[**AllByMeOnesies**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1520-allbymeonesies/)

* Deck Hand
* 
* 
* Member
* 50 posts

[Posted March 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=182422) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=182422)

Has anyone done any research on dental hygiene of the period? Seems like I've heard about everything else but that. Were there things available like toothbrushes (or something similar), etc.?

[**Capt. Sterling**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2648-capt-sterling/)

* Sticky Fingers Sterling Needs a New Hat
* 
* 
* Member
* 10,302 posts
* Gender:Pyrate Hunter
* Location:here
* Interests:Killing pirates, haven't met one yet worth keeping alive....

[Posted March 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=182426) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=182426)

Yikes teeth, have to look it up but seems like they did better than the egyptians in this area.... how about the no-nose club? 

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

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

[Posted March 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=182429) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=182429)

Now this could get fascinating. Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't they find some manner of toothbrushy-thing on the Whydah?

[**Capt. Sterling**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2648-capt-sterling/)

* Sticky Fingers Sterling Needs a New Hat
* 
* 
* Member
* 10,302 posts
* Gender:Pyrate Hunter
* Location:here
* Interests:Killing pirates, haven't met one yet worth keeping alive....

[Posted March 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=182432) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=182432)

Here you go, quoting Picard... pages 104-105.... "It is just possible that dental health was better in the 17th century than in ours. Recommended daily care included scraping away plaque. Sugar was known to cause caries. Sugary snacks had not been invented. If a child's teeth grew in crooked, there was no orthodontist to fit a brace, but at least the enamel was not constantly assaulted by sweet foods and drinks. "

"Oil of clove was used to deaden pain; with of course bleeding, purges, cupping on the spine and blisters behind the ears. Once extraction of a tooth became unavoidable-and operators seem to have had a curious reluctance to get in there and pull, unlike midwives-a large pair of pliers should do the trick. But it might still be possible to kill the nerve by cautery, and apply strong acid to make the tooth fall apart on its own."

"False teeth could be made of elephant ivory, hippo tusk or ox bone."

"Implanting teeth from a donor (there was a glut of human teeth on the market after the Plague), or from a less visible site in the patient's own mouth, was practised, with what permanent success is unknown. Instead of implantation, the tooth might be anchored to its neighbours by silver wire, or silk thread. The French were better at false teeth than the English."

"When caries did occur it was thought to be due to a worm in the tooth..."

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* 
* 
* Member
* 10,302 posts
* Gender:Pyrate Hunter
* Location:here
* Interests:Killing pirates, haven't met one yet worth keeping alive....

[Posted March 22, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=182434) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=182434)

oops Liza Picard's Restoration London, from poverty to pets, from medicine to magic, from slang to sex, from wallpapers to women's rights.

I'll see what Waller says about it in her 1700s book as well.....

Hector

[**Capt. Sterling**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2648-capt-sterling/)

* Sticky Fingers Sterling Needs a New Hat
* 
* 
* Member
* 10,302 posts
* Gender:Pyrate Hunter
* Location:here
* Interests:Killing pirates, haven't met one yet worth keeping alive....

[Posted March 23, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=182545) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=182545)

Waller claims "Teeth' is listed in the bills as a cause of death. Mortality was high among infants at teething stage."

"Septicaemai and abscess could kill."

"Tabacco was thought to cure toothache. Alternatively, The English Housewife advised: Take sage, rue smallage, fetherfew, wormwood, and mint, of each of them half a handful, then stamp them well all together, putting thereto four drams of vinegar, stir them all well together, then put it between two linnen clouts, of the bigness of your cheek, temples, and jaw, and quilt it in a manner of course imbroydery. Then set it upon a chassing-dish of coals, and as hot as you may abide it, lay it over the side where the pain is, and lay you down upon that side, and as it cools warm it up again, or else have another ready to lay on."

"If you keep your teeth from rotting, or aching, wash the mouth continually every morning with the juyce of lemons,*'The Queen's Closet Open'd* advised, 'and afterwards rub your teeth with a sage leaf, and wash your teeth after meat with fair water.' **The returning court at the Restoration had introduced toothbrushes from Paris, but there is little evidence that they were widely used. Toothpicks were part of the toilette.** It was possible to have the teeth scraped, but it was a painful and costly business. Extraction must have been all too tempting for those suffering toothache. False teeth, of human or animal origin, were available, but were so ill-fitting that speech became pretty much incomprehensible."

Pgs. 103-4. 1700 Scene from London Life... Maureen Waller.

Both Waller and Picard are a generalized history of the times but both help point you in the right direction and get your feet wet for life in general. And if you read over both their references and Waller's bibliography, you can find names of original authors and their articles....for more indepth, first source research....

Hector

[**Capt. Sterling**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2648-capt-sterling/)

* Sticky Fingers Sterling Needs a New Hat
* 
* 
* Member
* 10,302 posts
* Gender:Pyrate Hunter
* Location:here
* Interests:Killing pirates, haven't met one yet worth keeping alive....

[Posted March 23, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=182547) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=182547)

Waller claims "Teeth' is listed in the bills as a cause of death. Mortality was high among infants at teething stage."

"Septicaemai and abscess could kill."

"Tabacco was thought to cure toothache. Alternatively, The English Housewife advised: Take sage, rue smallage, fetherfew, wormwood, and mint, of each of them half a handful, then stamp them well all together, putting thereto four drams of vinegar, stir them all well together, then put it between two linnen clouts, of the bigness of your cheek, temples, and jaw, and quilt it in a manner of course imbroydery. Then set it upon a chassing-dish of coals, and as hot as you may abide it, lay it over the side where the pain is, and lay you down upon that side, and as it cools warm it up again, or else have another ready to lay on."

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Both Waller and Picard are a generalized history of the times but both help point you in the right direction and get your feet wet for life in general. And if you read over both their references and Waller's bibliography, you can find names of original authors and their articles....for more indepth, first source research....

Hector

[**Gabriel**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2743-gabriel/)

* Bilge Rat
* 
* 
* Member
* 14 posts
* Location:Quad Cities, IA

[Posted March 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=182796) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=182796)

I remember reading also some things about various strong smelling herbs and whatnot being made into some form of nice-smell and being used like an ancient listerine mouthwash or menthos spray... and my Altoid tin claims the mints were first made when the company was founded in 1837, so certainly the idea of getting rid of bad breath must've been around for a while. If any of you more research-savvy can find anything more about that that'd be neat.

Also from what I've gathered the Celts and other peoples tended to be prety darn clean, specifically that they kept a religious turned cultural (The Christian monks didn't have a problem at all with converted Pagans keeping with this tradition) habit of daily bathing and usage of perfumes and whatnot from the early BC invention of soap till at least the 1500's in Ireland... I'd assume it stuck around even later too, but not sure if the English conquest may have changed that with the whole trying to destroy Irish culture thing. Anyone know if any of that spread around more or stuck around during GAoP? While I don't really want to end up moving the conversation to a different topic or anything, but the question popped in my head also... Any evidence of period 'deoderant' type things?

[**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.

[Posted March 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=182803) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=182803)

I've heard of people once brushing their teeth with small twigs of birch or some such, before bristle brushes became available. Darned if I can remember where I read it.

[**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.

[Posted March 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=182818) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=182818)

This is GREAT guys! This topic has been hotly debated many times in the F&I and RevWar camps over the years, and this info is the best I've ever heard/read anywhere! Thanx!

I don't know if you've ever read any of Kenneth Roberts fictional works Daniel, but the birch sticks are mentioned in them. He wrote the Arundel Chronicles, a trilogy on the New England coastal peoples involvement in the RevWar, and also some other great stories as well. Oliver Wiswell is written as from a loyalists point of view during the RevWar. The thing about Roberts work is that he researched everything about the history before writing, and he is familiar with sailing and such, so the stories are more than entertaining, they are full of historical fact as well, alot like Allan Eckert. Damn good reading for a cold or stormy evening for sure.

Capt. Bo

[**Red Cat Jenny**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3475-red-cat-jenny/)

* Truly one of a Kind
* 
* 
* Member
* 7,468 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:New York but pining for the open sea
* Interests:Pirates, history, anthing nautical, salt water fish tanks, the Caribbean and South Pacific, a good barbecue and a cold Sam Adams, travel, airplanes, rockabilly, Grand Mariner on the rocks, fabulous sunsets accompanied by a warm breeze and good friends.
Diverse enough?
I's love to learn to sail and also surf. I grew up around the waters of LI. Cept for 2 yrs land lubbin in AZ. The pirate thing? When I was 6, I stole my brother's halloween tricorn pirate hat and proceeded to wear it for three months till it ripped and the string fell off. Needless to say the rest is history!

[Posted September 24, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=220514) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=220514)

Ok, It seems ye are all quite a bit in the know of such things..

I have long wondered on the subject of dental health on a ship. I know all the info about scurvy and bad water, lack of adequate nutrition etc...

But I have often wondered about care of tooth issues.

Having been the victim of more than one "Kill me now I can't stand it" wisdom tooth episodes which left me living on Excedrin and unintentionally portraying one posessed over a holiday weekend..

How would a pirate handle this? With rum having sugar in it, poor nutrition and hard biscuits, no to mention no asperin that I know of. The only thing I can figure is perhaps their diet wasn't as hard on the teeth as our modern day food laced with corn syriup and such.

While we're at it any thought on Gold teeth fact vs movies?

Arrrgghhh teeth! necessary but cursed

[**CrazyCholeBlack**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3395-crazycholeblack/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,578 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Illinois
* Interests:Everything! Historic clothing, sewing, fabric dying, cooking, mead, ale, astronomy, celestial navigation, reading, music, film making, blogging & pillaging the internet for visual inspirations.

[Posted September 28, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=221491) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=221491)

now take this with a grain of salt as I don't have the references out side of personal experience to back this up but...

Yes there is sugar in alcohol. However what I have learned is that the alcohol itself tends to 1. take away the pain so to speak & 2. kills a lot of the bacteria in your mouth. After all the mouth washes that we use these days is basically alcohol. Drinking straight rum like they had would be basically the same thing (except who would spit out rum?)

I'm sure there were also quite a few remedies for pain killing. mint works wonders. Also clove oil is used currently, could have been used in gaop as well although expensive.

But like I said, just educated guessing here.

[**Red Cat Jenny**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3475-red-cat-jenny/)

* Truly one of a Kind
* 
* 
* Member
* 7,468 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:New York but pining for the open sea
* Interests:Pirates, history, anthing nautical, salt water fish tanks, the Caribbean and South Pacific, a good barbecue and a cold Sam Adams, travel, airplanes, rockabilly, Grand Mariner on the rocks, fabulous sunsets accompanied by a warm breeze and good friends.
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[Posted September 28, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=221545) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=221545)

Wow I knew you would come through! Interesting! I was trying to imagine being on a ship in the hot sun or a blowing gale with your head about to explolde.

I figure if they meant to be sucessful in their voyages and plunders, pirates would have to look after their health in some way despite getting grubby and sweaty. I'd be interested to see if there were any requirements in ship's rules for keeping of health so as not to endanger the usefuleness of ones'self or the rest of the crew.

Dont know much about apothecary of the period, but I suppose there must have been herbal remedies as mentioned.

Are there logs of ships surgeons that might tell this in depth? NOt that I'm looking for the yucky stuff, just to see what they had to fight maladies of the time.

[**Red Cat Jenny**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3475-red-cat-jenny/)

* Truly one of a Kind
* 
* 
* Member
* 7,468 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:New York but pining for the open sea
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[Posted September 28, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=221549) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=221549)

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Dont know much about apothecary of the period, but I suppose there must have been herbal remedies as mentioned.

Are there logs of ships surgeons that might tell this in depth? NOt that I'm looking for the yucky stuff, just to see what they had to fight maladies of the time.

Any info on the gold teeth Q?

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

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

[Posted September 29, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=221670) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=221670)

I kind of had to laugh when reading all this stuff....ooops, my upper teeth just fell out.... 

[**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. :)

[Posted September 29, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=221681) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=221681)

Captain Sterling,

Take a look at the cover of Picard. If you have the same edition I do, there's a picture of a still life by Hoogstraten. I dimly recall a white (ivory?) toothbrush in it...

Kass

[**Red Sea Trade**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3073-red-sea-trade/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 157 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Melbourne, Florida
* Interests:16th and 17th century Colonial America, especially Florida (my current location). All aspects of material culture, especially foodways and music.

25 years of American Revolution reenacting.

[Posted September 30, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=221875) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=221875)

A bit late for the GAoP era, but Gen. Washington's expense account for late 1777 included purchase of several toothbrushes and tooth powder. The composition of the latter is unspecified, but period recipes include talc, cuttlefish bone and other strange and frightening ingredients.

[**John Maddox Roberts**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/334-john-maddox-roberts/)

* First Mate
* 
* 
* Member
* 272 posts

[Posted September 30, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=221883) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=221883)

Before the advent of lime juice, scurvy, a vitamin C deficiency disease, was a perpetual problem for sailors on long voyages. Among its effects was swelling and softening of the gums, causing teeth to loosen and fall out, so pirates like other sailors may have been more prone than the general populace to missing teeth.

[**blackjohn**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1144-blackjohn/)

* Iron Age Hero Lost at Sea
* 
* 
* Member
* 3,745 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Columbia, Md
* Interests:Stuff... and junk.

[Posted October 2, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=222105) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=222105)

Concerning the skeleton of Individual Two from *La Belle*:

 Quote

His jaws and teeth revealed even more. He had very bad, abcessed cavities that caused the loss of the right first and second molars, the upper left third molar, and the upper left premolar. We know this even though those teeth were missing because it was clear that Barange's jaws had deteriorated as a result of infected, abcessed teeth. The teeth that remained also showed significant decay. To compensate, Barange had been forced to use only his front teeth to chew food, which was evident from the severe wear on those teeth.  Furthermore, the upper canines and incisors were canted in a manner that suggested they were used as tools, perhaps to grip objects such as cordage.

[**Capt. Sterling**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2648-capt-sterling/)

* Sticky Fingers Sterling Needs a New Hat
* 
* 
* Member
* 10,302 posts
* Gender:Pyrate Hunter
* Location:here
* Interests:Killing pirates, haven't met one yet worth keeping alive....

[Posted February 13, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=247617) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=247617)

17th century Ivory partial denture for lower jaw

[**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.

[Posted February 13, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=247625) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=247625)

Thats AWESOME ! is it in a private collection or a museum?., an art piece really in its day and at 250 or so years? its in some fine shape! Lots of work involved in making and shaping something comfortable enough for someone .

[**Capt. Sterling**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2648-capt-sterling/)

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* Member
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* Gender:Pyrate Hunter
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[Posted February 13, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=247627) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=247627)

Museum of London photo archive

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted June 15, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=360439) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=360439)

I am reading *A History of Dentistry: From The Most Ancient times Until The End Of The Eighteenth Century* by Vincenzo Guerini. This material is in his section on the estimable barber-surgeon Ambroise Paré. Paré's book was written in France in the late 16th century and translated into English in the early 17th. (Note, this mostly just corroborates the above info, but I thought it was interesting coming from one of the fathers of chirurgery.)

First, something that I thought would be of interest to re-enactors:

"The following chapter [Chapter XVI of *Œvres complètes d' Ambroise Paré*] speaks '*de la limosité ou rouillure des dents, et de la manière de les conserver.*'

After meals the mouth must be rinsed with water or wine, or with water with a little vinegar added to it, and the teeth cleaned from all residues of food, so that their putrefying may not spoil the teeth and make the breath fetid. An earthy yellowish substance, like rust, often forms on the teeth from want of cleanliness and also when they are not used to masticate; this substance corrodes the teeth, just as rust corrodes iron. It is necessary to remove this substance, by scraping the teeth with small instruments suitable for the purpose, and then the teeth themselves must

\_\_

be rubbed with a little aqua fortis [nitric acid in water] and aqua vitæ [distilled wine] mixed together, to take away what the instruments have not been able to remove. In order to preserve the teeth it is necessary, besides, to rub the teeth frequently with appropriate dentifrices. Among these the author mentions simple bread crust, burnt and reduced to powder." (Guerini, p. 196-7)

Now for some fun stuff...

"Sometimes, when a tooth is too firmly planted, one prefers, says Paré, instead of extracting it, to break off the crown for the purpose of being able to act directly on the dental nerve with appropriate remedies, or to destroy the sensibility of the nerve entirely, by cauterization. [burning with acid or heated steel instruments.]" (Guerini, p. 194)

"The extraction of a tooth should not be carried out with too much violence, as one risks producing luxation of the jaw or concussion of the brain and the eyes, or even bringing away a portion of the jaw together with the tooth (the author himself has observed this in several cases), not to speak of other serious accidents which may supervene, as, for example, fever, apostema [abcess], abundant hemorrhage, and even death.

In extracting a tooth it is necessary to place the patient on a very low seat, or even the ground, with his head between the legs of the operator. After having laid the tooth bare sufficiently, if one sees that it is very loose, one may push it out of its socket with a *poussoir*, that is, with a trifed lever. But if the tooth is too firmly rooted to be extracted with this instrument, one must make use of curved pincers, or else one may have recourse to a pelican. the author notes, however, that much skill is required in using this latter instrument, for otherwise it will almost certainly happen that several good teeth will be knocked out, instead of the one intended to be extracted." (Guerini, p. 194)

***Below: A* poussoir *or trifed lever (Guerini, Fig 63, p. 195)***

***Below: Top - two pelicans; bottom - curved pincers (Guerini, Figs 61 & 62, p. 193)***

"In the treatment of toothache one must fulfil the following three indications:

1. Regulate fittingly the mode of living.

2. Evacuate or dissipate the morbid humors; this may be effected by various means, namely, by purgatives, by bleeding, by gingival

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scarification [scarifying is the process of making many small incisions with a scalpel to allow bleeding - in this case in the gums], by the application of leeches on the site of the pain, by cupping on the back of the neck, or on the shoulders. [Cupping is the process of heating a small glass cup and placing it on a body part. As it cools, it draws the blood to the surface of the skin.]

3. Applying in each single case the medicaments best adapted for calming the pain.

...

When a decayed tooth becomes the seat of excessive pain, and this does not yield to any remedy, one must either have recourse to extraction or cauterize it; this can be done either with potential caustics - such as oil of vitriol [sulfuric acid], aqua fortis [nitric acid in water] - or with the actual cautery [a heated iron]. By cauterizing, Paré adds, one burns the nerve, thus rendering it incapable of again feeling or causing pain.

Erosion or caries [rotting or gradual destruction of the tooth] is the effect of an acute and acrid humor, that corrodes and perforates the teeth, often to their very roots. To combat this morbid condition, even when it is not accompanied by pain, one mus also have recourse (besides general treatment) to cauterization either with oil of vitriol, with aqua fortis, or with a small actual cautery.

If, as often happens, that the seat of the erosion lies in such a manner between two teeth as to make it impossible to apply caustics or other medicaments, one must file just sufficiently between the healthy and the corroded tooth to render the part accessible, taking care, however, to file more on the side of the affected tooth than on that of the healthy one.

The file may be used, besides, to plane down a tooth that stands out above the level of the others, or for similar purpose." (Guerini, p. 190-1)

***Several Dental Files (Guerini, Fig 60, p. 192)***

Note: All these drawings are originally from Jacques Gillemeau's companion book to Paré's book - *The French Chirurgerye*.

[**Animal**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/91-animal/)

* Buccaneer
* 
* 
* Member
* 903 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Treasure Coast, FL

[Posted June 15, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=360451) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=360451)

Mission, you are a sick and perverted man!!!!! Those look like something a leather worker would use on fine leather craft.

\*\*makes mental note to not be around Mission when he is drunk and wielding those things or I'm drunk and he is wielding those things\*\*\*

Animal

[**PoD**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10743-pod/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 696 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Warrington UK
* Interests:Pirates, graphic novels, computer art, Listening to music, Going to gigs, Beer and Wine drinking, historical research, Period weaponry and Leatherwork

[Posted June 15, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=360465) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=360465)

wow and I thought dentists in this day and age are scarey.

[**Niko**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10781-niko/)

* Deck Hand
* 
* 
* Member
* 63 posts
* Location:Marathon, Florida

[Posted June 15, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=360477) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=360477)

Jesus man....thats scary.

[**Grymm**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10793-grymm/)

* First Mate
* 
* 
* Member
* 281 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Chilterns UK
* Interests:Stuff

[Posted June 15, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=360514) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=360514)

 Niko said:

Jesus man....thats scary.

Nah, just dose y'self up with laudenum from the quack and everything would be pink and fluffy.

[**Grymm**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10793-grymm/)

* First Mate
* 
* 
* Member
* 281 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Chilterns UK
* Interests:Stuff

[Posted June 15, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=360518) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=360518)

From a medical of 1669

forgive the f's and $

The liquid *Lmdanum,* which, as I faid, I ufed daily, was prepar'd according to the following plain manner.

*'fake of* Spanifh *Wine, one Tint*$ *of Opium, two Ounces ^ of Saffron one Ounce ; of the foiKdcv of Cinnamon, and Cloves, each one 1)ram . let them le infufd together in a $atb two or three tDays., till tbe Liquor com.es to a due Confidence* j *flrain it, and keep it for life.*

I do not think this Preparation has more Virtue than, the folid *Laudanum* of the Shops; but I prefer it before that for its more commodious Form, and by reafon of the greater Certainty of the Dofe $ for it may bs drop'd into Wine, or into any diftill'd Water, or into any oiher Liquor. And truly I cannot here forbear mentioning, with Gratityde, that Omnipotent GOD, the Giver of al( good Things, has not provided any other Remedy for the Relief of wretched Man, which is fo able either to quell more Difeafes, or more effectually to extirpate them, than opiate Medicines taken from fome Species of Poppies. And tho there are fome that would fain perfwade credulous People, that almoft all the Virtues of opiate Medicines, e/pecially of Opium, principally depend on their artificial Preparation of it; yet he th.at fhall make Experience the Judge, and /hall as often try the fimple Juice,, as it comes by Nature, as the Preparations of it, if he bs careful in his Observation, will fcarce 6nd any difference ; he will certainly know, that thofe admirable Effects. which it produces, peoceed from the native Goodnefs and. Excellency of the Plant, and not frQtn the Skill of the, Artificer. And fo neceflary is this Inftrument in the lund, of'a. skilful Man, that without it Phyfick would be very lame and imperfect ; and he that- rightly underftands it, do greater things than can be well hop'd for from one i Medicine : Medicine : For furcly he is very unskilful, and little under- ftands the Virtue of this Medicine, who only knows how to ufe it to promote Sleep, to eafe Pain, and to flop a Loofe- ncfs ; whereas if may be accomodated, like the *Delpbick* Sword, to many other ufes : and it is really a moft excellent Cordial Remedy, Ihadalmoft'faid the only one, which has been'hitherto found amongft the Things of Nature.

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted June 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=360814) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=360814)

And now for some more period tooth cleaning suggestions from the surgeons and physicians of the time.

“Numerous remedies exist for cleaning the teeth, but according to [Lazare] Riviére [1589 – 1655] the best way of cleaning them consists in rubbing them with a small stick immersed in sulphuric acid (*spiritus sulphuris aut viotrioli*) and afterward drying them with a piece of linen. This remedy not only cleans and renders the teeth white, but it preserves them also from caries! If the teeth are very dirty, the spirit of vitriol [sulfuric acid] may be used pure; otherwise one mixes it with *mel rosatum* [honey of roses] or with water.” (Guerini, p. 230)

“Riviére, besides, recommends tobacco ashes for cleaning the teeth, a counsel not yet given by any previous author. He also give the formulæ for two dentifrice powders, the basis of which is alum; he calls attention

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to the great importance of taking assiduous care to keep the teeth clean, and advises that after each meal the residues of food be removed from the interstices of the teeth and the mouth well rinsed with wine.” (Guerini, p. 230-1)

“This author [Anton Nuck – 1650 – 1692] acquaints us with a tooth powder, much used in his time, especially by Parisian ladies. The ingredients were powdered cuttle fish, coral powder, cream of tartar, Armenian bole [a reddish-brown soft oily clay], and powder of red roses.” (Guerini, p. 247)

[**Niko**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10781-niko/)

* Deck Hand
* 
* 
* Member
* 63 posts
* Location:Marathon, Florida

[Posted June 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=360823) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=360823)

 Grymm said:

 Niko said:

Jesus man....thats scary.

Nah, just dose y'self up with laudenum from the quack and everything would be pink and fluffy.

Just what I need....to start up an opium habit...lol

[**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'.

[Posted June 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361146) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361146)

Now, about those dental worms...you really need to know more about this subject.

"The belief that dental caries and toothache could be caused by worms was, at that time, still in full vigor, and it gained still greater force by reason of observations recorded by different scientists, whose affirmations could with difficulty be doubted, for at that period the great number still swore blindly *in verba magistri*.

Oligerus Jacobaens (1650 to 1701), a Danish physician and anatomist, who taught in the University of Copenhagen, declared that in scraping the decaying cavity of a tooth that was the cause of violent pain, he had seen a worm come forth, which, having been put into water, moved about in it for a long time.

Martin Six, having split some decayed teeth a short time after they had been extracted, asserts that he determined the existence of worms in

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them. (It is probably that this observer, as well as others, mistook the dental pulp for a worm, an unpardonable error, in truth, at a time when the anatomical constitution of the teeth had already been very well studied by several scientists, and especially by the celebrated Bartomoleo Eustachius.)

Gabriel Clauder (1633 to 1691) not only believed in dental worms, but maintained besides that these were the most frequent among all the causes of toothache. In a certain way, to sustain this opinion of his, he relates a case in which a tooth of healthy appearance being the seat of great pain, a tooth-drawer had asserted that there must be a worm in its interior; and, in fact, on the tooth being extracted and afterward split, the little animal whose existence the tooth-drawer had divined, was found to be existing inside of it!

Philip Salmuth asserts that by using rancid oil he got a worm out of the decayed tooth of a person suffering from violent toothache, thus causing the cessation of pain. The worm, he says, was an inch and a half in length (!) and similar in form to a cheese maggot.

Nicolaus Pechlin (1646 to 1706), professor of medicine at Kiel, testifies to having seen five such dental worms, like maggots, come out by the use of honey, though he does not say whether they issued from several cavities or only one!

Gottfried Schulz. But all this is nothing compared to what Gottfried Schulz has dared to assert, viz., that by using the gastric juice of the pig, worms of great size can be enticed out of decayed teeth; some of these even reaching the dimension of an earth worm!” (Guerini, p. 231-2)

“[Carlo] Musitano [1635 to 1714], too, believes in worms in the teeth, but does not admit, as preceding authors had done, that they generate spontaneously. He holds instead that they result from the eggs of flies and other insects, which, together with food, are introduced into the carious cavities and there develop in the heat of the mouth.” (Guerini, p. 247)

“As to worms, the best mode of destroying them [according to Musitano] is by using bitter substances, such as myrrh, aloes, colocynth, *centaurea minor*, etc., but sometimes the use of sweet substances, such as honey, is a good means of drawing them out of the carious cavities!” (Guerini, p. 248)

**Edited June 19, 2009 by Caraccioli**

[**1stMate Matt**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/5932-1stmate-matt/)

* ? ! Zoinks ! ?
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 859 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Maryland

[Posted June 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361176) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361176)

Wow. Those are scarey as hell. No wonder we all have a fear of the dentist embeded in our DNA.

[**1stMate Matt**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/5932-1stmate-matt/)

* ? ! Zoinks ! ?
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 859 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Maryland

[Posted June 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361177) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361177)

By the way this would make a killer article if someone would want to write such a thing.

[**Misson**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4957-misson/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,001 posts
* Gender:Male
* Interests:Who me?

[Posted June 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361184) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361184)

 1stMate Matt said:

By the way this would make a killer article if someone would want to write such a thing.

Like how? I might want to write such a thing. Might as well do something with all this info I'm accumulating...

[**Ivan Henry aka Moose**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10690-ivan-henry-aka-moose/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 486 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tampa, fl
* Interests:Bicycles
Travel
Wine
Beer
Good Food
Pizza!
Pirate Stuff
Design

[Posted June 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361187) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361187)

I'm seeing yet another reason Pirates were drunk a great deal of the time.

[**Niko**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10781-niko/)

* Deck Hand
* 
* 
* Member
* 63 posts
* Location:Marathon, Florida

[Posted June 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361188) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361188)

 Misson said:

 1stMate Matt said:

By the way this would make a killer article if someone would want to write such a thing.

Like how? I might want to write such a thing. Might as well do something with all this info I'm accumulating...

I'm suprised you haven't really. I mean with all the information you're giving people here on the pub you would think you would have.

[**Misson**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4957-misson/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,001 posts
* Gender:Male
* Interests:Who me?

[Posted June 20, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361269) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361269)

 Niko said:

 Misson said:

 1stMate Matt said:

By the way this would make a killer article if someone would want to write such a thing.

Like how? I might want to write such a thing. Might as well do something with all this info I'm accumulating...

I'm suprised you haven't really. I mean with all the information you're giving people here on the pub you would think you would have.

Well, I am writing a book. Look for it in a bookstore near you sometime in, say, the next decade or two...

**Edited June 20, 2009 by Misson**

[**Misson**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4957-misson/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,001 posts
* Gender:Male
* Interests:Who me?

[Posted June 20, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361277) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361277)

Hey, this is kinda' cool. There's a dental pelican on eBay. (It's a little pricey...)

<http://tiny.cc/2rZsJ>

Since it will disappear soon, here are the photos:

What's interesting about it (to me, anyway) is that it is adjustable. One of the problems with dental tools during this period is that they had to have tooth-pulling tools for different sized teeth. A competent tooth puller would probably have had a half-dozen or more tools sized to different widths of tooth. As you can see in the middle of the handle, this one has a wing nut for adjusting the end of the tool in and out. Look at the edge on that thing! Imagine having the tooth puller pushing the lever arm down and digging that serrated edge into your aching tooth to get a grip on it. Sheesh!

Boy I wish I could justify spending $600 on that thing. I'd guess it's a beautiful example of 17th/18th century devices based on the patina and the style of that wing nut.

**Edited June 20, 2009 by Misson**

[**Quartermaster James**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4887-quartermaster-james/)

* LUNATIC
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,662 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Sailing the Islets of Langerhans
* Interests:Interests cannot be left blank, so the machine says.

[Posted June 20, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361292) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361292)

So, exactly how is this used? Is it clamped down on a toothe and then used as a handle to pull the toothe out of its socket? Or, perhaps it somehow leverages the toothe free?

[**BlaggardMike**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10829-blaggardmike/)

* Deck Swabber
* 
* 
* Member
* 30 posts
* Location:Las Vegas

[Posted June 20, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361316) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361316)

Just look at the United States first president. Wooden teeth I believe. Ale and wine contain a lot more sugar than many sweets and after the spanish invaded central America chocolate became abundant. A hundred years after the invasion chocolate spread through europe and was well known and many people were quite fond of it.

Dental hygiene was available but ignored by many.

Europeans used the greek method until the early 1700's

The greek method was dipping linen cloth or sponges dipped in sulfur oils and salt solutions and rubbing away all the tooth grime.

Eventually chinese invention of bamboo and boars hair made its way to europe. the europeans improvised the bamboo for native wood



**Edited June 20, 2009 by BlaggardMike**

[**Misson**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4957-misson/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,001 posts
* Gender:Male
* Interests:Who me?

[Posted June 21, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361392) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361392)

 Quartermaster James said:

So, exactly how is this used? Is it clamped down on a toothe and then used as a handle to pull the toothe out of its socket? Or, perhaps it somehow leverages the toothe free?

As I mentioned in the post above with all the pictures, the pelican was used to grab the tooth from the side, giving the tooth-puller a handle which they could use to pull the tooth up and wiggle it around to loosen it. Some early authors refer to pelicans as "dental forceps" although they really don't function like forceps at all. Of course, methods for tooth removal varied. Tooth-pulling was largely believed to be the last resort for curing tooth-aches by most trained medical people. (Physicians and many surgeons believed such work was beneath them. However, on a ship, there is no one else to do such work -- well, maybe the carpenter if you were really suffering -- so the surgeon might have to do such things.) Many people didn't go to surgeons, rather they used barbers and wandering tooth-pullers to get a sore tooth removed.

The pelican wasn't the only tool. There are many examples of pointed dental extraction forceps of various sizes. In fact, I would suspect this would be the sort of thing that the itinerant tooth-puller would use:

***Dental Extraction Forceps:***



These are what I have in my period surgical kit, along with a charming little tool for getting under the tooth called a goat's foot elevator:

That little hooked thing (which I guess looks like a goat's foot - I do not know many goats) is used to get under the tooth and prise it upward.

From what I've read, some tooth-pullers believed you had to remove the gums from the roots of the tooth. My thought is that these would have been very experienced barbers or possibly surgeons rather than itinerant tooth-pullers. I doubt they were much interested in purchasing scalpels and surgical knives required for cutting the gums. You'll also find a pic of an instrument called a trifed lever in my last instrument picture-laden post. I suspect it would be used to dig under the gum when a tooth was loose and probably under the tooth to further loosen it by getting leverage. (Many people's jaws were broken during tooth removal from what I've read.)

Of course, there may be more to it than I've noted. I haven't read a whole lot on procedures. I didn't even understand what the goat's foot elevator was for when I first purchased mine - someone asked me and I quickly puzzled it out for myself. Dentistry was a much-hoarded secret, especially in England, so we don't actually have a lot of documentation on the practice. There was only one book published in England during period.

"Not until the year 1685, do we find in England the first real definite information concerning a dental practitioner. In that year Charles Allen of York, England, claiming himself as ‘professor of the same’ and referring to the care of the teeth, published what we today acknowledge to be the first English dental book, *The Operator for the Teeth*. His idea in writing this work is expressed in the ‘proem’ and he therein claims to be the first English dentist. ‘Of what importance it is to all men to be informed of those benefits which by my Art they may enjoy’..." (Weinberger, Bernhard Wolf, *An Introduction to the History of Dentistry, Volume 1*, p. 227)

I haven't procured a copy of *The Operator for the Teeth*, but I'm working on it. It's actually quite short - something like 90 pages. I am hoping he'll detail some of the dental procedures for me a little more succinctly.

**Edited June 21, 2009 by Misson**

[**Misson**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4957-misson/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,001 posts
* Gender:Male
* Interests:Who me?

[Posted June 21, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=361396) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=361396)

Ah, I just stumbled across this, which may be instructive regarding period dental instruments. It's a little early for period, but the instruments were all in use during period under one description or another. (Many of the various forceps Fabricius describes are also described by Woodall as they were useful for non-dental surgery .)

“The instruments which are used for the extraction of teeth, are, says Fabricius [Girolamo Fabrizio of Aquapendente (1537 to 1619)], of nine kinds; and the most important among them – generically called *forceps* – are indicated by special names, taken from their resemblance to the mouth or beak of certain animals. Thus, forceps with which it is usual to perform the extraction of molar teeth are called ‘pelicans,’ and of these there are two kinds, according as they are used for the right or left side, for the upper molars or the lower ones.

A third kind of instrument goes under the name of ‘beak’ (rostrum), and serves for the extraction of incisors.

A fourth kind is the ‘crow’s beak,’ or ‘crow’s bill,’ which is used for the extraction of roots.

Two other instruments are named in Italian ‘cagnoli,’ for they imitate the strong bite of the dog (in Italian *cane*) and are used in cases where the pelican is not adapted.

A seventh instrument is called by the Latin term of *terebra* (drill or auger). It is used instead of a lever to separate the teeth from one another when they are too close to each other, and so render their extraction much easier.

The eighth instrument is a ‘trifid lever’ (*vectis trifidus*), so called because it is furnished with three points.

The ninth and last kind of instruments are the *dentiscalpia*, slender, sharp, and oblong tools, with which the gums are separated from the teeth before extraction.” (Guerini, p. 211)

**Edited June 21, 2009 by Misson**

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[Posted July 3, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=362937) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=362937)

Ah, good stuff.

“If, says Strobelberger, a place is to be accorded, in dental therapeutics, to the vain remedies, among these, amulets deserve the preference; and the best accredited amulet is the root of the lepidium, already recommended by Discorides, who affirms that if it be hung around the neck of the sufferer it will cause pain to cease.

One of the *superstitious* remedies to be used aganst [sic] this affection (Chapter LVIII), consists in touching the aching tooth with the tooth of a dead person, and afterward greasing it with horse’s marrow.

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Among the *ridiculous* remedies (Chapter LIX), the author describes one that was especially in use among soldiers. With a piece of chalk or of rubble one writes on a table:

Chiacia.....Chiacia.....Chiacia

X..O..X......X..O..X......X..O..X

[Periods added to prevent removal of spaces by forum editor.]

One then pricks the tooth with a knife or an iron toothpick until it bleeds slightly; then thrusting the point of the instrument, to which the blood adheres, into the first cross, then into the second, then into the third, and so on, one asks the patient each time if the tooth still pains him. Before one gets to the last cross the pain ceases! This stolid cure, says the author, has no other value than that of the scarification of the part affected.” (Guerini, p. 221-2)

**Edited July 3, 2009 by Raphael Misson**

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[Posted December 31, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=376399) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=376399)

A dental tip from John Moyle's *Chirurgus Marinus: or the Sea Surgeon* (1693):

“CHAP. XLVI.

*Of the Tooth-ach and Gums.*

Various things are used to stop an Aching Tooth, or asswage pained Gums, but sometimes they take effect, and sometimes not.

You must know that there is a cold Rheume, and likewise a hot Rheume [a watery mucus discharge], that are causes of the Gums and Teeth pained: besides the rottenness and hollowness of the Teeth themselves, that letting in the Air, and Crums, cause pain, hurting the tender Nerve within the Tooth.

I know most of the ways that men use in this case, but I will content my self to write only the very best of things, and what I have experienced.

If it be a cold Rheume that is the cause, (as you may easily know) then use only a small pellet of Lint dipt in *Olium Garioph.* [not sure] and with the end of your Fleme put it into the hollow Tooth, and let the Patient lye down on that side, but be sure first to pick out any Crum that may be in the hollowness of the Tooth; and this usually gives ease.

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And if it be a hot Rheume, take only *Laudinum*, {grain}ij. dissolve it in a Spoonful of Sack [Wine], and dip a small pellet of Lint in it, and put it into the hollow Tooth, and let the Patient swallow the rest, and go and lye down warm upon it; and that is a sure remedy.

But if the pain do return to rotten and hollow Teeth, as often as the Air gets into them and offends the Nerve, or Crums get in and hurt the Nerve, in this case you may try to cure it by actual or potential Cautery; the actual is heating the small end of your Probe red hot, and so applying it into the hollow of the Tooth to burn or Sear the Nerve, but let it be done with care, that you touch not the Mouth or Gums with it. This hath done with several.

The potential is *Ol. Vitriol* [sulfuric acid]: put into the Tooth on a pellet of Lint; and here must care be taken too, lest it touch the Mouth or Gums. This hath likewise often taken effect.

But if all these ways fail, and the rotten or hollow Teeth still torment, you have no better way left than to draw them out.” (Moyle, p. 242-3)

Actual cautery is heating up some piece of metal and applying it directly to the flesh. Potential cautery is using acid to burn the flesh. I'm not sure why they refer to it as 'potential' other than as a way to differentiate it from applying hot metal.

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[Posted July 5, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=387313) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=387313)

This is from Albucasis, who was an Arabic surgeon in the 12th century. His books were still in use during period as teaching guides, although more in France than England. Still, I have seen reference to the actual cautery in dentistry in books contemporary to period and they are probably based upon this work:

“CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE On cauterization for toothache

When the toothache arises on account of cold, or if there be a worm in the tooth, and medical treatment does not avail,

then cauterization should be undertaken. There are two ways of doing this, one with butter, the other with the cautery. Cauterization with butter is done thus: take cow’s butter and let it boil in an iron ladle or pan; then take cotton or wool, wind it round the top of a probe, and dip it in the boiling butter and quickly apply it to the aching tooth and hold it there till cold. Repeat this a number of times till the power of the fire reaches the root of the tooth. If you prefer, dip wool or cotton in cold butter and put it on the aching tooth, then on top of that apply the hot iron until the heat of the fire reaches the root of the tooth.

The actual cautery is administered thus: take a tube of bronze or iron with some thickness in the body o fit so that the intensity of the fire does not reach the patient’s mouth. Then heat a cautery whose figure will be given shortly, and apply it to the tooth itself and hold your hand until the cautery gets cold. Do this several times over; the pain will certainly depart the same day or next. After this cauterization the patient is to fill his mouth with good butter and keep it in for a while, then spit it out.” (Spink, M.S. and Lewis, G.L., editors, *Albucasis On Surgery and Instruments; A Definitive Edition of the Arabic Text with English Translation and Commentary*, University of California Press, Berkley and Los Angeles, 1973, p. 66)

[**adam cyphers**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11273-adam-cyphers/)

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[Posted July 6, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=387337) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=387337)

mission ive got a tooth owie...if you are comin to the blackbeard fest..im first...

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

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[Posted March 28, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=398030) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=398030)

And now for a complicated (and very painful-sounding) dental treatment, courtesy of the Dutch author Matthias Gottfried Purmann, from his book *Chirurgia curiosa*, translated into English by William Cowper in 1705. (Feel free to skim the medical recipes, unless you can decipher mysteriously abbreviated Latin.) Oh, and I love the use of the word 'dentifrice.' (It's a word you don't get to see often enough, even though toothpaste is, in fact, a dentifrice.)

"In *December* 1678, I had under Cure a *Boatswain* of a Ship at *Strahlfund*, where I was then Quartered, being Chirurgeon to a *Brandenburg* Regiment: He was about 36 years of Age, named Hans *Peterson*, he had a Spongy Excrescence on the lower Part of the Left Side, which happened by the Inartful drawing of a Tooth, by which the *Maxilla* was Fissurated. Having diligently examined and considered the Parts, I spread the following Mass upon Linen indifferently thick, and applied it to the *Fungus*, renewing it every three Hours.

*Rx. Pulv. Cinam. Caryophill. ana {dram}ss Coral. rubr. ppt. Rad Pyrethr. ana {dram} jss. Porcellan. ppt. Lap. Sillic. ppt. ana {dram}ij. Alum. crud. Ocul Cancr. ana. {dram}j. Sangu. Draconis {scruple}j. Misce cum s. q. mell. Rosar. Ad mass formam.*

This succeeding well in the beginning, I continued it, and also used this Water very often.

*Rx. Rad. Tromentil. {ounce}ij. Serpentar. {ounce}j. Flor. Rosa. Rubr. Balaust. Lupul. Gland. ana. {dram}vj. misce.*

Boil all these together in *Aqu. Cochlear.* and *Aqu. Salviæ* of each a Quart, and afterward add as much *Alum* to it as will render it indifferent Sharp: But if the Distemper is accompanied with any great Pain, then use the following Water.

*Rx. Rasur. Lign. Gutac. {dram}j. Fol. Nicotrant. Mjss Rad. Pyrethr. {dram}ij. Caryophillor. Sem. Hyoscyam. ana. {dram}j. Coque in s. q. Aqu commun. Colat. Adde Essent. Anodyn {scruple}ij. vel Laud. liquid. Tartaris {scruple}ij. Misce & Fungo applicetur.*

This Excellent *Dentifrice* may be used in many other dolorous Infirmities of the *Teeth* and *Gums*, only applying it a little warm It performed its part very well in this Patient, but yet it would not heal; which gave me Reason to think, that the *Jaw-bone* was *Carious*; whereupon I cut away the Flesh, and as soon as the Bleeding was stopt, it might easily be perceived and having taken out more than three Splinters from the Jaw bone, I *scraped* and *Cauterized* it, and the Patient in Six Weeks time was perfectly Cured.” (Purrman, p 36)

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

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[Posted June 16, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=401163) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=401163)

Every so often you come across editorial comments like this that make reading worth your while. This is from Charles Allen's *Curious Observations in that difficult part of Chirurgery Relating to the Teeth* (or, more commonly called, *The Operator for the Teeth*):

"But these treble ones [teeth with three roots - molars] usually vary very much in time of growth, for it is but rarely that they all come forth in the same year, the four last of them seldom coming out before the one or two and twentieth year of our age; for which reason such *Teeth* are called by some, *Teeth* of *Wisdom*; because that by that time, we should have a full use of our rational *Faculty*, thought God knows how often it proves to be true." (Allen, p. 32)

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

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[Posted August 7, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=402162) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=402162)

N'kay, this is from Charles Allen's 1685 book *The Operator for the Teeth*, the first English book on dentistry. That latter part of it is a theoretical procedure rather than something that happened (as far as I know), but it's too fascinating for me not to post it somewhere, not the least of which reason is that it potentially involves goats. 

“…there are still some help for it [lost teeth], the natural want may be supplied artificially, and herein Art imitates Nature so *naitly*, that when the *succedaneous* Teeth (if I may so speak) are well set in, they cannot be distinguished from the natural ones, (neither in colour, firmness, nor proportion) but by them that known of it. Being thus exactly fitted to their place, they will keep the next to them, and by consequence all the rest of that Jaw abundantly firmer and stronger than they would otherwise be.

The Advantages that may be attributed to the artificial *Teeth*, are many; as that they keep the others fast, as we said just now, that they are of a great ornament, and help pronunciation extremely, *&c*. But all that is with a Proviso, that they be well made, and according to the best Art; for otherwise they might prove quite contrary.

Besides this Artificial way of repairing the loss of

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*Teeth*, there is another that may be called Natural; which is done by taking out the rotten Teeth or stumps, and putting in their places some sound ones, drawn immediately after out of some poor body’s head: which thing (tho difficult) I know to be feasible enough, not only by my own reason that tells me so, but by experience it self, as (to say no more at present) may be instanced in the case of a certain Lady, who thinking to have *two Teeth* growing one on top of another, come one day to my Master to have one of them Drawn; my Master told her that they were not two distinct *Teeth*, but only a double one; but the Lady being not satisfied with this, desired him to take out the *Tooth* she had told him of, let it be what it would. The *Tooth* being drawn out, and proving as my Master had said, it was quickly set again into the Jaw; and with the use of some convenient and proper Remedies, became in few weeks to be as firm again as any of the rest.

And yet although the event in this particular had not proved so prosperous as it did; its ill success would not destroy in me the possibility of such a transplanting, or *Inoculation* of *Teeth*; (if I may be permitted to use such terms) that was not the only motive I had to believe it; and I have not inserted the Story of it here as an Argument to prove invincibly what I say, but only as a proper Example to render probably to others what I know to be true. However, I do not like that method of drawing Teeth out of some folks heads, to put them into others, both for its being too

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inhumane, and attended with too many difficulties; and then neither could this be called the restauration of *Teeth*, since the reparation of one, is the ruine of another; it is only robbing of *Peter* to pay *Paul*. But if instead of humane *Teeth*, there is use made of those of some *Brutes*, as *Dogs, Sheep*, &c. In such case I do not only approve of it as lawful and facile, but do also esteem it as very profitable and advantageous; only care is to be had, that the thing be undertaken, and carried on by one that at least knows something of *Anatomy*, and has a right sense of the thing to be done, being furnished with whatever is necessary in an Operation of that nature.

And that (if my Opinion may be any wise serviceable in such an Attempt) I may contribute something towards the improvement of so useful an Invention; I think one I, to proceed in it somewhat after this manner. First, I would chuse an Animal whose Teeth should come nearest to those of the *Patient*; as a *Dog*, a *Sheep*, a *Goat*, or a *Baboon*, &c. and having tied his legs together, I would fasten his head in some convenient place, so that he might not stir in the least, and by some proper means keep his mouth open as long as I should have occasion: that done, I would open the Gums round the *Tooth* to be taken out of his head, not only to the very Jaw-bone, but as far between the said Bone and the Tooth, as the finest Instrument could go, leaving a very little portion of the Gums about it; and then having used the same circumspection, in dividing the Patients Tooth from the

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Gums, and the Jaw-bone, I would draw it forth, and put immediately in its place that of of [sic] the Brute; fastning it very well and streight [tight] between the other Teeth: and then with the use suitable Remedies [medicines], I do not question in the least but that it would unite to the Gums and Jaw-bone, and in a little time become as fast as any of the others: which performance might properly be termed the natural Restauration, or *Renovation* of Humane Teeth.” (Charles Allen, p. 20-2)

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[Posted August 7, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=402164) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=402164)

Wow. I didn't know the idea of animal transplant surgery was that old. Also, I didn't know that the phrase "robbing Peter to pay Paul" was over 300 years old. Now that I look it up, I see it may go back as far as 1380: John Wyclif reportedly wrote: "Lord, hou schulde God approve that you robbe Petur and gif is robbere to Poule in ye name of Crist?"

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

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[Posted January 1, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=405074) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=405074)

Purrman is reciting cures recommended by other surgeons for tooth-aches and he includes this one:

"Dr. *Bartholinus* makes an Unguent of the Feet of Green *Frogs* and *Opium*, of which he puts a little into the hollow Teeth, or anoints the Gums with it, and thinks he can never say enough in its Praise."

Somehow I think the Opium is the active ingredient here. 

[**William Brand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1471-william-brand/)

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http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSkt-q-HihQ

[Posted January 1, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=405079) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=405079)

I wonder if his particular 'green frog' be of some poisonous or hallucinogenic nature in addition to the active and praiseworthy opium. There is many a time when I would have taken opium and frog while waiting for a dentist appointment that was a week out or more.

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

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[Posted January 2, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=findComment&comment=405090) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7125-lets-talk-dental-hygiene/&do=reportComment&comment=405090)

That's an interesting point. I had forgotten about the hallucinogenic properties of some frogs. (I mostly just think it's funny that they made a medicine that included frogs. Of course they also made them out of various animal dung, new welpt-puppies and other odd animal bits.)