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition" by B. R. Burg. NYU Press. It's a bit of a scholarly read, but quite interesting.

Bit of a scholarly read? 

OK, I'm just going to make some points here and let you folks draw what you will from them.

A certain proportion of any given group of people is likely to be gay, but only the minutest of insignificant proportions of people will "turn" gay just to avoid celibacy. Therefore, if there were acts of homosexuality aboard ships it was because the participants were gay, not because they'd been at sea for a long time. At the end of the day you either like a bit of backdoor action or you don't, if you do then going to sea won't change anything, if you don't then... going to sea won't change anything.

Given that the punishments for sodomy were extreme - death was usual unless the "culprit" could offer a damn good excuse, and given the cramped conditions aboard most ships, to what extent do you think people really risked it, even if they wanted to?

Are we losing sight of the fact that many pirate cruises (and indeed other voyages) lasted only a few weeks anyway?

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Did pirates sometimes engage in a bit of same-sex sex? Probably.

Were they driven to it because of being at sea for a long time? Nope.

Let me just throw a figure at you for the fun of it. In his research for his excellent book "Sailors", the historian Peter Earle looked at the lives of thousands and thousands of English merchant seamen of the 1650-1775 era. He found ONE case of homosexuality.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173661)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173661_menu)

[**JoshuaRed**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/81-joshuared/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,342 posts

([IP: 68.210.30.189](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=68.210.30.189)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173666) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173666)

Speaking of Peter Earle I'm reading his book "The Pirate Wars" right now, and I'm finding it a refreshing point-of-view. First one I've read in a long time that seems to cull from sources other than the same-old same-old we're all familar with.

As to the gay pirate thing - remember what Kass said about the self-hate & social stigma involved back then...and toss in the fact that the pirate community was very small compared to other social sub-sets, and pirates were transient. In the GAOP for example, it has been shown that the vast majority of crews came from Hornigold's original gang and its offshoots. So within a timeset of the one or two years a pirate could expect to survive, and within the relatively small area of the West Indies, MANY of the pirates would have crossed paths and when that happens, word spreads. So I don't think Johnny Pirate would want it spread around the West Indies that he prefers catching to pitching.

It's a certainty that were GAOP pirates who happened to be gay, but no more prevalent than an equal cross section of Coopers, or Blacksmiths, or Fishermen, or Haberdashers, etc...

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173666)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173666_menu)

[**greenighs**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1469-greenighs/)

* First Mate
* 
* 
* Member
* 221 posts
* Location:Bridgeport, CT
* Interests:I belong to a site what teaches th' proper care o' seahorses in the home aquarium, an' I keep a few o' th' wee beasties m'self. Piracy is what I aspire t' in life, but in reality, I'm an 'umble graphic designer. Yes, I spend long hours practicin' me Long John accent, a fact o' which I'm neither proud nor ashamed. It's like 'aving Buccaneer Tourette's, it be. An affliction of which I must make the best in life, incurable as it seems.<br><br>

([IP: 63.172.187.131](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=63.172.187.131)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173667) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173667)

 hurricane said:

This was covered in the Sea Rover's Practice and I think the position was accurate.

And what position are ye referring to, I wonder? 

I would think the practice of sodomy by pirates and sailors would be much less prevalent than it is in prison populations. Sodomy in prisons is often more an act of domination and violence than it is an expression of sexuality or for the release of sexual tension. And also, because, as Capt. Bo says, of the fact that at sea, they were so dependant on eachother for survial, and all were openly armed or had free access to knives etc. If it wasn't mutually agreeable, it wouldn't be in one's best interest to proceed. Even it it was mutally agreeable, I would think it would be kept fairly discreet for reasons already mentioned. I can imagine being discovered as a willing "bottom" on a long voyage would make for a rather rough trip, or, if the crew tended towards the punitive, one wouldn't last long enough for prison.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173667)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173667_menu)

[**JoshuaRed**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/81-joshuared/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,342 posts

([IP: 68.18.32.228](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=68.18.32.228)) · · 

[Posted February 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173676) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173676)

Very good points Green!

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173676)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173676_menu)

[**Rumba Rue**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/5984-rumba-rue/)

* Immortal Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 7,270 posts
* Gender:Female

([IP: 69.85.147.156](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=69.85.147.156)) · · 

[Posted February 23, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173863) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173863)

I agree with everyone here. That kind of act between men would have been very hushed and not openly portrayed.

As you know das, we discussed this about the Hornblower episode with Capt. Sawyer. I as many did, do believe that the man would have taken a male as his consort. But to speak of it openly would have never happened. Though I have no doubt that some of the crew might have guessed it.

Funny how women together with women are pretty much ok, but men with men is not. I don't understand the reasoning behind this thinking.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173863)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173863_menu)

[**dasNdanger**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

([IP: 138.89.228.227](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=138.89.228.227)) · · 

[Posted February 23, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=173888) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=173888)

 RumbaRue said:

As you know das, we discussed this about the Hornblower episode with Capt. Sawyer. I as many did, do believe that the man would have taken a male as his consort. But to speak of it openly would have never happened. Though I have no doubt that some of the crew might have guessed it.

Oh, really?? I was thinking about all the talk regarding Simpson and Archie - I never KNEW that the 'good' Captain was suspected of buggery, too!! LOL!!! SEEE??!! It WAS hushed up!! LOL!! Actually, in the books, I always wondered about Sawyer and Wellard...and suspected some sort of abuse going on there. Poor, sweet Wellard...no WONDER he pushed the captain!! (Breathe ONE word of what I just said here over at horatians, and I'll have yer guts for garters!!! I have a reputation to uphold there, so I gotta keep up my 'Horatio did it' mantra...)

,

 Quote

Funny how women together with women are pretty much ok, but men with men is not. I don't understand the reasoning behind this thinking.

I'm not so sure about that - the thought just creeps me right out...but perhaps because I am a woman, and have no attraction to other women. It seems, perhaps, that women - since they usually view men as sexual partners - seem to think buggery was widespread. Could it be a case of transferring their desires onto their impressions of male companionships? Just like many men - who usually view women as sexual partners - oft times think that all 'girlfriends' are lesbians. 

That's why I wanted a male perspective, and it seems that everyone feels about the same - the ratio of gay:straight in society doesn't necessarily change aboard ship - and that men, for the most part, don't just give into buggery out of desperation.

Thanks for replying, everyone!! Does anyone have records of punishment for buggery? I have a few, I'll have to try to dig 'em up...

das

**Edited February 23, 2006 by dasNdanger**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=173888)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_173888_menu)

[**Caraccioli**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2554-caraccioli/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 999 posts
* Gender:Male
* Interests:HI! Mission is Carracioli is Mark. This is Mission's Doppelganger. Any questions? Good, off with ye'.

([IP: 24.247.52.73](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.247.52.73)) · · 

[Posted February 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174223) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174223)

 Foxe said:

 Quote

One resource that folks might like to read is the book, "Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition" by B. R. Burg. NYU Press. It's a bit of a scholarly read, but quite interesting.

Bit of a scholarly read? 

Righhhht. (Dr. Evil pinky turn)

Professor Burg's book is a lot of theory with very few facts to back it up. He basically admits this in the intro to the book.

**Edited February 24, 2006 by Caraccioli**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174223)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_174223_menu)

[**Fox**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,569 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

([IP: 82.26.116.238](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=82.26.116.238)) · · 

[Posted February 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174259) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174259)

The VOC are recorded as tying two chaps back to back and throwing them overboard...

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174259)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_174259_menu)

[**Daniel**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/352-daniel/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 652 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:McLean, VA
* Interests:History, pirates, fiction, writing, writing historical fiction about pirates, jokes, games, law.

([IP: 70.243.109.31](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=70.243.109.31)) · · 

[Posted February 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174334) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174334)

 Quote

Let me just throw a figure at you for the fun of it. In his research for his excellent book "Sailors", the historian Peter Earle looked at the lives of thousands and thousands of English merchant seamen of the 1650-1775 era. He found ONE case of homosexuality.

Well, OK, but there are other studies that show a little more gay action than that. Cordingly reports that there were 11 courts-martial in the British admiralty courts for sodomy in the Seven Years' War (with seven convictions for "indecency" resulting). He also mentions that there were 50 documented cases of homosexuality amongst Chinese pirate defendants, 1796 to 1800.

I think it's pretty clear that the majority of pirates were straight, though.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174334)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_174334_menu)

[**Daniel**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/352-daniel/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 652 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:McLean, VA
* Interests:History, pirates, fiction, writing, writing historical fiction about pirates, jokes, games, law.

([IP: 70.243.109.31](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=70.243.109.31)) · · 

[Posted February 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174336) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174336)

Incidentally, Cordingly also mentions that while the death penalty was authorized for sodomy, imprisonment or the pillory were more common punishments for this offense. (He is referring to the Golden Age of Piracy; in the 1750s the Articles of War imposed a mandatory death penalty for "buggery").

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174336)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_174336_menu)

[**CaptainCiaran**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2026-captainciaran/)

* Pyrate Legend
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,597 posts
* Location:36 degrees north, 79 degrees west
* Interests:Gay pirate from North Carolina interested in all things piratical (especially pirates associated with NC), lighthouses, seashore, travel, and folklore.<br><br>Captain of the fine vessel, The Cabin Buoy<br>Divine Caretaker of The Confessional Closet<br>Patron Extraordinaire at the Tsunami Kate<br>Loyal Lookout aboard the Watch Dog

([IP: 71.111.224.202](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=71.111.224.202)) · · 

[Posted February 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174338) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174338)

Gramercy to Foxe and Caraccioli fer catching me grammatical faux pas regarding B.R. Burg's book, *Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition*. I mistakenly used the word 'scholarly' when I referred to it. I meant to have said 'academic' to imply that Professor Burg was an academic himself and the book was published by New York University Press.

I honestly found it a slow, unexciting read; however, for those interested in the subject, I would still recommend it as a resource.

This has been a very interesting topic and I have enjoyed reading mates' responses.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174338)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/#elControls_174338_menu)

[**Fox**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,569 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

([IP: 82.26.116.238](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=82.26.116.238)) · · 

[Posted February 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174358) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174358)

 Quote

Well, OK, but there are other studies that show a little more gay action than that. Cordingly reports that there were 11 courts-martial in the British admiralty courts for sodomy in the Seven Years' War (with seven convictions for "indecency" resulting). He also mentions that there were 50 documented cases of homosexuality amongst Chinese pirate defendants, 1796 to 1800.

Since my post I've also checked a couple of other sources. Bernard Capp found 4 cases in the Commonwealth Navy, with no convictions (at least, no capital punishments). One of the defendants later found himself a post as cook on another ship.

It has been suggested that a passage in Ward's *Wooden World* suggests homo-sadistic overtones in the boatswain's flogging of miscreants. I don't think it's conclusive myself but in the interests of a balanced argument here is the passage:

 Quote

Cerberus is not more dreaful to the Dead, than this Cat [of nine tails] is to the Living; but indeed she's never let loose, but by Order of the Commander, who many a time slashes a man out of the same Itch of Fancy, that he cats a woman.

I would also like to draw attention to the reaction of a seaman when propositioned by one of his shipmates in this newspaper report of 1740:

 Quote

Bristol May 14th.

### Last Tuesday a remarkable discovery was made about one of his Majesty’s ship’s, The Prince Edw[Coastie04](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/27-coastie04/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,010 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Juneau, AK
* Interests:Nautical history, sailing (especially tall ships and my own 'Sanctioned Mistress'), shooting (of all eras and calibers), and homebrewing.

([IP: 66.58.246.44](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=66.58.246.44)) · · 

[Posted February 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174546) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174546)

I know the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) defines sodomy very loosely, so that sodomy does not necessarily mean buggery, or even a same-sex sexual relation. Currently, the article for sodomy reads as follows:

 Quote

925. ART. 125. SODOMY

a: Any person subject to this chapter who engages in unnatural carnal copulation with another person of the same or opposite sex or with an animal is guilty of sodomy. Penetration , however slight, is sufficient to complete the offense.

b: Any person found guilty of sodomy shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

So, even in cases of sodomy, it isn't necessarily gay. I don't know what the standard was in England historically, maybe Foxe can enlighten me, but if it's similar to today's definition, getting a bit too friendly with the ship's cat would be sodomy as well (and, I might add, disgusting).

Coastie 

**Edited February 24, 2006 by Coastie04**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174546)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_174546_menu)

[**dasNdanger**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

([IP: 141.150.164.109](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=141.150.164.109)) · · 

[Posted February 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174585) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174585)

 Coastie04 said:

maybe Foxe can enlighten me, but if it's similar to today's definition, getting a bit too friendly with the ship's cat would be sodomy as well (and, I might add, disgusting).

Coastie 

Well, I can't speak for Foxe...but I can for my brother, who was a commercial fisherman for many a year. He told us that seagulls were occasionally molested by the odd fisherman or two...which, of course, grossed us all out. He, fortunately, wasn't found of sea birds...

It sounds as if they used sodomy as a blanket offense to cover bestiality, homosexuality, and 'unnatural' relations with a woman. I guess it was easier than defining each practice.

das

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174585)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_174585_menu)

[**greenighs**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1469-greenighs/)

* First Mate
* 
* 
* Member
* 221 posts
* Location:Bridgeport, CT
* Interests:I belong to a site what teaches th' proper care o' seahorses in the home aquarium, an' I keep a few o' th' wee beasties m'self. Piracy is what I aspire t' in life, but in reality, I'm an 'umble graphic designer. Yes, I spend long hours practicin' me Long John accent, a fact o' which I'm neither proud nor ashamed. It's like 'aving Buccaneer Tourette's, it be. An affliction of which I must make the best in life, incurable as it seems.<br><br>

([IP: 67.86.240.68](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=67.86.240.68)) · · 

[Posted February 25, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174695) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174695)

 CaptainCiaran said:

Gramercy to Foxe and Caraccioli fer catching me grammatical faux pas regarding B.R. Burg's book, *Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition*.  I mistakenly used the word 'scholarly' when I referred to it.  I meant to have said 'academic' to imply that Professor Burg was an academic himself and the book was published by New York University Press.

I honestly found it a slow, unexciting read; however, for those interested in the subject, I would still recommend it as a resource.

This has been a very interesting topic and I have enjoyed reading mates' responses.

Have ye read this one? Looks interesting ....

[Rum, Sodomy and the Lash: Piracy, Sexuality, and Masculine Identity](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0814782248/ref%3Dcm_lm_fullview_prod_10/102-6263910-1685730?_encoding=UTF8&v=glance)

[Hello Sailor! The Hidden History of Gay Life at Sea](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0582772141/ref%3Dpd_sim_b_2/102-6263910-1685730?_encoding=UTF8&v=glance&n=283155)

(Not restricted to pirates, but looks like a fun read!)

**Edited February 25, 2006 by greenighs**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174695)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_174695_menu)

[**CaptainCiaran**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2026-captainciaran/)

* Pyrate Legend
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,597 posts
* Location:36 degrees north, 79 degrees west
* Interests:Gay pirate from North Carolina interested in all things piratical (especially pirates associated with NC), lighthouses, seashore, travel, and folklore.<br><br>Captain of the fine vessel, The Cabin Buoy<br>Divine Caretaker of The Confessional Closet<br>Patron Extraordinaire at the Tsunami Kate<br>Loyal Lookout aboard the Watch Dog

([IP: 71.111.224.202](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=71.111.224.202)) · · 

[Posted February 25, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174701) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174701)

Aye, have read the 'Rum, Sodomy..' book, but not heard of the 'Hello Sailor' one. Will check it out! Gramercy, greenighs.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174701)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_174701_menu)

[**Fox**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,569 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

([IP: 82.26.116.238](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=82.26.116.238)) · · 

[Posted February 25, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174708) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174708)

I haven't read either of them, but just looking at what others have said:

About "Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash..."

 Quote

"Turley shows the ways in which sodomy and piracy are inextricable from the cultural imagination of the eighteenth century and, in doing so, encourages us to rethink not only pirate history, but the history of sexuality as well." -George E. Haggerty

I don't know what Turley's sources are, but if he's trying to show that piracy and sodomy of the 18thc were inextricably linked then I have doubts about the reliability and credibility of the book

"Hello Sailor" looks a little better: this, for example, is an endorsement which impresses me:

 Quote

"…meticulously researched, cogently argued work of high scholarship…producing an endlessly fascinating and finely nuanced examination of the culture and mores of homosexuality afloat…This book is greatly to be commended." Dr Campbell McMurray OBE, Director, Royal Naval Museum

However, from the description of the book it should be pointed out that it seems to basically be a history of gay cabin staff on cruise liners. Albeit, apparently, a good one.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174708)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_174708_menu)

[**Gentleman of Fortune**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1651-gentleman-of-fortune/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,456 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Germany... Franconia (northern Bavaria)
* Interests:I \*used\* to be an environmental scientist, until I married a DoDDs teacher in 1997. Since then, I have been living in, and traveling around, Europe (First the UK, now Germany).

My hobbies are all the "usual suspects" for those interested in re-enacting and Golden Age of Piracy stuff.... but I have drifted away from the pirate scene as my location and young family don't allow for any more than "virtual" pirate participation. Besides Piracy, I am into Reverend Guitars and Vintage Corvettes.

([IP: 84.170.217.27](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=84.170.217.27)) · · 

[Posted February 25, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=174726) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=174726)

Ineresting topic... but not my cup of tea.

I will say this...

When I lived in the UK, there was an excellent show on TV about homosexuals in the 18th century. All the "coffee houses" where the upper classes would go and dress up like females and and do what they \*do\* (this included re-enacting fake births).

There seemed to be a tolarance up to a point. I think they called them

[Molly Houses](http://www.glbtq.com/social-sciences/molly_houses.html).

(I just watched the show for the costumes... they were awesome..... no really!)

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=174726)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_174726_menu)

[**dasNdanger**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

([IP: 141.150.164.8](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=141.150.164.8)) · · 

[Posted February 27, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=175100) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=175100)

Hey, it's not really my cuppa, either - but I like to have my facts straight when people go off on this subject...

Does anyone know anything about this: [http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/bi...1717238,00.html](http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/biography/story/0%2C%2C1717238%2C00.html)

Onesies gave me the link, and said it sounded right up my alley...LOL, I shouldn't have told her about this thread... 

das

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=175100)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_175100_menu)

[**Fox**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,569 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

([IP: 82.26.116.238](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=82.26.116.238)) · · 

[Posted February 27, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=175139) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=175139)

Interesting, but the memoirs of Louis le Golif are widely accepted as being fake :)

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=175139)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_175139_menu)

[**dasNdanger**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

([IP: 141.150.163.85](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=141.150.163.85)) · · 

[Posted February 27, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=175152) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=175152)

 Foxe said:

Interesting, but the memoirs of Louis le Golif are widely accepted as being fake  :)

Ah...so we can call it *A Million Little Piratical Pieces*??? Maybe Oprah will feature it on her show someday...

You know, I'm sure buggery happened...perhaps even more than is documented. (I use the term buggery specifically to differentiate between straight men who use other men as substitute women, and gay men who prefer male relations.) Rock Hudson, it's been reported, turned to buggery while in the navy to slake his lust between ports, and that during a time when such activity was quite taboo. Whether he discover at that time that he was gay, or if it something he always leaned towards, no one will really know. Of course, that's not to say that every man, or the majority of men, would follow his course...and by the looks of factual information provided, it doesn't seem that shipboard buggery was as widespread as some moderns would like us to believe. It could be that buggery laws aboard ship were purposely harsh in order to prevent chaos. As someone said earlier - what would happen to a poor fella if everyone found out he was willing to be their best girlfriend for a night? It's also interesting that, in the Navy, there were also strong laws against cursing and spitting on deck...something that, in today's society, might seem ridiculous (esp. to the guy who swears and spits on the sidewalk), but served a very important purpose aboard ship. Of course, that's the Navy, and pirates had a different set of guidelines. In one book (not sure of it's accuracy) it states part of Robert's articles, which say: "No boy or woman to be allowed amongst them. If any man shall be found seducing any of the latter sex and carrying her to sea in disguise he shall suffer death."

Now, if they had such strong rules against having a woman aboard (in this case it might be for a sexual companion at sea), I can imagine that the same would hold true of a man who was willing to engage in buggery. The problems (fights, loyalty issues, distractions) it would cause would be greater than the pleasures that could be had. In the same code there's a prohibition against gambling with dice or cards...another potential hazard aboard ship, especially if cheating was suspected. So, the articles aboard a pirate vessel seem to be aimed at keeping the peace, in whatever way necessary.

das

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=175152)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_175152_menu)

[**Deadeye**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2410-deadeye/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 176 posts
* Location:Va Beach, Virginia
* Interests:Hell Raisin, Carousing, General Malady. Marlinespike, swordplay, Reenacting, Bladesmithing, foundry work.

([IP: 70.174.10.173](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=70.174.10.173)) · · 

[Posted March 5, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=177499) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=177499)

Time to throw in my (long awaited, I am sure) $.02...

I am sure that it happened. I do not have the book with me at the moment, But I remember Cordingly saying in *Under the Black Flag* (to paraphrase) that Pirates were uniting to throw off the restrictions of society at large and that homosexuality would fall into that catagory.

I know that it happens even today in the modern Navy. I have heard the "Sea Stories" from my co-workers who have spent lots of time on ship, esspecially before women were allowed on-board. It even coined a joke "It Aint Gay when You're Underway!". But it still didnt happen as much as it would be made to beleive by society, stories, or the Village People.

I bet dollars to donuts that it was the same back then. of Course I am sure Roberts or Teach never instituted a "Don't Ask, Dont Tell" Policy



* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=177499)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_177499_menu)

[**Tall Paul**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1113-tall-paul/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 169 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Colchester, Essex. United Kingdom. Britans oldest recorded Town.

([IP: 82.23.36.231](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=82.23.36.231)) · · 

[Posted April 8, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=186683) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=186683)

on a lighter note, I just came across this.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=186683)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_186683_menu)

[**Jib**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,078 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Minneapolis, MN
* Interests:Piracy, stage combat, martial arts, reading, film, travel

([IP: 24.106.16.72](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.106.16.72)) · · 

[Posted April 11, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=187411) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=187411)

What about the term "Ship Wife"?

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=187411)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_187411_menu)

[**Dorian Lasseter**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/137-dorian-lasseter/)

* Where's My Water
* 
* 
* Member
* 3,266 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:The Sea!
* Interests:18th Century reenactment; Maritime, F&I...
Did ECW as well...
All BP firelocks and cannons!

Also enjoy Swordfighting and a good Donnybrook

Got a question for or about me? Ask!!!

([IP: 147.72.68.85](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=147.72.68.85)) · · 

[Posted April 11, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=187452) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=187452)

Ship Wife was a term used in the RN, the Doxies would come out to a ship and only "Wives" were allowed aboard... the officers would turn a blind eye, most of the time, or I should say, many officers did... SO a doxie would be a "SHip Wife" to one or more crewmen...

**Edited April 11, 2006 by Dorian Lasseter**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=187452)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_187452_menu)

[**Ransom**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2401-ransom/)

* It's Going on Your Permanent Record
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 5,177 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:The pirate wasteland of Southern OR.
* Interests:I belong to the Barn Owls Writers Group. My husband and I live on 20 acres with four cats, and a two horses, Delight and Apollo — used to have longhorn cattle, sheep, but no more. Our 28' Tollycraft is moored in Charleston harbor. She has no sails, but dreams of being a schooner.

I like to ride my horse doing Medieval gaming, and now mounted archery, and trail course challenges. I also garden, read, do artwork, write, make beaded jewelry for my Website "Found in the Ruins", and go on antique/junk crawls with my husband of 20+ years. I am somewhat of a costume making junkie. Now I make pyrate and steampunk costumes, as well as SCA costumes and horse bardings, and am having WAY too much fun....

([IP: 69.59.203.179](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=69.59.203.179)) · · 

[Posted April 18, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=188789) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=188789)

 greenighs said:

And also, because, as Capt. Bo says, of the fact that at sea, they were so dependant on eachother for survial, and all were openly armed or had free access to knives etc. If it wasn't mutually agreeable, it wouldn't be in one's best interest to proceed. Even it it was mutally agreeable, I would think it would be kept fairly discreet for reasons already mentioned. I can imagine being discovered as a willing "bottom" on a long voyage would make for a rather rough trip, or, if the crew tended towards the punitive, one wouldn't last long enough for prison.[/color]

Very interesting topic. One that I had just had a conversation with a friend about not long ago. Being female and straight, I am still not of the opinion that all men are ravenous for sex 24/7. (Although some might want you to think so! \*\*LOL\*\*)

I agree that buggery was probably no more prevalent on board ship than on land. I agree with the quote above—most pirates, if propositioned by a ship mate—could make it very plain the attention wasn't wanted. If it was, then I suspect secrecy would be the order of the day (night). They were a close, violent society prone to drunkeness. The wrong proposition to the wrong man might find some poor devil stabbed and tossed overboard for his mistake.

Thanks to the other mates on this thread for the book list. I'm sure they all make for an interesting read on an interesting subject. 

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=188789)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_188789_menu)

[**CaptainSatan**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4649-captainsatan/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 791 posts

([IP: 12.5.135.138](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=12.5.135.138)) · · 

[Posted June 20, 2008](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=317379) (edited) · Hidden by Mission, December 4, 2015 - No reason given · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=317379)

**Buggermania the musical!**



**OK....I admit this pic is more about some modern misconceptions about *buggery on the high seas* than it is about actual history. But I didn't want to start a second sodomy thread**

**Edited June 20, 2008 by CaptainSatan**

* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=317379)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_317379_menu)

[**CaptainSatan**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4649-captainsatan/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 791 posts

([IP: 12.5.135.138](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=12.5.135.138)) · · 

[Posted June 20, 2008](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=317380) (edited) · Hidden by Mission, December 4, 2015 - No reason given · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=317380)

**I could totally see George Takei as a swashbuckling sodomite. That and I accidentally created a double post when I added the strange photo above. And I would rather make a brief departure from a dated historical discussion than just post *deleted* or *duplicate post***



**Edited June 20, 2008 by CaptainSatan**

* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=editComment&comment=317380)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&page=2#elControls_317380_menu)

[**CaptainSatan**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4649-captainsatan/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 791 posts

([IP: 12.5.135.138](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=12.5.135.138)) · · 

[Posted June 20, 2008](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=findComment&comment=317385) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/1999-gay-blades/&do=reportComment&comment=317385)

**On a more serious note....**

**This about more recent events in Royal Navy. And NOT specifically about pirates or the GAOP.**

*"THE GOLDEN RIVET"*

*I do not wish to make an issue of this, and would not otherwise have mentioned it. However, as I have been challenged, and in high places, to prove that every word in the three-word title of my book is accurate, as otherwise it would be misleading, I have included here an extract from the Naval Chronicle that was sent to me by a retired naval officer about a hanging for sodomy - see SODOMY - A HANGING. I shall reproduce it as an appendix to any second edition of the book.*

*For the same reason, and reluctantly, I would also draw the attention of readers to this front page head-line article in The Times of Thursday 31 October 2002:-*

*“A secret clamp-down on homosexuality in the Fleet was ordered in the late sixties after officials discovered that half of all sailors had indulged in gay acts and that no ship was immune from the risk of blackmail.*

*“The problem was highlighted in 1969 when scores of sexually explicit photographs of British sailors were found in a flat in Bermuda. More than 400 sailors had been involved in "gross indecency" there, and the names of the men and their ships were written on the pictures.*

*“At the same time, more and more drunken sailors were being lured into having sex with catamites, men masquerading as beautiful women, in Singapore.*

*'The security concerns which will revive old 'hello sailor' jokes and Sir Winston Churchill's assertion that naval life was 'rum, sodomy and the lash' are disclosed in documents released by the Public Record Office yesterday under the 30-year rule. They say that homosexuals were at risk of being blackmailed because of disgusting, infamous or immoral acts that they would want to keep hidden.*

*“Admiral Sir John Bush, the Commander-in Chief of the Western Fleet, responded by writing to all commanding officers, ordering them to stamp out this vice. 'There is,regrettably, ample evidence that homosexual practices are rife in the Fleet', he wrote in November 1969. 'It can be assumed that the cases that come to official notice are but a small proportion of those who indulge in these practices'.”*

*The scale of the problem had been outlined a year earlier in Captain Donald MacIntyre's Report on Homosexuality in the Royal Navy. That claimed that there was a risk of discharging on security grounds a “considerable number of men who were otherwise loyal. Senior naval officers have told me that they reckon that at least 50 per cent of the Fleet have sinned homosexually at some time in their naval service life”.*

*The article went on to explain the perceived security threat and stated that a large number of naval ratings went to a male brothel in Bermuda where they were lavishly entertained and given presents in return for sexual favours, giving rise to fears of blackmail if the pictures were obtained by a foreign power. The case led to at least 40 sailors being discharged.*

*Naval friends tell me that homosexuality is jocularly called “the Golden Rivet” that holds the Navy together!*

*Buggery*

*If any Person in the Fleet shall commit the unnatural and detestable Sin of Buggery or Sodomy with Man or Beast, he shall be punished with Death by the sentence of a Court-martial.*

*From The Naval Chronicle for 1807, Volume 18, p 342.*

*On the 2d of October, a court martial was held on board the Salvador del Mundo, in Hamoaze, Plymouth, on charges exhibited by Captain Dilkes, of his Majesty's ship Hazard, against William Berry, first lieutenant of the said ship, for a breach of the 2d and 29th articles; the former respecting uncleanness, and the latter the horrid and abominable crime which delicacy forbids us to name. Thomas Gibbs, a boy belonging to the ship, proved the offence, as charged to have been committed on 23d of August, 1807.*

*Several other witnesses were called in corroboration; among whom was Elizabeth Bowden, a female who has been on board the Hazard these eight months. Curiosity had prompted her to look through the key-hole of the cabin-door, and it was thus she became possessed of the evidence which she gave. She appeared in court dressed in a long jacket and blue trowsers [sic].*

*The evidence being heard in support of the charges, but the prisoner not being prepared to enter upon his defence, he begged time, which the court readily granted, until ten o'clock the next day, at which hour the court assembled again, and having heard what the prisoner had to offer in his defence, and having maturely and deliberately weighed and considered the same, the court were of opinion, that the charges had been fully proved; and did adjudge the said William Berry to be hanged at the yard-arm of such one of his Majesty's ships, and at such time, as the Right Honourable the Commissioners of the Admiralty shall direct. Sir J.T.Duckworth was the president.*

*The unfortunate prisoner was a native of Lancaster, and only in his 22d year, above six feet high, remarkably well made, and as fine and handsome a man as in the British navy. He was to have been married on his return to port.*

*The awful sentence of the court was carried into execution on Monday the 19th of October, on board the Hazard, in Plymouth Sound, the prisoner having been removed from the Salvador del Mundo into that ship which lay alongside a hulk in Hamoaze. At nine o'clock he appeared, and mounted the scaffold with the greatest fortitude. He then requested to speak with the Rev. Mr Birdwood on the scaffold; he said a few words to him, but in so low a tone of voice they could not be distinctly heard. The blue cap being put over his face, the fatal bow gun was fired, and he was run up to the starboard fore-yard-arm, with a thirty-two pound shot tied to his feet. Unfortunately the knot had got round under his chin, which caused great convulsions for a quarter of an hour. After being suspended the usual time, he was lowered into his coffin, which was ready to receive him in a boat immediately under, and conveyed to the Royal Hospital, where his friends meant to apply for his body for interment. He was dressed in a blue coat, white waistcoat, blue pantaloons, and boots. For the last week he seemed penitent, firmly collected, and prepared to meet his fate.*

[Read More](http://uk.geocities.com/nelsonsnavy/hanging.htm)

**Edited June 20, 2008 by CaptainSatan**

ard in Kingsroad, a person who went by the name of John Davidson having drank freely became passionately fond of his messmate which occasioned him to suspect something, having informed his officer and on due examination by the ship’s surgeon he was discovered to be of the female sex and confessed to having been three years in the Privateers Service in which she was so successful as to be entitled to £150 prize money.

The advances alarmed the sailor, so he went to his officer, and the culprit was then examined by the surgeon. Quite a few of the cases quoted by Capp and Rodger involve another seaman becoming suspicious, or even having some definite knowledge, and taking the information to the ship's officers to deal with.

The examples which we do have give a good illustration of the difficulty of concealing homosexual activity on a cramped and busy ship, and the general reactions of the other seamen to it.