**[dasNdanger](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/" \o "Go to dasNdanger's profile)**

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 18, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=88933) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=88933)

Jus' discussin' sailor's shoes wif me pa-in-law, an ol' salt himself. And he said that since shoes were often a status symbol, a sailor/pirate wouldn't likely be wearin' 'em on a slippery deck, but only for going ashore. I mentioned how pictures show the men in shoes, and he said that was an 'artist's representation' because it would be 'disrespectful' to portray the men barefoot. He said shoes were highly valued, and would have been 'saved' for more formal occasions. He used the illustration of how kids in the south would carry their shoes to school, then put them on once there, just to prevent wearing them out.

Now, running around barefoot on the deck does seem more practical, especially in warmer climes, but I want to know if this was the case on ships, especially pirate ships - barefoot on deck, and shod in towne? And what about other footwear on deck - was there anything else that may have been worn while working or at leisure but not worn in town?? Or were shoes worn at all times to prevent any sort of foot injury (slinters, cuts, etc.) that could turn septic and lead to an untimely death or amputation?

Jus' wonderin' what the books say...

das

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

* Immortal Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_immortal_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/5984-rumba-rue/)
* Member
* 7,270 posts
* Gender:Female

[Posted February 18, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=88938) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=88938)

Well ye see, when it's really cold and the deck freezes with ice, the sailors go skating. Course that's really bad when they skate right off the deck inta the ocean...oops....

Rumba Rue

\*\*Your favorite 'peanut gallery' person\*\* :rolleyes:

[**Desert Pyrate**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1016-desert-pyrate/)

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1016-desert-pyrate/)
* Member
* 377 posts

[Posted February 18, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=88967) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=88967)

There are others that can better speak to this than I, but I can say from personal experience that a deck can be awfully dangerous to feet. One particularly harrowing day aboard Royaliste, I had just boarded from the dink, and was barefoot (didn't want to waterlog my shoes beaching the rowboat). Heading below in strong heel, heavy winds and rough seas, I slipped and smashed my foot into the carriage of one of the deck guns. I've still got a scar. So yes, shoes are certainly helpful. Though I too have heard that sailors of old didn't wear them...

[**Wartooth**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1037-wartooth/)

* Ship's Master
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_shipsmaster.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1037-wartooth/)
* Member
* 119 posts
* Location:Dusty & Boring Reno, Nevada
* Interests:My wife and 3 sons, of course. My Welsh & Dutch heritage, including the substantial privateering and roguish ancestry therein. Martial sword work focusing on longsword, short sword, rapier, and baskethilt saber.

[Posted February 18, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=88980) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=88980)

The problem is more for those going aloft. Its difficult climbing the rigging in shoes ... if not impossible. Then again, nobody's gonna order my substantial bulk up the shroud and onto the yardarm! My barrel chest and stumpy legs are better suited to moving cargo, turning capstans, and eating beef and pease.

Wartooth

[**privateer**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1371-privateer/)

* First Mate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_1st_mate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1371-privateer/)
* Member
* 278 posts
* Location:if the winds blowing look for me on the horizon
* Interests:sailing drinking surfing sailing camping anything outside. learning

[Posted February 18, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=88984) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=88984)

aye shoes were rarely if ever worn on deck. the only time they wore anything on their feet was for protection from the cold. even then it was more likely for them to wrap their feet in cloth then wear shoe's. the deck of those ships are so worn and smooth that splinters were not a real concern.

[**Patrick Hand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1049-patrick-hand/)

* The sailor's sailor
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_immortal_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1049-patrick-hand/)
* Moderator
* 6,100 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:TH' Mountains of Central California
* Interests:I like wierdness... Klingon, Pyrate..... and even..... gasp.... Renn Faires...... (Baseball and tractor pulls I'd have to think about.... could be wierd or Not,,,,)

[Posted February 18, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=88988) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=88988)

I'm not sure if its period or not...

but I DO know that leather soles on wet decks DO get slippery...........

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.  
    
  Shooting pirates.

[Posted February 18, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89017) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89017)

In my experience (as curator of the Golden Hind replica in Devon for 3 years as well as a sailor-for-fun since I was a kid) I'd say it depends entirely on the weather and the job.

In wet weather bare feet are very definitely the order of the day, the grip is so much better, but of course it depends on the temperature. In cold wet weather the slight skiddiness of leather soled shoes is more than offset by the comfort of not walking barefoot in freezing water and watching one's toes fall off. :P

I'm interested in what Wartooth says though, I find it much easier to go aloft in shoes than bare feet - definitely not near-impossible. I guess it's down to preference.

I think the reason that most pictures show seamen wearing shoes is less to do with looking "proper" and more to do with the fact that most artists were ashore and drew seamen as they saw them, which was mostly in their shore rig. The shore rig was probably similar to their working rig, but a bit smarter. Or of course it could be because seamen generally wore shoes :P

Now here's the $6,000,000 question. Does anyone actually have any evidence of whether seamen in the GAoP wore shoes onboard or not, or is this just more speculation? I ask because Gabriel Bray, who was painting a bit later in the 1770s, but who painted from life, tends to have his subjects in shoes. He was painting men at work and rest aboard a man-of-war, and he's one of the few artists of the 18th century who really understood what he was painting, being a mariner himself. This suggest to me that seamen probably wore shoes more than we like to think. Any evidence to the contrary?

[**Wartooth**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1037-wartooth/)

* Ship's Master
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_shipsmaster.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1037-wartooth/)
* Member
* 119 posts
* Location:Dusty & Boring Reno, Nevada
* Interests:My wife and 3 sons, of course. My Welsh & Dutch heritage, including the substantial privateering and roguish ancestry therein. Martial sword work focusing on longsword, short sword, rapier, and baskethilt saber.

[Posted February 18, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89049) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89049)

Foxe said:

I'm interested in what Wartooth says though, I find it much easier to go aloft in shoes than bare feet - definitely not near-impossible. I guess it's down to preference.

I'll bow down to your experience, of course, Foxe. I had always read that shoes in the rigging were a big "no-no". I would have assumed that the bare feet would conform more easily to the lines and ropes. Then again, I've never had to climb up there.

Wartooth

[**the Royaliste**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/237-the-royaliste/)

* Pyrate Legend
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/237-the-royaliste/)
* Member
* 2,841 posts

[Posted February 18, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89069) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89069)

Wartooth said:

Foxe said:

I'm interested in what Wartooth says though, I find it much easier to go aloft in shoes than bare feet - definitely not near-impossible. I guess it's down to preference.

I'll bow down to your experience, of course, Foxe. I had always read that shoes in the rigging were a big "no-no". I would have assumed that the bare feet would conform more easily to the lines and ropes. Then again, I've never had to climb up there.

Wartooth

Without impuning on anyone's reading, I go aloft daily in everything from tennie's to wellington's, depending on work to be performed, but never barefoot, (barring an occaisional swimming jaunt)...I'm not a pauper, and I enjoy the skin on all of my toes!..All forms of rigging is like rawhide knots to your feet.....

:rolleyes:

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.  
    
  Shooting pirates.

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89132) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89132)

I'm glad you've come in on this one Royaliste :rolleyes:I've often used my experience as a good reason why seamen probably didn't go aloft in bare feet in times gone, but anyone trying to argue that they did always says "But your feet would harden up and get used to it..." At which point I tend to leave the argument - I figure if after 3 years of going aloft, maybe not daily but 3 or 4 times a week at least, I'm still wearing shoes because it's more comfortable, then GAoP seamen probably did too. Maybe your feet would harden up over time, but the pain you'd have to go through to get them that hard just wouldn't be worth it, you'd just wear shoes instead.

So, to meet a longer term seaman who says the same thing is great :lol:

Simple experiment for those without access to rigging: climb a ladder first in bare feet then in shoes and see which is the easiest. Then bear in mind that even the tautest ratlines will bend slightly under one's weight, digging into the side of one's feet, and the realtive smoothness of steel ladder rungs compared with rope ratlines.

[**the Royaliste**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/237-the-royaliste/)

* Pyrate Legend
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/237-the-royaliste/)
* Member
* 2,841 posts

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89133) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89133)

Although finite, there is the difference between a seaman who's station is on deck versus that of a topman...Two really different worlds back in the 'day'. It would be far easier to imagine bafefoot deck sailors than barefoot topmen........

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89137) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89137)

Wow, thanks everyone for your input...

Now, back to my original question before it gets all tangled up in the riggin'.... :rolleyes:

If the men did have shoes, would they have 'saved' them for going ashore? For instance, I'm thinking of JR's red heel thread...if a pirate did have such a pair of shoes, would he have worn them while performing everyday duties, or something else?? Was there any other sort of 'shoe' a sailor would wear to preserve higher quality shoes for fancy dress? I can imagine, as privateer suggests, that a sailor might wrap his feet in cloth. But would there be anything else worn? Barefeet on deck, especially in the tropical heat seems possible. But then we go back to the threat of injury, and the fear of infection - would they risk barefeet? As far as going aloft, I can imagine that some might actually prefer barefeet (esp. any seaman of 'native' origins. A man used to scampering barefoot up a coconut palm would probably do the same in the rigging. But I would think a man of European background might prefer to be shod).

I know working on just a small schooner I'm always stubbing me toe on something. We have to wear shoes (when carrying passengers) - usually sandals with a backstrap. No flipflops allowed. But when no passengers are about, the crew often go barefoot (mind you, with no tops'ls, they don't have to go aloft in the normal fashion, but only by way of a bo'sun's chair when necessary). But this is modern day - with cheap shoes available to all, safety regulations, etc. I'm trying to figger out the mindset of the early sailor/pirate. We live in a throw-away society, they did not. Everything had value, even if it was falling apart. To preserve a 'good' pair of shoes makes sense...but then we need to ask how many shoes DID they have?? One pair? Two? More? Or did they even share shoes when times were lean?? Where did I read - fact or fiction - that one pirate crew ate their leather shoes to avoid starving??

I don't want to put modern man's shoe collection into a pirate's seachest. Sure, stealing shoes from captured vessels, or buying them from pilfered loot, may have increased their availability, but would they risk wearing them out while performing daily tasks?

Don't mind me - I'm just thinking aloud. Many of my above musings have been answered...but I guess I'm looking for more specifics, based on shoe cost and availability 300 years ago. So, anyway, continue discussing, please, and don't mind me...

das

[**Wartooth**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1037-wartooth/)

* Ship's Master
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_shipsmaster.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1037-wartooth/)
* Member
* 119 posts
* Location:Dusty & Boring Reno, Nevada
* Interests:My wife and 3 sons, of course. My Welsh & Dutch heritage, including the substantial privateering and roguish ancestry therein. Martial sword work focusing on longsword, short sword, rapier, and baskethilt saber.

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89148) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89148)

Foxe & Royaliste --- Thank you both for clearing up that fount of misinformation I was apparently under. I appreciate it. :rolleyes:

Wartooth

[**the Royaliste**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/237-the-royaliste/)

* Pyrate Legend
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/237-the-royaliste/)
* Member
* 2,841 posts

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89150) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89150)

dasNdanger said:

As far as going aloft, I can imagine that some might actually prefer barefeet (esp. any seaman of 'native' origins. A man used to scampering barefoot up a coconut palm would probably do the same in the rigging. But I would think a man of European background might prefer to be shod).

I

Spent much time living in the tropics??..I can't buy into this concept; in most island nations, the palms are territorily 'owned' for generations by families. If one studies people 'scurrying' up palm trees, you'll find hereditary 'notches' in all trunks. They are footholds, few people climb palms like primates................Several of my crew are 'natives' as you describe them, and wouldn't even think of doing such a thing. They even threaten me when putting Stockholm tar on rigging; don't want the stuff on their hands, much less their feet!..A sailor's feet are his life; nothing is better protected.........You can climb one-handed, but forget 'one-footed'

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

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/81-joshuared/)
* Member
* 1,342 posts

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89168) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89168)

Fascinating info Royaliste, thanks!

How about the possibility of sailors wearing just their stockings around ship, no shoes? Would provide some measure of protection, and probably better grip than smooth soled shoes.

Personally though, I'm of the belief that they wore shoes more often than not. There are SO many things on deck to bang/stub/slice a toe on when trying to hustle about.

[**the Royaliste**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/237-the-royaliste/)

* Pyrate Legend
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/237-the-royaliste/)
* Member
* 2,841 posts

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89177) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89177)

It's been noted everywhere thru history that a sailor's life was rugged, unsafe, and plain deadly. FWIW, as far as shoes, this presents us 'fulltime' onboard reenactors a rub; how to stay safe, but not be in 'yellow rubber galoshes'......since actual sailing is work, and safety is utmost with us, I've shifted to a black, pull on pair of low-cut Rossi brand boots from Australia for ondeck as I much as I can work them in. They are good gripping ondeck and aloft, yet pretty much 'go' with any of my sailor garb for pants and slops.......round toed, look O.K. in photos..

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89202) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89202)

the Royaliste said:

Spent much time living in the tropics??..

What does it matter? B)

Quote

They are footholds, few people climb palms like primates................

Primates? I never suggested such a thing. Footholds or no, I only wondered whether or not a person who is used to going about barefoot (climbing barefoot, walking barefoot, doing anything else barefoot) would start wearing shoes once aboard ship. My sister, for instance, (although not a primate or a native) climbed trees and rode horses in her bare footsies all the time. She preferred it that way, it's what she was used to.

Quote

Several of my crew are 'natives' as you describe them,

Yo - back down a bit, K? I didn't use the term 'native' in a demeaning way, just as a contrast to 'Europeans'. In fact, let's just forget the whole stupid coconut/barefoot scenario as it seems to be taking this discussion in the wrong direction...

Yes, I agree that feet must be protected. I have also said that it seems logical (by MY standards) for shoes to be worn for such protection, especially considering how deadly even a small scratch could be back before the discovery of antibiotics. But again, we can't put today's standard of living on that of people 300 years ago. Shoes were not mass-produced in factories back then...there wasn't a Payless on every corner...there were no on-line suppliers ...there was a limit to their availability. Men were at sea for months, even years, at a time (though pirates were not as likely to go that long without going ashore). Leather soles wore out, stitching rotted apart, toes broke open. I tend to adopt a favorite pair of shoes ane wear them daily until they fall off my feet, and most (leather, canvas, or man-made material, doesn't matter) last me less than 6 months. So, I'm trying to figure out how a sailor, doing much harder work than I do and with far fewer options when it came to replacing his shoes, made his shoes last. I figger the average shoe would last about 6 months at sea and with continual wear before starting to fall apart. So, although I agree that shoes would have been worn for certain tasks...I would be surprised if they wore them continually, day in, day out (unless they were cobblers by trade). So, IF (and ONLY IF) they didn't wear them continually, what would be the alternative? Barefeet? Stocking feet? Cloth? A sort of slipper or sandal (seems rather unlikely)? Old shoes that were only good to 'beat around' in? Worn-out sneakers tied together with duct tape? BUCKET BOOTS? Or did a man just wear his best shoes until they rotted off his feet, and then went in search of a new pair?

das

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
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* 2,564 posts
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* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.  
    
  Shooting pirates.

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89211) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89211)

**On the availability and price of GAoP shoes**: Certainly shoes weren't mass produced in industrial factories as we know them today, BUT shoes are and were a "necessary" item of clothing, rather than a fashionable one. Where there is a need you will usually find someone to fill that need. What I'm trying to say I guess is that there's never to my knowledge been a shoe-famine.

With regards to cost it would perhaps be good for us to look at the RN slop regulations pooh-poohed on another thread. In 1706 "double soled shoes, round toes" were available to any seaman in the RN who wanted them at 4 shillings a pair, "brass buckles with iron tongues" at 3 pence a pair. At that time an RN Seaman earned 19s per 28 day month, an Able Seaman earned £1 4s, and a Boatswain earned between £2 and £4 depending on the size of ship. A pair of shoes therefore represented round about 4 1/2 days' wages for an AB and about 2 1/2 days' wages for the boatswain on the smallest vessel.

By comparison in the same regulations an unlined red waistcoat with 18 buttons cost 5s 6d, a shirt of linen cost 3s 6d, and even a pair of linen drawers cost 2s 3d. ie, 2 pairs of underpants cost more than a pair of shoes with brass buckles.

**On alternatives for shoes**: I think the most likely thing is actually that seamen wore shoes. I've never seen a written or pictoral source for seamen tying cloth round their feet and I don't think that wearing stockings would offer any more protection than bare feet, plus they'd wear through and you'd have to buy new stockings (grey woollen ones, 1s 9d a pair from the purser - nearly half the price of a pair of shoes).

However, I do have two other possibilities to offer: firstly, in wills and similar documents of seamen of the GAoP one often finds shoes and buckles listed seperately. This fact coupled with the practicality of working seriously in buckled shoes (I've not found it practical) leads me to suspect the possibility that seamen wore their shoes at sea, but fastened them with laces through the buckle holes perhaps, or left them unfastened, then put the buckles on to smarten their shoes up for going ashore.

The other possibility is the obvious one that many seamen probably had work shoes and shore shoes. John Hutchinson who died in 1684 for example left "one paire of bootes" to a shipmate, but desired that "one paire new shoes English and one pair modderas[?]...be sold at mast". It's possible that the boots mentioned are bucket-tops but I seriously doubt it, more likely to my mind are short sea-boots, perhaps similar to this one recovered from the *Vasa*, a shipwreck of 1628.



**On a different note**: Yes Das, Many of Morgan's men ate their shoes as they crossed the Isthmus of Panama. If memory serves they soaked them in water and pummelled them between stones to make them soft before cutting them up into small pieces.

B)

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89221) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89221)

Wow, thanks Foxe...exactly what I was looking for!! First, about Morgan's men - thanks, I knew I had read that somewhere, but couldn't remember for the life of me who it was about!

Okay - now everything you say seems to make sense. I'm interested in what the 'modderas' may be?? In Spanish a similar word means 'moderate, slacken, or cool'....but we know how languages can change in a few hundred years. But now I'm wondering if these 'modderas' could be some sort of working shoe??

But the other information is excellent - just what I was trying to find out. Thanks so much, gonna go off and research some more...

das

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89239) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89239)

okay - doing some more checking on 'modderas'. I asked a Mexican friend of mine, and he said Moderas sounds like a surname. So could this 'modderas' be like a 'brand name', a style of footwear (if it was, in fact, a shoe) named after whoever made it, or after a region or place, like a 'Panama' hat? Again, a lot can change in 300 years...

also, I found an interesting link, dealing with a period a couple hundred years earlier: <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/calderon/clothing.htm>

If you look through this link, you'll see reference to 'hemp sandals' that the Spanish made - I wonder if they ever had a specific name?

Also, whalers in more recent times seem to have worn a hemp shoe (c1820-1880).

Since hemp was used prior to and after the GAoP, could it be possible that some sort of hemp slipper or sandal was worn aboard ship to save on wear and tear on good leather shoes?? I am in no way suggesting that such was the case, just wondering.

I find it interesting that in my research on shoes for sailors, there is precious little information. Great detail is given to uniforms and slops, even to hats and the buckles for shoes, but very little description of any footwear - nary a mention of boots, shoes, or anything else.

Also, I have noticed before in several illustrations (not sure of the dates of the illustrations), that many pirates seem to be wearing something that almost looks like a 'slipper', with a pointy toe. Now, I'm guessing that this is just the artist's way of getting around the footwear problem if he hadn't a clue as to what they wore, but could it also be some sort of informal shoe?? (if anyone has a piccie of what I am talking about, I'd appreciate it if you could post it. One such picture is that of the pirates riding the monks, and the other is that of the officer tied to the mast, bottles hurled at him as he's shot) - sorry, no idea where I can get me hands on these pictures at present.

\*goes off to do more research\*

das

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89252) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89252)

And a final pondering for the night...

In doing research on 'sandals', I came across information that indicates currans (cuaran), revelin, pampooties, etc. were sometimes referred to as 'sandals'. Now, looking at pictures of 'currans' c. 1700, they could almost look like the 'slipper' some sailors seem to be wearing. I wonder if such a simple shoe was used by sailors (since many sailors were of Scottish/Irish ancestory, it IS possible they brought this style of shoe aboard ship). Of course, this is all wild speculation, and I'm still amazed at the lack of information in the books I have, and also online regarding styles of seaman's shoes.

das

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

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/81-joshuared/)
* Member
* 1,342 posts

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89258) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89258)

Mmmm! Tastes like feet!!

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89263) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89263)

LOL...nuffin' like toasted shoes wif a little toe jam on da side...

:P

das

[**captain.richard.grenville**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2060-captainrichardgrenville/)

* Bilge Rat
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_bilgerat.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2060-captainrichardgrenville/)
* Member
* 14 posts
* Location:Milwaukee, WI

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89282) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89282)

I am an Elizabethan reenactor focusing on the reign of Elizabeth I as Captain Sir Richard Grenville son of Captain Grenville who drowned when the Mary Rose floudered under the reign of King Henry VIII. My research spans from approximately the begining of Henry VIII through Elizabeth to the end of the Golden Age of Piracy just prior to the Napoleonic Wars my research has found thus much overall.

First and foremost everyone had some type of footware be it simple shoes through leather shoes and tall boots. For sailors the former would be typical attire while the later for the Captain and/or "gentlemen" and eventually "the officers" aboard.

Onboard however, I would agree that artistic license has been taken over the years depending on what the artist is to portray and/or was commissioned.

From my research until the late 1600s when a more formal "uniform" for the British Navy was becoming more and more standardized weather and comfort ruled the day. There was no specific shoe/no shoe rule aboard with the exception of the "gentlemen" of the boat who typically as onboard or ashore would wear their clothing denoting their station more than anything else. For the general sailor unless it was required for example the Captain's review or Sunday Services I believe it was a matter of personal preference. But ashore unless they did not own shoes they would have some form of footware.

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 19, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89285) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89285)

Thanks, cap'n!!

Just one question - when you say 'simple' shoe, are you referring to the heeled leather shoe sans buckle (perhaps laced as Foxe suggests), or something even more simplistic, such as currans/pampooties??

Thanks for the information!!

(Foxe - forgot to mention that I appreciated the expense breakdown of the various items. Guess shoes weren't quite as dear as some other items, eh? )

das

[**captain.richard.grenville**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2060-captainrichardgrenville/)

* Bilge Rat
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_bilgerat.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2060-captainrichardgrenville/)
* Member
* 14 posts
* Location:Milwaukee, WI

[Posted February 20, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89286) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89286)

Simple meaning very cheap maybe not in construction but in materials such as cotton or linen as the fabric versus a more durable fabric or leather. Buckles versus ties would be dependant on the style of shoe/boot etc more than the cost or design.

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 20, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89292) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89292)

captain.richard.grenville said:

Simple meaning very cheap maybe not in construction but in materials such as cotton or linen as the fabric

Hmmm...so piratical sorts DID wear sneakers (trainers), eh?? :P

Thanks again. I would be interested in knowing exactly what sort of shoe this might be - the style, etc.

On a side note, I pulled an old National Geographic book off the shelf (*Men, Ships, and the Sea*) - published back in 1962. I hadn't given this book much thought because I figured the information in it would be lacking. However, it has some rather interesting pictures. The first pages of the book are photographs of sailors around the world (c. 1962) - the crew of a dhow in the Indian Ocean, men working a galley in the Persian Gulf, fishermen on a Chinese junk - and most, if not all, are barefoot - even the men on the junk straining at the windlass. Later in the book is a painting entitled "Death of Lord Nelson" by Denis Dighton (1792-1827), and it portrays officers and marines in shoes, but most other seamen in their bare feet (and working the guns, no less). Of course, this was painted well after the GAoP, but still could be a valuable reference to go by. Clothing styles may change, but a seaman's habits probably remained fairly consistent over the centuries. It seems from pictures of modern sailors in the tropics, and from the one at Trafalgar, sailors did and still do work the ship in their bare feet. Therefore, I think it would be safe to assume that at least some sailors went barefoot when it was practical or preferred, and had probably done so for ages, especially in warmer climes.

das

[**captain.richard.grenville**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2060-captainrichardgrenville/)

* Bilge Rat
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_bilgerat.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2060-captainrichardgrenville/)
* Member
* 14 posts
* Location:Milwaukee, WI

[Posted February 20, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89294) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89294)

One other thought after discussing the matter "off board" with several individuals we came to the conclusion that basic shoe/boot design of the day did not have "tread" as we know it today. Most shoe soles were flat with no cross cuts or roughing done to them. This coupled with the thick tarred ropes and finer hemp rope in moderate sea conditions could be slippery at best and downright wet in others which would lead me to believe that most that went aloft would definately prefer no footware than slippery flatbottomed soles even if they had footware for the "beach". These individuals are costume fanatics so, I will try and post typical sailor footware from mid 15th Centurty through the early 19th when we get it assembled. Please contact me directly if you have individual questions and I can see if I can get answers.

Cap'n Sin

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 20, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89298) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89298)

captain.richard.grenville said:

One other thought after discussing the matter "off board" with several individuals we came to the conclusion that basic shoe/boot design of the day did not have "tread" as we know it today. Most shoe soles were flat with no cross cuts or roughing done to them. This coupled with the thick tarred ropes and finer hemp rope in moderate sea conditions could be slippery at best and downright wet in others which would lead me to believe that most that went aloft would definately prefer no footware than slippery flatbottomed soles even if they had footware for the "beach". These individuals are costume fanatics so, I will try and post typical sailor footware from mid 15th Centurty through the early 19th when we get it assembled. Please contact me directly if you have individual questions and I can see if I can get answers.

Cap'n Sin

Thank you again!! Yeah, I am very interested in this subject and would appreciate any additional information you can find. The flat soles would, I think, create a problem under certain conditions, but could the heel actally help in the rigging?? Dunno. If I have something specific, I will certainly contact you in PM...

Could you ask your friends about the earlier mention of modderas, and what that could possibly mean?? That is something I am very curious about - discovering the unknown...

:PHere's to ya!!

das

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.  
    
  Shooting pirates.

[Posted February 20, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89307) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89307)

Smooth soled or not, shoes in the rigging is definitely better than no shoes, no question. On deck is a different matter of course, but not aloft! See the first page of this thread.

I'd be interested in any source evidence for non-leather shoes being worn as cheap alternatives. I've come across fabirc shoes being used for dainty court wear, and while I can't think of any reason why seamen shouldn't have used cheaper fabric shoes I can't think of any reason why they should have either. As we have seen based on primary evidence leather shoes were not all that expensive, and I've not seen any evidence otherwise.

I must admit that "modderas" has stumped me. I have not a clue. The context makes it fairly clear that it is something to do with footwear, and I doubt it's a "trademark", but beyond that I can only speculate.

I think the slipper type shoes with the short toe you're talking about (looking at the monk riding picture) are actually fairly accurate representations of shoes from the early 19th century when those pictures were drawn, not an artist's impression of earlier shoes.

[**Patrick Hand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1049-patrick-hand/)

* The sailor's sailor
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_immortal_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1049-patrick-hand/)
* Moderator
* 6,100 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:TH' Mountains of Central California
* Interests:I like wierdness... Klingon, Pyrate..... and even..... gasp.... Renn Faires...... (Baseball and tractor pulls I'd have to think about.... could be wierd or Not,,,,)

[Posted February 20, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89411) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89411)

Not sure if this form of shoe construction is correct for the time period or not.....

But brogans were wet molded around a wooden form ( I think its called a "last"), and the soles were pegged (using wooden pegs) through the sole, the upper's leather and the insole, holding everything together... (one of the Foxfire books shows how this was done)

In the Smithsonian... American history... in the Kids section there was a demo on how they made shoes, and the uppers were sewn to the insole,then everything was turned rightside out..... this would make a stronger shoe, but would require more labor to make.

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 20, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89459) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89459)

Foxe said:

I must admit that "modderas" has stumped me. I have not a clue. The context makes it fairly clear that it is something to do with footwear, and I doubt it's a "trademark", but beyond that I can only speculate.

okay - here is a WILD speculation on the 'modderas'.

Could it be related somehow to this shoe""

<http://birkenstocks.sandals4less.com/madera/>

The spelling is different and of commercial origins (as opposed to traditional), it's a modern shoe and I doubt has any direct connection to the one we are trying to figure out, but still....is there any way to find out when and where this style of 'fisherman's shoe' developed??? I tend to believe that this 'modderas' is of Spanish origin, perhaps something more casual than a fine leather shoe.

das

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.  
    
  Shooting pirates.

[Posted February 21, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89508) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89508)

Quote

I tend to believe that this 'modderas' is of Spanish origin, perhaps something more casual than a fine leather shoe.

There's not really any reason to suppose a Spanish origin, although I grant the word does look Spanish to our modern eyes.

The other thing is that there is no reason to suppose that "modderas" is anything more than a place of origin - possibly Madieras, or (since he was aboard an East Indiaman) Madras. If you look at the whole quote he's saying "one pair of new English shoes and one pair modderas"; this could very easily be "one pair of shoes made in England and one pair made in the Madieras/Madras", it needn't be some distinct style at all. In fact, since nobody seems to know of any particular style of period shoe with a similar name it seems likely to me that it was just where the shoes came from, not what they looked like.

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted February 21, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=89523) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=89523)

Foxe said:

The other thing is that there is no reason to suppose that "modderas" is anything more than a place of origin - possibly Madieras, or (since he was aboard an East Indiaman) Madras.

Well that would certainly make sense (there is also a 'Modera' in Sri Lanka...however not sure when the it was named such). My Spanish-speaking friend said that a double 'd' doesn't exist in the Spanish language, but that could just be a mistaken English translation. All the other 'related' words madera (wood), and Modera have the single d. Also, a misspelling of Madras or Madieras seem very likely possibilities. So, a traditional leather shoe made in one of those places, perhaps, and not a specific style - that would surely make sense.

Does this mean I can let the whole 'modderas' thing rest?? :D

Everyone has been so very helpful - I love a good discussion that explores all possibilities. True, we can't discover all the answers, but I think it's clear that there is a bit of wiggle room allowing for personal taste and choice. We will never really know how many men preferred bare feet to shoes while working on deck, or what alternatives they may have come up with...although it appears that a regular shoe was the most likely choice. Pictures and eyewitness accounts are not always reliable, and there are relatively few in relation to the number of pirates that roamed the seas during the time period in question.

You know, in three hundred years, if the ONLY documentation of modern society to survive are copies of Vogue, folks might think that everyone today dressed like Paris Hilton. On a side note, did anyone ever see the issue of Omni magazine from the 1980's when they spoofed an archaeological dig of a modern (in the 1980's) community?? It was a RIOT!! They thought toilet seats were some sort of neckwear with attached headdress, and toothbrushes (because many had a hole on the handle) were ornamentation. Imagine that - pirates with toothbrushes dangling from their ears...Now THAT could be the start of another great discussion... :D

Feel free to add any additional info you might find on this subject, and thanks so much for all the input so far!

das

[**MadMike**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1572-madmike/)

* First Mate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_1st_mate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1572-madmike/)
* Member
* 251 posts
* Location:Careened near the Gulf of Mexico
* Interests:1712 raid on Dauphin Island, Alabama.

[Posted March 7, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92631) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92631)

I just received my straight last shoes a week ago from Townsend. Not a bad pair, they are more comfortable than the low quarters I was issued in basic training. Wasn't even a problem putting on the buckles.

Obviously, these shoes need some heel plates to preserve the leather heels.

As for sandals, will probably make a period style pair from some scrap saddle leather I have laying around.

Yours, &c.

Mike

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

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/81-joshuared/)
* Member
* 1,342 posts

[Posted March 7, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92633) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92633)

They used to "armor" the heels by driving a series of nails into the heel for added wear. Here's a pic of my shoes:

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.  
    
  Shooting pirates.

[Posted March 7, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92645) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92645)

Just thought I'd throw in this contemporary picture of John Paul Jones. Bit late I know, but the principal is the same:



Check out the pair of feet on the foot-rope in the background :lol:

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

* Where's My Water
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/137-dorian-lasseter/)
* 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!!!

[Posted March 8, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92747) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92747)

I's gonna add a bit about sandals....

I can see sailors wearing sandals in the warmer climates, as they provide a solid base to walk and climb with, don't stretch and deform as a leather shoe/boot does when wet...

The type of sandal would be made out of what could be easily had onboard, rope...

I have a few pairs of these; <http://gurkeesandals.com/>

The "Neptune" style. in natural... Only thing I see different from what might be period is how the sole is put together. They have the cordage laid out along the foot, instead of coiled...

These are a nice alternative to bare feet, might not be proper as the only painting I've ever see with a sailor wearing these is Pyle's "The Bucaneer"

[**Kalum**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1370-kalum/)

* Ship's Master
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_shipsmaster.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1370-kalum/)
* Member
* 123 posts
* Location:Cruisin' the warm seas of the Spanish Main!

[Posted March 8, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92763) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92763)

Dorian,

Myself and Shaelyn were just talking about this the other day on drive back from FLaRF. We got to thinking that maybe the soles would actually be rope as well instead of a leather sole.

I would think that for going aloft they would provide good traction and be easier on the feet. Granted this would be mainly for warmer climates like you said. However, in the warmer months in northern areas they may have been worn as well.

Like you though, I haven't seen any paintings or drawings that depict this, but it's something to think about.

[**MadMike**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1572-madmike/)

* First Mate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_1st_mate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1572-madmike/)
* Member
* 251 posts
* Location:Careened near the Gulf of Mexico
* Interests:1712 raid on Dauphin Island, Alabama.

[Posted March 8, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92775) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92775)

JoshuaRed,

Thanks for the pic's. How are the heels doing as far as wear and tear?

Although I've located a picture of Inca rope sandals dating from 1400 AD, haven't found any justification for wearing such items (guess I'll go barefoot until we locate some "maderas"- or could that be "madras"?).

Yours, &c.

Mike

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

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/81-joshuared/)
* Member
* 1,342 posts

[Posted March 8, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92790) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92790)

well I haven't gotten too much use out of them yet, but the year is still young. So far so good, though! They do help a little bit with traction...

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted March 8, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92827) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92827)

Guess what I found at K-Mart today?? Cheap piratesque shoes! JR, they're a lot like those in your picture, only the tongue is a bit shorterand the buckle slightly off-center, but otherwise, with the squared toe and all, they're a fairly decent 'imitation' of an 18th century shoe (if the kids ONLY knew they were wearing such old-fashioned footwear... ;)), and will suffice until I can afford a better and more accurately made shoe. The heel is a little higher than I'd like (about 1.5"), but will have to do for now.

I might invest in a pair of those sandals, too - thanks for the link, Dorian L....

Now, should I paint these heals red... ;)

;)

das

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.  
    
  Shooting pirates.

[Posted March 8, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92832) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92832)

The tongues don't have to be as long as those on Josh's shoes, and would it be possible to move the buckle?

Any chance of a picture of your new shoes Das?

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted March 8, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92841) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92841)

I'll see what i can do about a picture...but...that requires buying film, shooting an entire roll, developing it...and scanning the pic into the 'puter, which means I MIGHT be able to get one up in three or four weeks... ;)

I checked on-line for a picture of one, but couldn't find any. Basically it's a leather shoe, with a rubbery sole. Of course rubber is not period, but it will have to do for now. About moving the buckle - not sure I can...well, perhaps I can... \*looks\*...hmmm... there might be a way, but if I decided to do that, I'd take it to a cobbler or something, don't want to take a chance. The buckle isn't FAR over to the side, but it's definitely not centered, either. Hey, I can just say they were made in France, eh?? ;)The toe is really squared, though there is the SLIGHTEST angle distinguishing right from left. Gah - I guess it would be best to take a stinkin' picture, eh??

;)

das

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

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/81-joshuared/)
* Member
* 1,342 posts

[Posted March 8, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92853) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92853)

While yer a Kmart getting the shoes pick up a cheap digital cam too! :)

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

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/805-dasndanger/)
* Member
* 320 posts
* Location:NJ
* Interests:Tall ships, Native American history and culture, rugby...and just about anything that predates 1900...

[Posted March 9, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=92901) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=92901)

JoshuaRed said:

While yer a Kmart getting the shoes pick up a cheap digital cam too!  :)

yeah - i guess i could do that...

B)

das

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.  
    
  Shooting pirates.

[Posted March 12, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=93629) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=93629)

And another one for you ;)



*The British Hercules* 1737

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

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/81-joshuared/)
* Member
* 1,342 posts

[Posted March 12, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=93642) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=93642)

Now THAT is cool.

[**Swashbuckler 1700**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20630-swashbuckler-1700/)

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20630-swashbuckler-1700/)
* Member
* 1,115 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Europe
* Interests:pyrates, pryvateers, naval military and other history, different books, good movies, music (a little bit), drawing, games,...

[Posted January 19, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=415792) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=415792)

As this is a thread about shoe usage on board sailing ships:

Later than Gaop (early 1800s) but still notable as the ship-life conditions etc. wouldn't have changed significantly. (I must say the picture itself is ugly).

The weather is not necessarily really hot as one sailor (right side) has probably a fur cap.

*'Deck scene in an Indiaman'*

[](http://collections.rmg.co.uk/mediaLib/476/media-476316/large.jpg)

<http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/12572.html>

**Edited January 19, 2014 by Swashbuckler 1700**

[**Coastie04**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/27-coastie04/)

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/27-coastie04/)
* Member
* 1,008 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.

[Posted January 19, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=415794) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=415794)

I'm not convinced that the sailor on the far right has a fur cap, as there are hints of sideburns. I think it's just a lot of really curly hair. Also, it looks a lot like the hair of the sailor in the foreground (what you can see of it).

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.  
    
  Shooting pirates.

[Posted January 19, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=415795) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=415795)

An object lesson in the perils of going bare-foot on deck as the boatswain crushes two of the middle fellow's toes...

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_scourge_o_the_7_seas.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted January 20, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=415797) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=415797)

It actually appears that the bo'sun is crushing those toes as an object lesson. And from the exaggerated style of the painting I would say that is was created for satirical impact.

[**Bright**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/5106-bright/)

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/5106-bright/)
* Member
* 380 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:South Carolina
* Interests:He has been seen most recently in the company of the Charles Town Few and rumored to be their Quarter master

[Posted February 7, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=416092) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=416092)

<http://usscm.blogspot.com/2014/02/slip-shod-truth-about-early-navy-shoes.html>

[**Commodore Swab**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6250-commodore-swab/)

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6250-commodore-swab/)
* Member
* 1,148 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Key Largo
* Interests:Flintlocks, Cannons, Ships, Sailing, antique cars

[Posted February 8, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=findComment&comment=416099) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4276-shoes-and-slippy-decks/&do=reportComment&comment=416099)

A good read, What I was able to gather is that shoes were preferable to be worn aboard ship, although they often had to be replaced as they would not last long. However, my premise has always been that without a replacement source shoes were too valuable to be worn on a daily basis.