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

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

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

[Posted March 11, 2005](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=93284) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=93284)

This information below is on my webpage (see below) and comes from several sources. The discussion started at the [Piratebrethren Yahoo Site](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/piratebrethren/) and reflects several threads and discussions on that site .

The sources include "Working Dress" by Diana de Marly (1986), Christopher Lloyd's "The British Seaman" (1968) and G.E. Manwaring, “The Dress of the British Seaman from the Revolution to the Peace of 1748, "Mariner’s Mirror, The Journal of the Society for Nautical Research, Volume 10, 1924.

In 1628 the British Admiralty made sailor's clothing, called "slops," available to press-ganged men. They consisted of a suit of canvas with doublet and breeches, Monmouth caps, cotton waistcoats and drawers, stockings, linen shirts and shoes.

The Pursers stood to make a profit from the sales from the slop chest, but since clothing is a necessity, it seemed unfair to allow each ship's purser to name his own price. Thus, by 1663 the Admiralty began to issue specifications for the types of clothing (slops) and set fixed prices. It was also stated that they had to be sold before the mainmast, once a week, and in the captain's presence.

So, while the Royal Navy did not have or issue an “official” uniform until at least the mid 18th Century, they did issue a contract for, and made certain types of sailors clothes available to, sailors on their ships and in the major costal towns where England’s sailors were.

Though these slops were not a uniform because there was no "order" for the sailors to wear them, Manwaring does say that, "Nevertheless, as these were the only clothes permitted to be sold on board ship, and the men were allowed to purchase them on a long credit, it is safe to assume that the supply was eagerly taken up”.

One of the most important facts overlooked time and again when examining the common members of a pirate crew is that seamen of the Golden Age period did not consider themselves "Navy" seamen, or "Merchant" seaman, they were just "seamen". One year they might be in the RN. The next year they'd be on a trading voyage to the East Indies. That might have been followed with a six months tour on a Newcastle collier, and then maybe a quick jaunt on a privateer, as the fancy and opportunity took them. So even if many pirates hadn't come directly from an RN ship there's every probability that they had RN slops in their chest from earlier voyages.

In 1706, a new contract was issued by the Admiralty for the kinds of clothing that would be acceptable as slops; and they were pretty specific. The contracting system was not all that different from what we have today; that is, the government published what wanted, and various firms bid on the contract. The winning company had to have slop clothing available at set prices to Royal Navy ships. The government even provided "sealed patterns" of each garment that was available in various English ports (even in Lisbon). Sea captains needing to outfit a crew could compare the quality of the local slop supply with these samples.

Each contract ran for a limited number of years and then a new contract was issued and opened to bidding. From 1706 to 1748 (other contracts that affect the GAoP were issued in 1717 and 1724) each new contract specified pretty much the same set of clothing, with some minor variations, and also specified the price of each article. The 1706 contract, for example, called for:

Shrunck Grey Kersey Jackett, lined with Red Cotton, with fifteen Brass Buttons, and two Pockets of Linnen, the Button Holes stich’d with Gold Colour Thread, at Ten Shillings and Sixpence each

(Shrunck appears to mean water-resistant. Kersey is a very coarse cheap wool)

Waist Coat of Welsh Red plain unlin’d, with eighteen Brass Buttons, the holes stich’d with Gold Coloured Thread at Five Shillings and Sixpence each

(Welsh red refers to a type of wool flannel; cotton flannel does not appear until the 19th C)

Strip’d Ticken Waist Coats of proper lengths, to be one Yard in length at least, with Eighteen Black Buttons, the Holes Stitched with Black Thread lined with White linen and two White Linnen Pockets, at the Rate of Seven Shillings each

(Ticken/Ticking A strong material of linen, basket woven, and usually in stripes)

Red Kersey Breeches lin’d with Linnen, with three Leather Pockets, and thirteen white Tinn Buttons, the Button Holes stitched with white Thread, at the Rate of Five Shillings and Sixpence each (Kersey is a very coarse cheap wool)

Strip’d Shagg Breeches lin’d with Linnen, with three Leather Pockets, and fourteen white Tinn Buttons, the Button Holes stich’d with white Thread, at the Rate of Tenn Shillings and Sixpence each. (Shagg also called Duffel - a coarse woolen fabric with a thick tufted nap)

Strip’d Ticken Breeches of proper lengthes, lined with white linen, and two linen Pockets, with Sixteen Black Buttons, the Button Holes stich’d with Black Thread, at the rate of five Shillings each

(Ticken/Ticking A strong material of linen, basket woven, and usually in stripes)

Shirts of blew and white chequer’d Linnen, at the Rate of three Shillings and Threepence each.

Drawers of blew and white chequer’d Linnen, at the Rate of Two Shillings and Threepence each.

Leather Capps faced with Red Cotton, and lined with Black Linnen, at the Rate of One Shilling and twopence each

Small Leather Capps stich’d with white Thread, at the Rate of Eightpence each.

Grey Woollen Stockings at the Rate of One Shilling and Ninepence per Pair

Grey Woollen Gloves or Mittens at the Rate of Sixpence per pair

Double Sold Shoes, round Toes, at the Rate of Four Shillings per pair

Brass Buckles with Iron Tongues at the Rate of Three Pence per pair

These slops lists continued in much the same vein with minor variations until 1748. Since there was no order compelling Royal Navy sailors to buy slops, this could not be considered a uniform, but it amounted to such since these were the clothes most commonly available to them.

According to G.E. Manwaring's "The Dress of the British Seaman From the Revolution to the Peace of 1748" in The Mariner's Mirror, 1924 (which has these lists in detail as well as their original sources), this is the costume that British seamen were most often pictured wearing in period prints and paintings.

Grey jackets, red breeches or trousers, striped waistcoats and blue-and-white checkered shirts was the de facto uniform for this era.

The point about caps is interesting. British seamen were not issued hats until relatively late. They were known for their thrummed caps in the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as Monmouth caps. For some reason, knit caps disappear from the slops list for several decades. Despite this we know through other sources that knit hats and cocked hats were worn during this period, they just do not appear on the slop contracts during the 1690-1720 period.

It is not until the list of 1730 that you find the leather caps replaced with "Caps, woolen milled" and "Caps, yarn”. The "Caps, Woolen, milled yarn" is repeated in 1739, when for the first time "Hats" (with no other description) is added.

Manwaring believed that trousers were exclusive to British sailors in this era. He cites a Spanish report from the Pacific in which some seamen were recognized as British because they were wearing trousers.

The above information is not meant to coerce you into adopting the Admiralty Contracts as your sole guide or vision for building your pirate kit. It is meant, however, to provide examples as to what the common or average sailors clothing might have looked like.

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

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

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

[Posted January 1, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=159502) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=159502)

bump

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 2, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=159882) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=159882)

Since GoF has "bumped" this one...

I've been working (very slowly) on producing a set of kit based entirely on on the ASC specs (my shoes are square toed and I'm not going to buy another pair, I obviously didn't "buy" them from the purser - otherwise I'm going for the whole caboodle), and while the level of detail they provide is probably unparallelled in other sources of the time there are a few points which are unclear, making the whole attempt difficult.

My principal problem is the placing of buttons:

 Quote

Shrunck Grey Kersey Jackett, lined with Red Cotton, with fifteen Brass Buttons, and two Pockets of Linnen...

If we combine this written description with the pictoral evidence it seems, at first glance, to be not *unreasonable* to assume that the pockets were buttoned closed. Take, for example, this picture of a French seaman circa 1700:



and on coats of the period (including the one pictured) three seems to be a pretty common number. That would leave 9 buttons to go down the front. Fair enough.

BUT, if we assume that the slop coats also had mariners' cuffs which buttoned closed that would only leave 3 buttons for the front (mariners' cuffs are *usually* depicted with 3 buttons also), and 3 is clearly not enough to fasten the coat closed.

So, do we assume that a: the coats had buttons on the pockets, but no mariners' cuffs (since they are not mentioned), b: the coats had mariners' cuffs and the pockets were not buttoned closed, or c: that the specs only take into account the buttons down the front anyway, in which case the coats may or may not have had mariners' cuffs?

Personally I suspect (B:), based solely on pictures of other, non-regulation coats.

The issue is clouded further by the fact that the waistcoats had 18 buttons, and probably no mariners' cuffs (though it would not be surprising to find a small cuff opening with perhaps 2-3 buttons). However, several pictures of the period show a large difference in the number and size of coat and waistcoat buttons anyway. Take this picture for example: The British Hercules, 1737**\***:



(Privately, I wonder if that is actually a depiction of an ASC spec strip'd ticken waistcoat. It's about the right length, of the right pattern and he IS a Royal Navy seaman of the right period. Does anyone fancy counting the buttons? IF it is an ASC spec garment does anyone else think that it looks remarkably like he's got his hand in a slit pocket on the side, rather than a flapped pocket in the front as one would suspect? Either that or it's got a VERY high slit up the side.)

Then we come to the breeches! I wondered at first whether the large number of buttons was perhaps due to the pockets being buttoned closed (which would be practical, but I have no evidence off hand to support such an assumption), but the ticking breeches have less pockets and more buttons than the woollen breeches so there must be another answer. Are we talking about breeches with 3-4 buttons at each knee and 8-10 buttons at waist and fly? 5 buttons at each knee and 6 at the fly? The 1730 regulations do offer a snippet of extra information:

 Quote

Striped Ticken breeches...blah blah blah...and 2 waistband buttons, with 14 other buttons suitable to the ticken, etc.

The trousers, included for the first time in the slops contract in 1730, but available from at least as early as 1725 (*letter from Franklin the slop seller to the Navy Board, Sept 10, 1725*) call for them to be of

 Quote

brown osnaburgh canvas, to be cut out of whole cloth brecches fashion, 2 buttons at the waistband and 2 others

Naturally one would expect trousers to have fewer buttons than breeches since they have no fastenings except at the waist and fly, but does this mean that the breeches had only 4 buttons at the waist and fly? That would mean 6 buttons on each knee of the ticken breeches - or does it mean that there *were* buttons on the pockets after all, since there is no mention of pockets in the trousers? (note also the 2 fly buttons on the trousers in the "British Hercules" picture)

I know that GoF has attempted to fathom the "Leather Capps faced with Red Cotton, and lined with Black Linnen" previously. I wonder if they might be similar to early grenadier caps? From 1703 all the marine regiments seem to have worn grenadier style caps, presumably because they were more practical at sea than the infantry tricorns. What's to stop the seamen having worn similar hats?

Thoughts on any of that from anyone who hasn't developed a headache yet?

Frankly, I'm going to start work on my 1690s set of slop clothes first. There are less details in the specs, but that means more room for using other evidence which is less confusing...

**\****Purists may balk at my use of such a late picture, but since the slop contracts for the period up to 1748 are almost identical to those from 1706 there seems little reason to assume that their appearance changed much.*

[**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 January 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160161) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160161)

Okay, gentlemen. I really want to give my opinion on all the points, but then none of the pattern work I have to do would get done today!

But I would like to add this to the discussion: if the coats had mariners' cuffs, which require three buttons each, it's possible that the pockets were not buttoned (leaving 9 to go down the front). It's also possible that the "pockets" referred to are not pockets in the coat but pockets worn separately (like a woman's). The text is a little ambiguous to me.

Assuming three buttons on each mariner's cuff and three on each pocket, however, you can still have a jacket: a laced front. Marcus Laroon's "Cryes of London" (1687) shows some working men wearing coats with mariner's cuffs and the fronts laced closed. Here's one now:

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160234) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160234)

I seriously doubt the possibility of the pockets being seperate. Given the nature of the lists if they were talking about seperate pockets then they'd have been listed seperately. The pockets listed are integral, no doubt.

The laced front is an interesting thought, but again, I think it's unlikely. given the level of detail which the specs go into (particularly the 1730 set) it's hard to believe that the coats could be lace without it being mentioned. These things list the colour of thread to be used in the button hole stitches - if the coats were laced they would say so.

Having completely argued with you, you were one of the people I was really hoping would respond to this thread. Hang your patterns, come back and give me answers!

[**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 January 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160243) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160243)

No. 

Maybe later...

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

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

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

[Posted January 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160249) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160249)

Another enigma...

But

You are making some assumptions that are not addressed in the contracts.

1) That the pocket has button closure



(also, cuff only has 2 buttons)

(From Ed Foxe's [Pirate Pics Gallery](http://www.picturetrail.com/gallery/view?p=999&gid=6655055&uid=3253847))

2) That the coat in the ASC has mariners cuffs



(From Ed Foxe's [Pirate Pics Gallery](http://www.picturetrail.com/gallery/view?p=999&gid=6655055&uid=3253847))

3) If it does have mariners cuffs, that they are "button-closed" (both seated figures right)



(From Ed Foxe's [Pirate Pics Gallery](http://www.picturetrail.com/gallery/view?p=999&gid=6655055&uid=3253847))

4) and if it does have mariners cuff and pockets, that they are both "button-closed"

(from <http://www.chs.org/textiles/menswear.htm> 1730's cotton waistcoat)

A lot of the pictures from your Gallery site, make it unclear whether they have button closure at all. I have been noticing that I have seen a lot of slit cuffs, but not neccesarily "button closed mariner's cuffs".

GoF

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160345) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160345)

Haha, I was trying to avoid making any assumptions at all!

I believe in my original post I highlighted the possibility that the ASC jackets didn't have buttons on the pockets, and that they may not have had mariners' cuffs at all. I hadn't considered the possibility that they had mariners' cuffs which weren't buttoned closed, but I find that a little had to fathom to be honest. Neither of the examples posted are of working gear, ad I find it hard to believe that clohtes specifically in existence to preserve the health of mariners would have a large opening at the cuff that couldn't be closed on what was, theoretically at least, the seaman's top layer. I grant that it's possible, but it seems unlikely to me. Or am I wrong?

I'm actually seriously wondering about the possibility of the jackets having slit pockets let into the side seams. a: a lot of the coats in the period pictures (I'd even go so far as to say "most") that I've got don't appear to show any pockets, it may be that they don't have any pockets, but it may be that the pockets are not immediately obvious. b: The "British Hercules" figure *really* looks to me like he's sticking a hand into a slit pocket in the seam of his waistcoat. *If* he is, then why not jackets too? c: slit pockets let into the side seam would be much easier and cheaper to mass produce (and let's not forget that we're talking about mass production) than flapped pockets on the front panel would be.

[**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 January 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160355) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160355)

Okay, you got me... at least briefly...

I've been looking really closely at two 1670s justacorps in the V&A. Both are upper class jackets made for the wearer's wedding day. So we're not talking about common sailor's clothing.

However, that being said, the construction of these coats is very simple (two fronts, two backs, two-piece sleeves) and all the fancy stuff is provided by tons of gold embroidery or fine matierals -- not an over-abundance of fabric.

This is what I'm getting at -- they have slits for pockets. In one case, a small strip of fabric is inserted into the pocket to make a narrow overlap. In the other, the slit is just pulled to and buttoned closed.

Looking at the men's coats in the Cryes of London, I see very similar shapes to these two upper class coats. So I am making the logical leap that lower class coats were constructed similarly.

And if they were, why not slits for pockets?

That's a lot of leaping about, but it's something to think about while I get back to my pattern work... 

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

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

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

[Posted January 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160386) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160386)

I hear you mate, but...

I see it as the back of Hurcules's wrist as resting against his hip for support and not in a slit pocket.

If the pictures from your site aren't sailors in working gear.... then they at least seem to be in clothing similar to working gear... right?

Picture 1 in my post... the artist did not include much detail, but he did include enough to put 2 buttons on cuff but none on pockets. That plus the original example of a slightly later waistcoat at least give credence to that possibility that *some* waistcoats might not have had buttoned pockets.

Picture 2)

Not the clearest picture of Reade and Bonny, but there doesn't seem to be cuffs (or pockets) on their coats. The Rodger's Guyacil picture also has sailors with short jackets and without pockets (cuffs are hard to discern).

Picture 3)

The two seated figures (captain and navigator) are wearing some sort of short waistcaoat/jacket. The "navigator" doesn't seem to have a slit cuff, and the captain's coat though somewhat inconclusive, *could* be one without buttons.

4) Here is an orginal waistcoat of some sort... I am not saying that its a sailors coat by any means....

but it is one button short of 15.

If it was made of Grey Kersey, had 15 brass buttons and linen pockets.... well????

And if frogs had wings they wouldn't bump their ass's when they tried to fly.....

Button-less pockets *at Least* gets you to 6 for cuffs and 9 for the front. (which don't have to go all the way down to the bottom). And if you leave the buttons off the cuffs, than you can have 15 down the front without any problem.

And if you were wearing such a garment, and claimed it was your interpretation of the ASC, I don't think I would have a problem with it.

GoF

PS

pardon any spelling errors... its late and I'm lazy

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

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

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

[Posted January 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160395) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160395)

Another interesting short jacket... that appears to not have buttoned cuffs is this one

Its 'Gamekeeper to Sir Nicholas Williams of Edwinsford' by an unknown artist, 1725

you can get a bigger jpg here

<http://www.gtj.org.uk/item.php?lang=en&id=26643&t=1>

hmmmm.....

[**Slopmaker Cripps**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1522-slopmaker-cripps/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 137 posts
* Interests:Maritime Living History<br>Slopmaking<br>Tailoring

[Posted January 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160414) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160414)

 Foxe said:

Since GoF has "bumped" this one...

I've been working (very slowly) on producing a set of kit based entirely on on the ASC specs (my shoes are square toed and I'm not going to buy another pair, I obviously didn't "buy" them from the purser - otherwise I'm going for the whole caboodle), and while the level of detail they provide is probably unparallelled in other sources of the time there are a few points which are unclear, making the whole attempt difficult.

My principal problem is the placing of buttons:

 Quote

Shrunck Grey Kersey Jackett, lined with Red Cotton, with fifteen Brass Buttons, and two Pockets of Linnen...

If we combine this written description with the pictoral evidence it seems, at first glance, to be not *unreasonable* to assume that the pockets were buttoned closed. Take, for example, this picture of a French seaman circa 1700:



and on coats of the period (including the one pictured) three seems to be a pretty common number. That would leave 9 buttons to go down the front. Fair enough.

BUT, if we assume that the slop coats also had mariners' cuffs which buttoned closed that would only leave 3 buttons for the front (mariners' cuffs are *usually* depicted with 3 buttons also), and 3 is clearly not enough to fasten the coat closed.

So, do we assume that a: the coats had buttons on the pockets, but no mariners' cuffs (since they are not mentioned), b: the coats had mariners' cuffs and the pockets were not buttoned closed, or c: that the specs only take into account the buttons down the front anyway, in which case the coats may or may not have had mariners' cuffs?

Personally I suspect (B:), based solely on pictures of other, non-regulation coats.

The issue is clouded further by the fact that the waistcoats had 18 buttons, and probably no mariners' cuffs (though it would not be surprising to find a small cuff opening with perhaps 2-3 buttons). However, several pictures of the period show a large difference in the number and size of coat and waistcoat buttons anyway. Take this picture for example: The British Hercules, 1737**\***:



(Privately, I wonder if that is actually a depiction of an ASC spec strip'd ticken waistcoat. It's about the right length, of the right pattern and he IS a Royal Navy seaman of the right period. Does anyone fancy counting the buttons? IF it is an ASC spec garment does anyone else think that it looks remarkably like he's got his hand in a slit pocket on the side, rather than a flapped pocket in the front as one would suspect? Either that or it's got a VERY high slit up the side.)

Then we come to the breeches! I wondered at first whether the large number of buttons was perhaps due to the pockets being buttoned closed (which would be practical, but I have no evidence off hand to support such an assumption), but the ticking breeches have less pockets and more buttons than the woollen breeches so there must be another answer. Are we talking about breeches with 3-4 buttons at each knee and 8-10 buttons at waist and fly? 5 buttons at each knee and 6 at the fly? The 1730 regulations do offer a snippet of extra information:

 Quote

Striped Ticken breeches...blah blah blah...and 2 waistband buttons, with 14 other buttons suitable to the ticken, etc.

The trousers, included for the first time in the slops contract in 1730, but available from at least as early as 1725 (*letter from Franklin the slop seller to the Navy Board, Sept 10, 1725*) call for them to be of

 Quote

brown osnaburgh canvas, to be cut out of whole cloth brecches fashion, 2 buttons at the waistband and 2 others

Naturally one would expect trousers to have fewer buttons than breeches since they have no fastenings except at the waist and fly, but does this mean that the breeches had only 4 buttons at the waist and fly? That would mean 6 buttons on each knee of the ticken breeches - or does it mean that there *were* buttons on the pockets after all, since there is no mention of pockets in the trousers? (note also the 2 fly buttons on the trousers in the "British Hercules" picture)

I know that GoF has attempted to fathom the "Leather Capps faced with Red Cotton, and lined with Black Linnen" previously. I wonder if they might be similar to early grenadier caps? From 1703 all the marine regiments seem to have worn grenadier style caps, presumably because they were more practical at sea than the infantry tricorns. What's to stop the seamen having worn similar hats?

Thoughts on any of that from anyone who hasn't developed a headache yet?

Frankly, I'm going to start work on my 1690s set of slop clothes first. There are less details in the specs, but that means more room for using other evidence which is less confusing...

**\****Purists may balk at my use of such a late picture, but since the slop contracts for the period up to 1748 are almost identical to those from 1706 there seems little reason to assume that their appearance changed much.*

Foxe,

Seeing how I used to make the ASC garments, and have patterns for them on hand, I guess I should chime in. The jackets had 11 buttons on the front, and two on each cuff. The cuffs weren't your "mariner cuffs" of later periods, but simply hemmed, then buttonholes put in and overlapped (makes it closer fitting on the forearm when buttoned, which is also a reason they're most often seen unbuttoned! Can't work with sleeves fitted on the forearm). The pockets were parallel to the waistline and positioned just above the 8th button. The 10th button looks to be even with the belly button/trouser waistband.

The pockets are not buttoned, but simply placed in like you were doing a "welt" pocket without adding the welt.

Sorry I can't get more detailed with this right now, but school is keeping me busy (hence why I'm not making ASC garments anymore...). I am doing a few clothing lectures later this year, but they're mostly on the post-GAoP periods due to my audience requests. A shipmate and I might be doing a publication over the summer if all goes well that will be more modern than the articles from the 1920's, and will cover the whole period.

Cheers,

Adam C., slop-man

P.S. Feel free to shoot me an email if you need anymore help. I also have connections for some correct linen ticking if you want to go for the summer slops. And yes, the ticking garments were meant for summer wear.

P.P.S. If you're going for a completely slop fit-out, then you must have been in desperate straights on your last voyage! Hope you're having better luck these days...:-)

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160445) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160445)

 Slopmaker Cripps said:

Seeing how I used to make the ASC garments, and have patterns for them on hand,

WHAT?!?! Say that again!? I'll swap you a set for my first born child. (Before I hand over the as-yet-unconceived little mite let me just check you're talking about pre 1748 ASC specification patterns copied from originals?)

**EDIT**<Stop Press> Email from Adam received (thanks very much for the promptness). His patterns are not copied from originals, but are based on the 1730 specifications and on evidence gleaned from period depictions. Much like we're trying to do here - let the discussion continue!

 Quote

P.S.  Feel free to shoot me an email if you need anymore help.  I also have connections for some correct linen ticking if you want to go for the summer slops.  And yes, the ticking garments were meant for summer wear.

The email is on its way.

 Quote

P.P.S.  If you're going for a completely slop fit-out, then you must have been in desperate straights on your last voyage!  Hope you're having better luck these days...:-)

I'm doing it to prove a point really, I doubt I'll ever wear a complete slop outfit at an event - I love my petticoat breeches and silly hats too much. 

GoF, the only bit I was talking about when I mentioned that the pictures were not of working gear was the open cuffs. All the other pictures were of working gear and all the stuff about unbuttoned pockets and buttoned cuffs and what not I agree completely on.

**Edited January 3, 2006 by Foxe**

[**Slopmaker Cripps**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1522-slopmaker-cripps/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 137 posts
* Interests:Maritime Living History<br>Slopmaking<br>Tailoring

[Posted January 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160473) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160473)

Foxe,

As I mentioned in the email, there aren't any extant original ASC garments to my knowledge. I derived the patterns as close as possible using all the primary source material I could gather (measurements given in the contracts, artwork, journals, letters, complaints and praises about slops, etc). Research on them is constantly going on, and as such I'm glad to alter the patterns as needed, but so far, they're on par with the most current research on the ASC goods. In no way do I claim them to be 100% accurate, but rather the closest approximation I could manage with what all I've been able to gather on them.

As for trading you kids, it's ok, I'd rather have my own in a few years. If you have a young daughter who's single and about my age...well then we can try and bargain.... 

Aye, I meant that comment about the whole fitout as a joke. Having a full set is a good part of a display, especially when you're doing a purser's impression. I like to use them in lectures about the slop system. As for your love for slop-hose, I can totally sympathise as that's usually what everyone sees me wearing. Then again, I'm always working at events, so most of my shipmates haven't even seen me in any of my shore going rigs. It's funny, my closet is full of historical stuff, yet I only use 1-2 outfits when doing sailor.

Oh, I just went back and read your questions on the Farness Hercules sketch. He's wearing a complete set of 1731 slop contract goods, as the artists wanted to make sure everyone knew he was suppose to be a sailor (usually the funny bearded guy is a naked Greek statue). It was a political sketch trying to gain support and recruits for the navy. They used the statue for the human figure, because most people knew what it was (not because all sailors wore beards ;-)). Anyway, he has 11 button front, 2 button cuffs.....all heck...it's the same as the details I posted earlier....

And the waistcoats used smaller buttons and really had all the buttons on the fronts, as they were of the sleeveless variety. You never see a set of sleeves underneath the open cuffs on a sailors jacket except the sleeves of the shirt (if I'm mistaken, I'd love to see a picture showing sleeves between the shirt and the jacket!). And a note on the waistcoat fabric. Either the slop-man was unable to procure actual ticking stripe cloth (thus having to settle for a blue on white solid stripe ticking) or the artist decided it wasn't worth drawing all those fine lines and just put solid straight lines. Unfortunately, we'll never know which was the real reason it's just solid straight lines. Personally, I vote for the first option.

As for the whole button thing, I didn't feel like reading it all, so I'm not going to involve myself in that discussion.

Cheers,

Adam C., Slop-man

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 3, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160485) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160485)

Thanks for clarifying that Adam,

I thought for one golden moment that you might have copies of original patterns - I know no actual garments have survived, but tailors' patterns come up now and then. I'm afraid the offer of children is off (until someone does find conclusive evidence about the slop gear). Neither do I have a daughter, but I do have a sister, 21 years old, good child bearer (she's just popped a second one out). She's yours for a new checked shirt and half a packet of Smarties.

The thing with the Hercules drawing is that nothing he is wearing is obviously NOT ASC slop gear (except the hat), but that doesn't mean that it IS ASC slop gear. I'm inclined to think that since the slop gear was apparently widely worn, and he is obviously a depiction of a "typical" seaman then the chances are that at least some of his clothes are to ASC specs. But really, for all we know, he might be wearing a blue coat and white trousers, and the waistcoat might actually be a broad-striped fabric rather than the product of a lazy artist. However, even if that is the case, it can still be used to give us a good idea of the patterns and suchlike of the ASC gear.

Right, I'm off to check out some pictures of seamen's cuffs...

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

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

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

[Posted January 4, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160645) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160645)

Well I guess I can get my knickers untangled now....

I thought Adam was holding out on us with some vital information.

JUST SO WE ARE ON THE SAME SHEET OF MUSIC.....

Are we going to discuss 1706, 1717 ASC or post GAOP 1730s ASC?

Assuming that we are talking about 1706 ASC, I think that the garments are going to be similar anyway.

Adam, Do you have many/any good sailor images that are not already on Foxes site?

Foxe, have you maxed out your storage space and need more for pictures?

I have been working on a ASC wool coat for some time. I have "slowed" down production some because there are some things that I could not really nail down but went ahead anyway, and now I am not sure that I took the right path.

I know that you are busy with school Adam, but do you have a sketch or your 1706 jacket pattern? I would love to see it.

Also, I am kind of waiting to see what Kass is doing with her pattern (she is coming out with a GAOP line this year).

This is a hard one to nail down (the Jacket) but I am enjoying this thread and would like to come up with a consensus of what we (the brothers twill) come up with!

GoF

[**Slopmaker Cripps**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1522-slopmaker-cripps/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 137 posts
* Interests:Maritime Living History<br>Slopmaking<br>Tailoring

[Posted January 4, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160698) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160698)

Foxe,

We're still on the hunt for the patterns. If I remember correctly, paper patterns weren't produced until the early 19th century. The tailors would draft the measurements they needed right on the cloth, which is why the slop contracts talk about a display piece being available at every location for the captain and purser to exam instead of a pattern. These prototypes were made exactly like what the Admiralty wanted, and were required to be available for the captains and pursers to see them, and compare them with the slops they were in the process of buying together. So, unless we can turn up an original, we're pretty much stuck with the evidence we have so far.

I got the checked shirt covered, but the smarties might be hard to come by. :-)

As for the striped waistcoat, I just offered the artist getting lazy as an option. Personally, I think it was solid striped woven ticking (the problem here is that there is a ticking stripe and an actual ticking weave). The simple fact of the matter, is that with the thousands of garments being cranked out, they're not all going to look identical since fabric supplies, slop-maker, etc., change constantly (hence why the ASC's discuss the small details and basic requirements instead of getting EXTREMELY detailed). We're talking about mass-produced garments by hand. A good example is Federal Sack coats during the Civil War. Admittedly, it's just over a century from GAoP, but it's the perfect example of a set of requirements on details and basic aspects for the garment, and then you have many varying originals depending on the fabric run, dye bath, lining materials available, etc. Just thought it'd give you an idea of what we're talking about. Unfortunately, we still haven't attained 100% uniformity even in our own modern armies (they're not in Iraq fighting in their dress uniforms).

GoF,

I don't hold out, I just sometimes have to wait to have enough time to share the info. Heck, I'm amazed I've been able to swing computer time last night and this morning.

As for which contract, they were the same ones (if you notice, most of them were just renewals with the same slop-man ;-)) for the most part, with a few very slight differences on details in the 1730's-40's ones. Even then, the differences aren't with patterns, it's just thread buttons instead of brass, etc. As for the 1706 contract, I say to heck with it, let's work off the 1717 one ....

As for the pattern, I have one set I hand drafted for myself, and then I just draft them with tailors chalk on the material (just like the originals were done...as I said, paper patterns were a later thing....), altering as needed. No sketch yet, but I've thought about it, and might very well do it here in the next couple of months (trying not to leak too much out, especially if plans don't go the way we're planning). I don't have the printers, etc., to mass produce my patterns or I would have awhile back, but anymore I just use them for my shipmates and I (we're the only WOJE naval group out there, and we use them in our WOJE Royal Navy impression...admittedly, the 1731 set...).

I too am interested in what comes out of Kass's GAoP line. Just another set of patterns to add to my extremely sickening collection (I think I have enough patterns that the paper involved killed a whole acre of the rain forest).

Anyway, time to get to classes! I'll see if I can manage to swing by later this evening.....

Cheers,

Adam C., Slop-man

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

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

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

[Posted January 4, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160700) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160700)

I guess there is not too much difference between the 1706 and the 1717 ASC... but the 1717 ASC seems to be a little more reliant on "shagg". Flowered and Striped.

My research has found that "shagg" and duffel wool are similar. The hard part is getting the pattern put in it.

There are lots of weavers in India and China that could do it.... I just don't have a need for 1000 yards of it 

Even if I could convince the masses that the ASC is a great starting point, I can't imagine your average ren-faire pirate would want to wear wool breeches.

Can you share your source for Ticking?

I run accross vintage linen ticking from time to time, but it would be a nice to find a ready available source for linen checks and linen ticking (Have you tried B & Towbridge?)

GoF

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 4, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160713) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160713)

Personally, I'm making my slop outfit to the 1706 specs, for two reasons. Firstly, a 1706 spec outfit might well be left over and last well after the changes of 1717 were introduced, whereas if I went with a 1717 spec suit then it wouldn't be right for 1716 or earlier. Secondly, there is a sort of unspoken movement here in the UK that pirate events tend to be set 300 years previously. In 2000 we were playing 1700, this year we'll be playing 1706. (Also, the 1706 specifications were in use for a longer period than any of the others.)

However, since the matter has been brought up, and in case anyone is reading this still who hasn't got a copy of the various slop contracts to hand, here's a list of the differences in each from GoF's original 1706 post.

**1717**

Red flowered shag breeches introduced. Fourteen brass buttons with gold coloured button hole stitching.

**1725**

"Trousers made with canvas" introduced (correction of my earlier post)

All buttons of metal replaced with "thread" buttons.

Red kersey breeches now become "Red and cloth colour kersey breeches"

Colour is no longer specified for kersey waistcoats

**1731**

The contract becomes slightly more detailed generally, sizes are included.

Ticking waistcoats now have 20 buttons.

Grey Kersey coats have 17 buttons

Kersey waistcoats have 19 buttons

Leather pockets of the Kersey and Shag breeches replaced by canvas, and breeches have 16 buttons

Leather caps replaced with "Caps, woollen milled" and "Caps, yarn"

The contracts all seem to include in the preamble words to the effect of "clothes shall be furnished...agreeable in all respects, and in no way inferior to the patterns approved of by this board the 7th November 1707" (*quoted from the 1717 contract*). Apart from the cosmetic changes regarding the numbers and material of buttons and pockets etc it seems that the later slops were basically the same as the earlier ones anyway.

GoF, yes I do have more images not yet on the site, which has a maxed out capacity. I will eventually get around to producing a new site over which I have more control, the trouble is that it'll mean building a whole new site from scratch and I don't have the time at the moment. It will happen though. :)

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

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* 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 4, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160714) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160714)

 Foxe said:

Take this picture for example: The British Hercules, 1737**\***:



IF it is an ASC spec garment does anyone else think that it looks remarkably like he's got his hand in a slit pocket on the side, rather than a flapped pocket in the front as one would suspect? Either that or it's got a VERY high slit up the side.

**\****Purists may balk at my use of such a late picture, but since the slop contracts for the period up to 1748 are almost identical to those from 1706 there seems little reason to assume that their appearance changed much.*

In your picture of the "British Hercules" little weight should be paid to the position of the "hand in the pocket." Illustrators of the time were notorious theives (pyrates?) swiping ideas right and left. The original image that the illustrator used is from some account of the Farnese Hercules:



The statue dates from the fourth century B.C. Although the image is reversed, the pose, hair, beard and modeling of features is the same. That the artist called the illustration "British Hercules" denotes that he would have had to have seen the statue or some depiction of it and that the statue was famous enough at that time that others would make the connection. Note the hand hidden behind the figure. Another example of why illustrations from this period can be very misleading.

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 4, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160717) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160717)

Yar, I'm familiar with the Farnese statue - even if I wasn't it has already been mentioned.

What made me wonder about pockets though was the fact that the artist *could* very easily have drawn the seaman's hand behind his back on the outside of the coat (as one would expect if he were simply "dressing" the statue), but he didn't, he slipped it neatly inside the coat.

Having said that, I'm coming to the view that he hasn't got his hand in a mythical pocket - though that doesn't mean that he doesn't have a pocket. Indeed, if he *is* wearing a slop waiscoat then there must be a pocket let into the side seam, there certainly isn't one on the front panel.

[**Slopmaker Cripps**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1522-slopmaker-cripps/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 137 posts
* Interests:Maritime Living History<br>Slopmaking<br>Tailoring

[Posted January 4, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=160949) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=160949)

GoF,

I only have two seconds to post here, so unfortunately I can't continue in the discussion this evening. However, if you shoot me an email, I'll try and get back to you as soon as I can. As for Burnley and Trowbridge, the Burnleys are personal friends of mine .

Cheers,

Adam C., Slop-man

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

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

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

[Posted January 6, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=161563) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=161563)

 Quote

And the waistcoats used smaller buttons and really had all the buttons on the fronts, as they were of the sleeveless variety. You never see a set of sleeves underneath the open cuffs on a sailors jacket except the sleeves of the shirt (if I'm mistaken, I'd love to see a picture showing sleeves between the shirt and the jacket!).

Adam

I just noticed this picture (or i just noticed this IN the picture)



The figure on the left *looks* to have a buttoned coat under his short jacket. Am i seeing it wrong? To me it looks like his short jacket is opended to the waist, but that there is another "buttoned" garmet under it.

Also, dig the little watch fob pockets on the two guys on the left's thighs... what is that all about?

Lastly, what size would you say is a good size for short jacket buttons? I am thinking about 1/2 inch... what say you???

GoF

[**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 January 6, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=161609) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=161609)

1/2 to 3/4 inch would work. No bigger, though.

This is what I'm seeing in the picture, Greg: a guy looking like he's wearing a 19th century waistcoat and cutaway jacket!

Of course we know the provenance of this illustration, so we know that not to be true.

Therefore, it must be some kind of short waistcoat about which we have yet seen nothing.

In the early 17th century, knitted waistcoats were worn under clothing for the purposes of warmth. Charles I wore one to his execution (so he wouldn't shiver and thereby appear cowardly!). It's in the V&A, I believe. It's body-hugging and meant to be worn under the shirt and tucked into the breeches.

I'm wondering if this thing that looks like a short waistcoat is something longer that's tucked into the pants for some reason. Perhaps he simply has no shirt on over it? Or maybe he's wearing it in an unconventional fashion?

Wouldn't base a seaman's outfit on this guy, though. That's my policy: "Make Not The Rare Common Nor The Common Rare"

Damn, he looks 19thc though...

Kass

[**Slopmaker Cripps**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1522-slopmaker-cripps/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 137 posts
* Interests:Maritime Living History<br>Slopmaking<br>Tailoring

[Posted January 6, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=161701) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=161701)

Greg,

If you play around with the picture, what you're seeing under the jacket sleeve is his shirt. It's a window-pane checked pattern. There is two vertical and one horizontal bar visible in the drawing. He's wearing a typical sleevless waistcoat underneath the jacket (the necklines were cut higher in the ealier part of the century on the weskit instead of dropped down the chest later on). Kass is right on the button size, though my personal recommendation is 5/8" flat brass or the rim-less brass dome buttons as they seem to be what I run into most often when collecting info. Do note this is for the short jackets with fewer buttons, whereas the smaller sizes like Kass mentioned is for the jackets you see with half a million (not literall) smaller ones (circa 1/2 inch). I doubt those are watch fobs, but they appear to me to be triangular shaped pockets that were cut out of the main trouser material, the pocket stitched in, then the flap pulled over the hole and buttoned. I drafted a pattern for those trousers (which is somewhere around here...my patterns got moved around in the move a few months ago), but haven't had a chance to test them out. As for the jackets, they are just work jackets similar to the sleeved waistcoat. Notice the split on the side-seam at the bottom of the guy presenting his case, just like waistcoats. As for the waistcoat, it is of the shorter variety falling around the trousers waistband, yet not to further as the jacket falls circa 3" (estimate) below the waist. I doubt it's tucked in, as I have never heard of or seen anything about tucking in a waistcoat (except for the knit under-waistcoat Kass mentioned, which I haven't found anything about sailors wearing....yet...), though we can not get a definitive answer either way since the buttons we're seeing through the guys arms belong to the jacket and not the waistcoat. He's wearing his clothes in typical sailor fashion of buttoning the bottom half of the coat buttons, and leaving the top open to expose the waistcoat, shirt, and neckerchief in the breast area. So, whether it's tucked in or not, we don't know definitively since he's got his jacket buttoned overtop, though I seriously doubt it's tucked in.

Kass,

I guess I'm not seeing what you are, but I don't see much 19th century about him. The waistcoat, if 19th century would have had a standing collar (not seeing it) up until the 1820's-1830's, and after that would have a shawl collar (that I'm not seeing either). Up above the neckline is his neckerchief which is covering his shirt collar (which was usually a standing collar on sailors shirts coincidentally). What are you seeing that makes you believe it's 19th century in style? I truly am interested, as I also do 19th century and you may know something (that you're seeing) I have never heard of.

Cheers,

Adam C., Slop-man

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 6, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=161710) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=161710)

SO I've got myself a bigger version of that picture, and blown it up as far as I reasonably can, and mucked about with the contrast and whatnot to crisp up the lines a bit, and I gotta tell you I'm damned if I can make out anything under his coat sleeves in enough detail to say with any confidence what it is.

I'm not saying that it's a waistcoat, or a shirt cuff, or an elephant, there just ain't enough detail to tell. 

[**Slopmaker Cripps**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1522-slopmaker-cripps/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 137 posts
* Interests:Maritime Living History<br>Slopmaking<br>Tailoring

[Posted January 6, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=161717) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=161717)

Foxe,

Thanks for giving it a shot. I wish my computer would stop being a \_itch and allow me to post and email pics (so I can share details pics). It is very hard with all the clutter there, but I'll tell you how I came to the conclusion that I did. I'll start from the top and go down. Just in front of the cuff and right behind his thumb is a small triangle of white. Just below that and seperated by a horizontal dark line, behind the shirt cuff and before the jacket cuff, there are two squares with a distinct dark line seperating them vertically. Below the two white squares, there's another horizontal distinct dark line with a white triangle beneath it, on the hand side of the vertical, and before the cuff. Where another white square would be, on the jacket cuff side of the vertical, the artist decided to sketch in some shadowing and the area is darkened along with the area under the armpit, side, and upper thigh area of the trousers. The artist would not have left these squares and triangles white unless he's trying to represent a pattern (which in this case looks just like window pane check, which is period and seen on other artwork and described in deserter ads etc). The artist also distinctly darkened the shirt cuff so as to contrast with the patterned part of the shirt coming out from under the cuff, which also gives us another example the narrow cuff widths used on early style sailors shirts. I still stand by my belief that it's a window-pane checked linen shirt for the time being.

Cheers,

Adam C., Slop-man

P.S. I also play with a magnifying glass a lot......:-)

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 6, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=161758) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=161758)

**On Sleeveless Waistcoats**

I must confess to being a little bothered by the assertion that ASC waistcoats (and indeed seamen's waistcoats in general) were always sleeveless. If we look at this 1689 picture of a seaman from Admiral Torrington's achievement of arms we can see that the garment he is wearing quite definitely has sleeves:



This picture is quite an important one, because unlike most others we also have a contemporary description of what he's wearing, not just our own interpretations:

 Quote

"...a waistcoat, buttoned, azure; wide breeches argent, double striped crosswise crimson; hose and shoes sable; neckcloth silver..."

The question is whether he is wearing slop garments or not. I believe the most recent set of ASC specs prior to 1689 was that of 1672, which included "blue suits". Of course, we don't know what form those blue suits took, but in 1690 blue suits were still on the list at 5s. The 1699 list also includes blue suits at 5s, and describes them as including "waistcoats", but no coats - coats are dealt with elsewhere in the list, an arrangement perhaps similar to the 1706 sets of matching red breeches and waistcoats and non-matching coats. There is, then, a reasonably good chance that our figure is wearing a slop waistcoat. In addition, all the other garments he is wearing can be found in the ASC specs of the later 17thC (striped suits at 11s6d, red caps at 1s1d etc. even his rather natty collar might well be one of the "French falls" which we know were issued as slops in the 1670s at 5s) IF he is wearing slop clothing then we have evidence of sleeved waistcoats prior to 1705 in the ASC specs, if he is not then we still have evidence of seamen wearing sleeved waistcoats.

I'm not suggesting for a minute that this proves the 1706 and subsequent ASC spec waistcoats had sleeves, but it certainly throws doubt on any statement that they definitely didn't.

Also, although we've discussed this privately it hasn't been thrown open to public debate: this painting (which has already been posted but it's on a different page) clearly shows two men aboard ship wearing apparently identical ticking waistcoats, with sleeves. The mere fact that they are the same suggests a common source, and the most obvious common source of clothing for men aboard ships is the purser's packs of slop clothing.



It might be argued that the men in the captain's cabin are probably officers, but there are two obvious objections: firstly, neither of them are wearing what might be called fashionable clothes as one would expect officers to be, and the fellow standing at right is wearing a very tatty looking round hat; and secondly, there was not, so far as I am aware, any rule prohibiting officers from buying and wearing slop clothing anyway.

Personally I suspect, because of the way they are dressed and because they are the only two figures without chairs, that the two men in ticking waistcoats are warrant/petty officers - working men like a boatswain or a gunner, rather than commissioned officers like lieutenants. Alternatively it may be that they are commissioned officers, but they are clearly not wearing their "best" clothes and are probably in their working gear. Without a more detailed contemporary description it is not possible to tell for certain whether they are wearing slop clothing, but the fact that their waistcoats are identical certainly does suggest a common source. Whether they are warrant/petty officers or commissioned officers in working gear there is no reason to suppose that that common source is not the Admiralty spec slop clothing, and reasonable grounds for supposing that it might be.

As before, even if they can positively be shown not to be wearing slop clothing (which they cannot) it does at least show seamen of the era in question wearing sleeved waistcoats.

There is nothing like enough conclusive evidence to say with any certainty that ASC spec waistcoats had sleeves, but neither IMHO is there enough to say that they certainly didn't. :)

One other point: although the ASC's in theory represented the specific garments which were allowed to be supplied to ships and sold by pursers of the RN we know from supply documents that other non-regulation garments were also supplied. The French falls mentioned earlier do not appear on any ASC specs, but we know they were issued; similarly in 1725, for example, we see "under waistcoats" being supplied by William Franklin the slop seller. Is it inconceivable that these "under waistcoats" were sleeveless while the ASC spec waistcoats were not?

[**Slopmaker Cripps**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1522-slopmaker-cripps/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 137 posts
* Interests:Maritime Living History<br>Slopmaking<br>Tailoring

[Posted January 7, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=161828) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=161828)

Foxe,

I need to get to bed, as I have to report at 0800 this morning for my coast guard duties.....so, I'll have to make this short.

What I was talking about with the sleeveless waistcoats had to do with the sailor on the far left of the sketch earlier, not sailors in general. Only general comment I made had to do with the neckline. I understand you're trying to leave options open on the ASC, but I was referring to the specific picture and not all sailors as a whole (saving that for some later publications). I'll try and get back online and comment on your post here in the next few days. This is always one of the busiest times of the year for me!

Cheers,

Adam C., Slop-man

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

* The sailor's sailor
* 
* 
* 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 January 10, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=163012) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=163012)

I started making a sort of 1706 slops contract Jacket.....

Shrunck Grey Kersey Jackett, lined with Red Cotton, with fifteen Brass Buttons, and two Pockets of Linnen, the Button Holes stich’d with Gold Colour Thread, at Ten Shillings and Sixpence each

(Shrunck appears to mean water-resistant. Kersey is a very coarse cheap wool)

I'm basing the pattern off of the back view of the sailor watching a hanging.... and the picture that Foxe posted one page back.... (I think it was labled A...) Basicaly it is a modified version of my last Jacket, and I am making a few changes to it so it will be more period correct...(I found out what I did wrong on the last one...), but using my old jacket to draft a pattern.... (well.... marking it with soap on the cloth......)

I'm making it out of a grey Navy blanket that I got at a yard sale for $3.00, and lining it with red cotton ($2.00 per yard...) and some linnen scrap for the pockets....

I have the body and the pockets cut out. I'm cheating and machine sewing it, but hand finishing all of the outside seams (the ones that you can see).... I have one of the pockets and pocket flap sewn, but decided to work on the other side's pocket tomarrow.......

I'm pleased that the blanket, isn't as thick as I thought it would be.... when I topstitched the first pocket, it came out much better than I thought using a blanket would be...... It's only a little heaver than the Kersey that was used for Uniforms when I did American Civil War reenactments.......

The Red lining on the Grey, looks realy good..... I will have to take some pictures of the jacket parts, and as I'm putting it together.....

The reason I call it a sort of 1706 slop contract jacket, is that I'm guessing on a lot of the parts and assembly.... working from pictures..... But it should be warm...... 

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

* The sailor's sailor
* 
* 
* 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 January 11, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=163131) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=163131)

I think I will move the pictures and how I'm making the jacket into plunder.....

start a new topic.... so we can continue discussing the slops contract info here.... without my aditional .....clutter... 

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

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

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

[Posted January 11, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=163184) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=163184)

Wow.. Pat, how bizzare.

 Quote

I'm basing the pattern off of the back view of the sailor watching a hanging.... and the picture that Foxe posted one page back.... (I think it was labled A...) Basicaly it is a modified version of my last Jacket, and I am making a few changes to it so it will be more period correct...(I found out what I did wrong on the last one...), but using my old jacket to draft a pattern.... (well.... marking it with soap on the cloth......)

I say this because I have been working on a similar coat (for the last 5 months and I have used the SAME picture for my refrence. I also am making/made it out of a blanket... though it was "tan", now that it is in the shape of the jacket (I just have to finnish hand sewing 6 more button holes!) it looks.... "pinkish".

The shrunk kersey.

Devil of a time finding real kersey. Most of the ACW suttlers that have it (and most don't) don't sell the material and those that do seem to want upwards of $30 a yard.

But I think that Shrunk kersey is much like you are describing. I am betting that it is sort of "fulled" to make the weave even closer/water resistant. You can "full" it yourself by throwing it in the washing machine on warm setting with a little detergent.

My suspect about the red cotton though is that it ain't cotton like we know it. They used the term cotton in the 17th/18th century to mean a nappy kind of wool as well.... nappy as in fibers fuzzy on the surface.

Anyone else have any thoughts on that without starting the infamous cotton wars?

GoF

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

* The sailor's sailor
* 
* 
* 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 January 12, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=163469) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=163469)

 Quote

My suspect about the red cotton though is that it ain't cotton like we know it. They used the term cotton in the 17th/18th century to mean a nappy kind of wool as well.... nappy as in fibers fuzzy on the surface.

Well I figure that even if it was cotton as we now know it, well....... thats why I said it is semi-period..... What I'm using was inexpensive.... without the brass buttons, I have less than $10.00 in materials. 

I can't remember where I read it, but it said that cotton came mostly from India, and England didn't want any compitition with thiere linen trade...... so I'm guessing that cotton was around. looking through the slops contracts, there was a lot of clothing made from cotton... but shirts are still linen......

I'd like to know more about period use of cotton also.......

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 16, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=164718) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=164718)

**On paper patterns**:

While looking for somehting completely different I just found

[this from the Concealed Garments site](http://search.concealedgarments.org/results.jsp?view=detail&pos=3&id=1551).

A bit late, but patterns cut from newspaper (hey, I do that!) in 1752.

[**Slopmaker Cripps**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1522-slopmaker-cripps/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 137 posts
* Interests:Maritime Living History<br>Slopmaking<br>Tailoring

[Posted January 17, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=164923) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=164923)

Foxe,

I should have worded that as commercially available paper patterns.

Sorry for not getting back into the discussion, but I'm lucky to get time to sleep at night anymore. Anyway, I should be back in a few months once summer gets here.....

Cheers,

Adam

P.S. Anyone is welcome to email me at provincialnavy@yahoo.com though I can't guarantee when/if I can get back to you.

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 17, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=164926) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=164926)

Well, I've definitely seen late 17thC paper tailors' pattern so I don't see any reason why the slop makers shouldn't have had them - don't see any reason why they *should* either...

I really posted the link as a curiosity item. It made me chuckle to think that people were making their patterns out of newspaper 250 years ago too 

[**michaelsbagley**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3724-michaelsbagley/)

* Smells Like Wet Sheep
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,548 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Columbus, Ohio
* Interests:Mostly into GAoP, but starting to develop more Buccaneer era stuff for re-enacting as well. Generally I do re-enact both piratical/nautical and other impressions from the period. I am focusing on more "common" impressions from the period (i.e. average sailor/pirate, rank and file Red Coat, early Colonial huntsman, etc.)

[Posted September 25, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=285621) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=285621)

Bump...

An oldie but a goodie. 

So I've been looking at the slop contracts lately thinking of adding some slop contract clothing items to my slowly growing collection of period garments from the era.... And one item that keep throwing me for a loop is mention of "black buttons" on waistcoats and breeches in the a few iterations of the Slop contracts.

What are "black buttons"?

Are "black buttons" a reference to heavily leaded pewter? It would not be truly black, but much darker than the "white Tinn Buttons".

I seem to recall a discussion about these on a forum, and I thought it was either this Forum or the Pirate Brethren forum, but searches on both forums have not provided me with any good results. And I seem to also vaguely recall someone suggestion horn buttons as a possibility of what "black buttons" may have been. No offence to whomever may have put forth this suggestion, but it doesn't "feel" right to me. But I'm asking here, so obviously, I have no clue. 

Are there any other theories out there? Even better, is there any reasonable evidence as to what might have been meant by "black buttons"?

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

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

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

[Posted October 3, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=286317) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=286317)

Good question

From looking at period pictures, the buttons would either be

1)metal with shank

2)cloth buttons

3)thread buttons, like dorset buttons.

1)Metal

When they talk about "white tinn" it usually means pewter. "Gold" buttons would probably mean brass.

If "black buttons" were metal... maybe they were painted metal. I don't feel great about that, but its the only thing I can think of.

I have a collection of original buttons (not necessarily naval), but from the GAoP era, and they are either pewter, brass, or bronze (and a very few are silver).

By far, the majority that I have are pewter (white tinn). None of them show any evidence of ever being painted.

2) Cloth buttons

They still used a lot of cloth buttons in the GAoP as evidenced by period pictures. These would probably be made the same way they were made in the 16th.17th century... here is an example

<http://www.vertetsable.com/demos_buttons.htm>

The gunnister man's clothing (Short Jacket, Justaucorps, and Shirt) all had cloth covered wood buttons.

3) Thread buttons.

This is a specific style of button, so i think it would be noted as such in the ASC if that is what they meant... something like "15 black dorsett buttons..", but since we don't see that, I say its the least likely possibility.

PS

Yes, this is a great thread.... I very much enjoyed re-reading it and am glad to say most of the players are still here at the pub.

GoF

[**michaelsbagley**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3724-michaelsbagley/)

* Smells Like Wet Sheep
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,548 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Columbus, Ohio
* Interests:Mostly into GAoP, but starting to develop more Buccaneer era stuff for re-enacting as well. Generally I do re-enact both piratical/nautical and other impressions from the period. I am focusing on more "common" impressions from the period (i.e. average sailor/pirate, rank and file Red Coat, early Colonial huntsman, etc.)

[Posted May 6, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=355018) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=355018)

Bump again, because it has come up in a paralell thread,

[**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 May 6, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=355025) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=355025)

How about... horn?



[**Matty Bottles**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/949-matty-bottles/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 891 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Milwaukee, WI
* Interests:Writing, Art, Spending exorbinant amounts of money on action figures, rum, murder.

[Posted May 6, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=355057) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=355057)

 blackjohn said:

How about... horn?



I use horn buttons - *they* hold up, but oddly the thread doesn't. I think that sharp edges of the thread holes in the buttons wear at the thread until it breaks. However, I make no claim that the buttons I wear (mostly from William Booth - a great guy, BTW, whose I recommend to anyone) are *manufactured* in the same manner as the originals. Without that, I won't say that the originals suffer the same problem. But the buttons themselves have never broken. In fact, they are sort of flexible. Sort of.

[**michaelsbagley**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3724-michaelsbagley/)

* Smells Like Wet Sheep
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,548 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Columbus, Ohio
* Interests:Mostly into GAoP, but starting to develop more Buccaneer era stuff for re-enacting as well. Generally I do re-enact both piratical/nautical and other impressions from the period. I am focusing on more "common" impressions from the period (i.e. average sailor/pirate, rank and file Red Coat, early Colonial huntsman, etc.)

[Posted October 6, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=370580) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=370580)

I found the below quote [in this edition of the London Gazette dated to March 1713](http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/5205/pages/2). I did a little work in the below quote fixing the optical character recognition errors, but some of the stuff is so fuzzy one can only guess as to what it should be.

While the described clothes are seemingly for sailors who are retired (pensioners), I am seeing a lot of parallels to the slops contracts in this (which is why I posted this here). It seems old sailors who lived to retire were expected to die wearing the same things they wore their entire lives. 

 Quote

The Directors of the Royal Hospital for Seamen at

Greenwich, do hereby give notice, That any Persons who

desire to Cloth the Pensioners of the said Hospital, may

bring their Proposals in Writing, Seal'd up, for Suits

of Coat, Waistcoat and Breeches, to the said Directors,

at their Meeting on the 25th Instant at 10 in the Fore-

noon, at Dr. Mapletofi's House behind St. Lawrence

Church, near Guildhall, and they may view the Pattern

Suit, by which the said Cloths must be made, every Day

at the Steward's Lodging in the said Hospital.

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 October 7, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=370632) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=370632)

The Greenwich pensioners included not only those too old to be useful on a ship, but also those too injured or recovering from sickness. The Pensioners' uniforms would be easier to recreate as there are plenty of pictures, and they remained more or less the same until very late.

Point of interest: the Greenwich Hospital was built, in part, with funds recovered from Capt. Kidd.

[**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 October 7, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=370647) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=370647)

 On 10/7/2009 at 2:52 AM, Foxe said:

Point of interest: the Greenwich Hospital was built, in part, with funds recovered from Capt. Kidd.

Say, that *is* interesting. Thanks! (That's going into my notes. Got a reference I can cite?)

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 October 8, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=370785) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=370785)

I could probably find a better reference if I wasn't so damned lazy.

Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates* (Harvard U.P., 1986, paperback ed.) pp. 232-233

Incidentally, Ritchie's biography is far better than Zacks'.

[**callenish gunner**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1944-callenish-gunner/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,138 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Pennsylvania mountains north of Clarion
* Interests:The Callenish gunner has just hoved into view looking for safe anchorage in these waters... purveyor of bladed and flintlock weaponry also leather accessories ..........painter of portraits and period scenes by avocation I'm getting my armoury business underway and will be doing as many festivals as I can ...right now along the east coast or great lakes

[Posted October 10, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=370980) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=370980)

**Since as pensioners and they would be remaining on land don't you think their clothing would be of the sort landlubbers or common citizens might be wearing rather than sailor's clothing. To assume that men would wear sailor's clothes once they were no longer going to sea might be a stretch, since their is no mention that these suits should match admiralty slops contract which would be within the scope of contract tailors knowledge. Just a thought toward not making assumptions.**

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* 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 October 10, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=370983) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=370983)

Absolutely. From the mid-18thC at least the pensioners' uniform consisted of navy-blue breeches, waistcoat, and long coat, topped with a black tricorn.

[**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 August 4, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=402113) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=402113)

While reading through Rodger's *Command of the Ocean* I found a paragraph on slops on pages 190-91. A lot of it is redundant with what Gentleman of Fortune put in his first post, but a couple of items contain additional detail, such as the mention of shoes having buckles. I didn't read every word in the thread, but I skimmed and this doesn't appear to have been posted yet, so here goes.

 Quote

There was another sort of problem with slop contracts. Good, stout working clothes were essential to seamen's well-being, and as commissions increased in length,it became necessary to make them available aboard ship. These slops were supplied by contractors, issued by the purser and charged against men's wages. In the 1690s they included blue waistcoats and kersey jackets, white 'petticoat breeches' (a sort of canvas divided skirt) with red stripes, red caps and white neckcloths. Richard Harnage's 1706 contract specified grey kersey jackets lined with red cotton, fifteen brass buttons and the 'buttonholes stitched with gold-coloured thread'; red kersey breeches, red flannel waistcoats, red or striped shag breeches, blue and white check linen shirts, linen drawers, leather caps, grey woollen stockings, gloves and mittens, shoes and brass buckles. In 1711 the range of sizes was increased from three to four, each bale of fifty suits being made up of eight of the smallest size, then seventeen, seventeen, and finally eight of the largest. It suited the Navy to draw contracts by which the clothes were shipped at the contractors' risk until the moment they were issued, though the bales passed out of their control as soon as they were delivered to the Navy Board. Aboard ship they were subject to many hazards: 'he verily believes it is impossible for pursers to prevent such damage, but that slops will become damnified either by the rats eating them or by water coming to them in leaky ships and in hot countries.'45 Though pursers were allowed one shilling in the pound on slops issued undamaged, it was the contractor who bore most of the risk, with no control over conditions of storage. Damaged slops were returned for full credit in large and unpredictable quantities, 'so eaten or rotten that it hath not been presently discoverable whether the remains were parts of waistcoats or parts of breeches.46 What was issued was paid for long in arrears; in 1709 Harnage was owed £44,553 9s 1d for three years' supplies. So onerous were the terms of this business that no one would undertake it but by selling shoddy slops (as it was complained) at high prices. Public money was saved, and the risk was offloaded on to the contractor, but in the process the actual object of the exercise was lost sight of: giving the men access to the good clothes at fair prices which they needed.47

His endnotes, on page 679:

 Quote

45 PRO: E 134/1 Geo I/Hil/27; Deposition of William Franklin, 10 Jan 1714/5.

46 PRO: E 134/2 Geo I/Mich/27; Deposition of Nathaniel Cutler, 23 Nov 1715.

47 Merriman, *Queen Anne's Navy,* pp. 191-2. Ehrman, *Navy,* pp. 121-4. Manwaring, 'Dress of the British Seaman'. PRO: E 134/13 Anne/Trin/10, 1 Geo I/Hil/27 and 2 Geo I/Mich/27, depositions in suit Braddyl, Gough and Dawsonne con Franklyn.

PRO means Public Record Office, so you pretty well have to be in the UK to get at some of these sources.

Notice that at this time the contracts were not in fact Admiralty at all. Rather, the Navy Board was entirely responsible for these contracts to supply the pursers, the Admiralty now being at the lowest ebb of its power and responsibility.

[**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 August 4, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=402130) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=402130)

I actually have a copy of the Queen Annes Navy book by Merriman and the details of the slops contract are from a letter from the Lord High Admiral to the Captains and Masters and Commanders of H.M. Ships and vessels.

Interestingly I was also just reading Journals of the House of Commons, Volume 12 which mentions proceedings bought against Richard Harnage for his refusal to account for where the money went that was given to him for a contract to cloth the Army. This was in 1697 though so obviously his accounts were proved to be kosher else he wouldn't have got the contract for the Navy slops in 1706. He was also mentioned several times as an agent (this may mean accountant?) for the Marquis of Camarthen's regiment of marines who had refused to pay members of the regiment their dues. All in All he sounds like a bit of a dodgy character

Ahhh further reading suggests that by 1705 he was rich and a member of parliament. No wonder he got the slops contracts.

The Navy's accounts for the year 1715 show he was paid over £7000 for what I assume was the 1715 Slops contract <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=85260>

**Edited August 4, 2011 by PoD**

[**Matty Bottles**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/949-matty-bottles/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 891 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Milwaukee, WI
* Interests:Writing, Art, Spending exorbinant amounts of money on action figures, rum, murder.

[Posted August 9, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=findComment&comment=402186) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/4425-the-admiralty-slop-contracts/&do=reportComment&comment=402186)

I'm so glad I don't have to bump this. I was just at an event and I stopped by the sign of the unicorn, and what do I see?

Shirt-weight linen, window-pane checked in blue. [It's half way down this page](http://www.wmboothdraper.com/Linen/linens_checks.htm):

Man, I have been looking for this tuff for YEARS. I had a lead on some cotton checked with blue from a later period that I was going to take a chance on, but it was discontinued before I could waste my money.