

ROBERTS, BARTHOLOMEW [originally JOHN] (1682? - 1722), pirate

Name: Bartholomew Roberts
Date of birth: 1682?
Date of death: 1722
Gender: Male
Occupation: pirate
Area of activity: Anti-Establishment
Author: William Jenkyn Thomas

Born in Pembrokeshire. In 1718, when he was second mate on the *Princess*, his ship was captured by the Welsh pirate, Howel Davis, and he was forced to serve under his captor. When Davis was killed, Roberts, who in six weeks had shown great courage and resourcefulness, was elected captain. He accepted, saying that since he had dipped his hands in muddy water it was better to be commander than a common man. Notoriety came speedily. He sailed into a fleet of forty-two Portuguese ships, ascertained which was the richest, boarded, and sailed off with her. Soon he struck terror everywhere. When he entered a harbour in Newfoundland, their crews abandoned the twenty-two ships there. After successes, the pirates went ashore at places like Surinam and Sierra Leone, indulging wild debauchery until their resources were exhausted. Not that success was unbroken; once at least they were long in extremities for want of provisions and water. One of their finest captures was a frigate built ship of the Royal African Company. Roberts renamed her the *Royal Fortune*. Captain Chaloner Ogle, R.N., managed to bring her to battle off Cape Lopez.

Roberts was killed (10 February 1722), and his body, in all its pirate finery, thrown overboard, as he had previously requested. His crew then surrendered. Bold as pirate captains were, Roberts's calculated daring was exceptional. In a drink-sodden and blood-stained community he was comparatively temperate and humane.

Author

William Jenkyn Thomas, (1871 - 1959)

Sources

Charles Johnson, *A general history of the robberies & murders of the most notorious pirates* (1724?), 1724

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Further Reading

WalesOnline: [The Welsh pirate of the Caribbean](#)

ODNB: [Roberts, Bartholomew](#)

BBC cymrufyw: [Y môr-ladron Cymreig](#) (accessed August 2019)

Wikipedia Article: [Bartholomew Roberts](#)

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