



THE
TWYCLIFFE
SYPHON
Patent

COMBINATION No. 50. £ 18 15 0

"TWYCLIFFE"

PATENT
SYPHON
W.C.
BASIN.

MADE
IN
ROYAL
"C.V."
Porcelain,
WHITE
or
IVORY.

Combining
W.C.
BASIN &
URINAL.

COMBINATION No. 51.

"Twycliffe," including Porcelain Basin, white or ivory, "Corinthian" Pattern in Relief, No. 1, page 4, with Paper Box to match; C Connection to outlet, Brass Connection to Supply Pipe; Mahogany Seat with Flap, Best Quality, attached to Basin; Three-gallon Syphon Cistern, mahogany casing, "Corinthian" Pattern in Relief, decorated Blue and Gold to match Basin, with Brass Syphon, noiseless fitting and Brass Brackets; Strong Copper Chain Pull and Gun Metal Guide Ring; 6-ft. 1 1/2-in. (186 cm) Brass Flush Pipe and Clips ... £12 5 0

With Brackets, Guide Ring, Flush Pipe and Clips, Plated ... £13 0 0

Do. in White Metal £14 10 0

Cistern, Porcelain casing, "Corinthian" Pattern in Relief to match Basin, £12 16 0

COMBINATION No. 50.

"Twycliffe," including Basin, with "Corinthian" Pattern in Relief, decorated Blue and Gold, No. 25, page 4, with Paper Box to match; C Connection to outlet, Brass Connection to Supply Pipe; Mahogany Seat with Flap, Best Quality, attached to Basin; Three-gallon Syphon Cistern, Porcelain casing, "Corinthian" Pattern in Relief, decorated Blue and Gold to match Basin, with Brass Syphon, noiseless fitting and Brass Brackets; Strong Copper Chain Pull and Gun Metal Guide Ring; 6-ft. 1 1/2-in. (186 cm) Brass Flush Pipe and Clips ... £18 15 0

With Brackets, Guide Ring, Flush Pipe and Clips, Plated ... £19 10 0

Do. in White Metal £21 0 0

NEW CENTURY PATTERN,
EMBRACING ALL LATEST IMPROVEMENTS.

Advantages claimed for the "TWYCLIFFE" Syphon.

Perfect Safeguard against sewer gas and the evils arising therefrom. Guaranteed to stand Smoke Test.	Practically noiseless in action.
Extra large water surface and great depth of water seal, with large body of water in Basin, to receive and deodorise soil.	Simple in construction, reliable in action.
	No complicated mechanism to get out of order.
	Easily fixed as an ordinary Basin.

A HIGH-CLASS ARTICLE OF SUPERIOR MATERIAL, WORKMANSHIP AND CONSTRUCTION.

All the Fittings and Working Arrangements of these W.C. Combinations are warranted to be thoroughly practical in detail. The Fittings having been designed and thoroughly tested in action by experienced Engineers at our Works. A guarantee sent with each Basin.

At your convenience

It might be the smallest room in the house and the butt of many a joke, but it is surely one of the most revealing. Bronwen Riley investigates the smartest loos in the land

ON arrival at a friend's parents' house in the deepest Massif Central, the writer John Cornwell summoned up his best prep-school French to ask discreetly for *les toilettes*. Taking him straight back out of the front door, his hostess exclaimed,



with a dramatic sweep of her arm over the surrounding landscape: '*Mais vous avez toute la France!*'

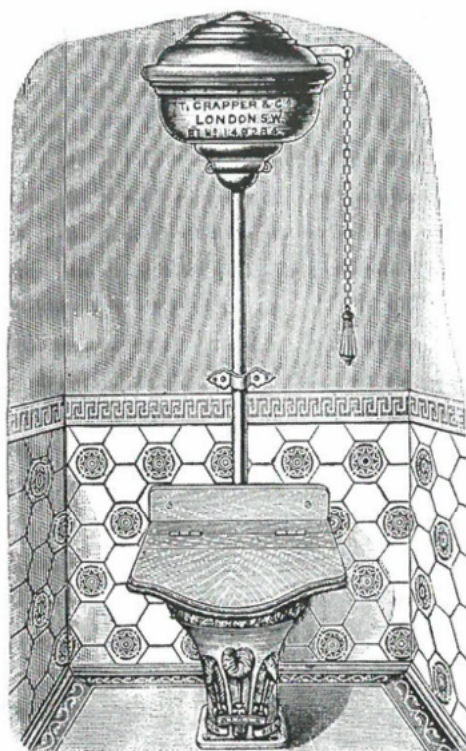
That was the 1970s, when French plumbing (indeed, foreign plumbing of any persuasion) provoked much English sniggering, squeamishness and outright



Clockwise from above: Twyford's bathroom and sanitary equipment in a lavishly illustrated catalogue; an advertisement for Crapper's flush-down water closet; 18th-century inventor Joseph Bramah; a bourdalou decorated with floral sprays

dismay. The horrors of the *pissoir*, *petit coin* and other cabinets of horrors remain part of the stock repertoire of British travellers' tales for anyone over the age of 45.

British plumbing was still resting on its 19th-century laurels, having reached its apogee of comfort and convenience during the Regency, according to architectural



CRAPPER'S

Improved

Registered Ornamental

Flush-down W.C.

With New Design Cast-iron Syphon Water Waste Preventer.

No 518.

Improved Ornamental Flush-down W.C. Basin (Registered No. 145,823), Polished Mahogany Seat with flap, New Pattern 3-gallon Cast-iron Syphon Cistern (Rd. No. 149,284), Brass Flushing Pipe and Clips, and Pendant Pull, complete as shown ... £6 15 0

historian Mark Girouard. Then, the English nobility were the envy of their Continental contemporaries, enjoying flushing water closets, bathrooms en suite and hot and cold running servants at the touch of a mechanised bell-pull.

Inventor and locksmith Joseph Bramah had patented an improved version of a water closet with valve and S-bend in 1778, which made him a household name for the best part of 100 years, until a flurry of innovations later in the 19th century by firms that are still familiar today. Dent & Hellyer's Optimus (1870) boasted a quieter flush and illustrious patrons, including assorted British royals, the Tsar of Russia and the King of Siam.

George Jennings produced the first stand-alone ceramic pedestal version (not encased in wood) in 1881. Similarly, Twyford's, Doultons, Thomas Crapper, Humpherson and Shanks all vied for custom with lavishly illustrated catalogues bursting with innovative engineering, highly decorative sanitary ware and Royal and Imperial Warrants.

Remarkably, the modern lavatory has retained the basic shape and workings of its late-Victorian counterparts, although it has become regrettably plainer and more

short-lived. No wonder the owners of its more decorative ancestors hold onto them, however temperamental they may have grown in old age.

In his Regency house near Kirkby Lonsdale in Cumbria, Henry Bowring has three Edwardian installations with splendid levers, helpfully instructing you to LIFT to flush, all by Doultons. 'I am very fond of them,

although they require a great deal of maintenance,' he divulges.

'The levers look robust, but their mechanisms are delicate, so they require a lightness of touch to prevent them flushing indefinitely.'

The late Eric Till, a doctor and local historian in Stamford, Lincolnshire, also had flushing issues, albeit purely because he taught his cat to pull the lavatory chain with its tail. The cat was so proud of its achievement that it pulled the chain the whole day long and, eventually, Dr Till had to

keep the door shut, much to the cat's disappointment. It was Dr Girouard who told me about his friend Dr Till's performing cat on a memorable visit to Old Wardour Castle, Wiltshire—even if he was tantalisingly vague about a nearby manor house 'where there was, and probably still is, a lavatory seat modelled to fit the bottom of some countess who >





Above: The plush surroundings of Queen Victoria's railway-carriage loo. **Left:** George Jennings, one of the pioneers of sanitary science, patented his washout closet in 1852

lived there'. Our conversation had taken this turn because Wardour is renowned in the annals of loo history as being the place where Sir John Harington first had the idea for a water closet, in 1592. He built at least three, giving one to his godmother, Elizabeth I. However, they didn't catch on and the Court kept to its portable close stools—chamber pots encased in chests, fancily decorated with velvet, lace, fringes or ribbons—until improvements were made in the late 17th century.

Even in the grandest houses, where water closets were installed from the late 1600s and often lavishly fitted out in marble with japanned seats, they were still liable to smell and clog up. Until the invention of the S-bend and Bramah's valve a century later, 'the little house' in the garden was often preferable to indoor WCs. Garden buildings, such as banqueting houses, were also provided with separate privies for the use of visitors, discreetly and often exquisitely built in the ➤

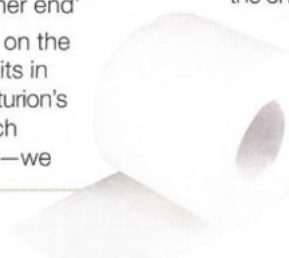


The best seat in the house

- Medieval latrines weren't always as bleak and draughty as you might imagine: John Russell's 15th-century *Boke of Nurture* instructs servants in the households of the nobility to ensure the 'house of easement be sweet and clean', to cover the 'privy board' (wooden seat) with a green cloth and a cushion, and to make sure that there was a supply of 'blanket, cotton or linen to wipe the nether end'
- Did the Romans read on the loo? 'Among the deposits in a latrine drain from a centurion's lodging—very wet, which ensured their existence—we

found a fragment of an ink tablet with a line from Virgil's *Georgics*, 1.125. I will let your imagination fill in the gaps as to how or why you think the letter ended up in the loo,' smiles Andrew Birley, director of excavations and CEO for the Vindolanda Trust, Northumberland

- According to Eric Grotz, although the model of his decorative WC made in Stoke-on-Trent in the 1880s is relatively common, the only known survivors outside a museum in Holland are reserved for the use of the Dutch royal family in splendidly appointed royal waiting rooms at Amsterdam Central Station and The Hague



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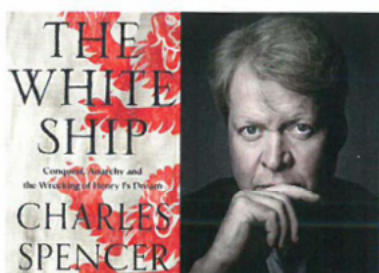
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Feeling flush? A history of loos through the ages

100–150 The Roman wooden loo seat discovered at Vindolanda in 2014 is a unique find. In such a chilly part of the empire, wooden seats were preferable to the stone or marble models found elsewhere

1016 Some reports of the death of Edmund I ('Ironside') claim that he was stabbed from below when sitting on a latrine

1437 James I of Scotland is assassinated in a sewer drain at Blackfriars, Perth

1596 Sir John Harington publishes *Metamorphosis of Ajax*, in which he describes and illustrates his invention—the water closet

1775 Alexander Cummings takes out the first patent for a water closet with an S-trap

1778 Joseph Bramah patents his improved

water closet with a hinged flap valve and becomes a household name

1860 Rev Henry Moule patents his dry earth closet, a forerunner of modern dry and composting loos

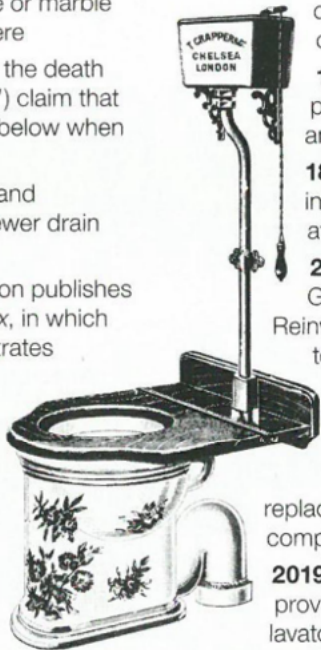
1864 John Shanks patents No 4 with valve and ballcock

1886–1909 Thomas Crapper installs the sanitary fittings at Sandringham, Norfolk

2012 The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation launches Reinvent the Toilet Challenge to find a sustainable loo that doesn't need water

2016 Glastonbury Festival starts to phase out plastic portaloos and replace them with organic compost loos

2019 The Worthy Farm-based event provides 1,300 organic compost lavatories for concertgoers



Cumbria from her parents in 1910, rather than installing running water or a bathroom to serve any of the bedrooms, she chose instead to buy Dent & Hellyer's latest contraption for the disposal of the contents of chamber pots. 'Even so, there was a problem, which the firm could not have foreseen,' explains Warcop's current owner, Mark Blackett-Ord. 'The housemaid emptying the pot had to stand just within the banister on the landing at the top of the backstairs, above the servants' bells, and so was plainly visible to a servant passing in front of the bells on the floor below. Or, rather, they could look up her skirt. To remedy this, Miss Wild installed frosted-glass paneling against the bannister, which remains in its place to this day.'

‘If Pugin saw any ships in distress, he could rush out as he buttoned up his flies’

Although historic-house owners are often happy to put up with eccentric sanitary arrangements for private use, renting out historic buildings is a different proposition—something that John Evetts, furnishings adviser to the Landmark Trust, knows only too well: 'We need to have modern plumbing and I try to keep things plain.' However, many Landmark properties are small and fitting bathrooms into discreet spaces can be challenging. 'We try to provide a view from our loos if possible. At Swarkestone Pavilion, Derbyshire, the bathroom is situated in one of the twin cupolas, which is only accessible by walking across the leads of the roof from the bedroom and can be fun in a storm.'

For Mr Evetts, the facilities at The Grange, Ramsgate, Kent, are rather special: 'We had the original plans to work from and the water closets there were every-

thing you would expect from the home that Pugin designed for himself: incredibly well thought out and ahead of their time. The seat was at absolutely the right height in relation to the window.

The downstairs closet has a view over Goodwin Sands so, I suppose, if Pugin saw any ships in distress, he could rush out to rescue them as he buttoned up his flies.'



Clockwise from above left: An illustration of an 1890s Thomas Crapper lavatory; a Drummond & Son cistern handle and chain; a lavishly decorated lavatory by Steven McDowall & Co, London; an earth closet, a forerunner to composting loos



same style as the adjacent houses. Victoria and Eric Grotz, who live near Gouda in Holland, have one of the prettiest privies—from the 17th century—adjoining their garden house of the same date. Rather less picturesquely, it originally emptied straight into the canal.

Although multi-seater latrines tend to be associated with the Romans, outside privies at houses large and small often had two or three seats (known as 'twicers or thricers' in Cumbria and possibly elsewhere). Some had small, low seats alongside—for children who might otherwise have fallen down the larger holes. Many continued to be cheerfully and unabashedly used within living memory.

In the 1730s, the satirist Jonathan Swift chastised 'proud and lazy' ladies who couldn't be bothered to step into the garden 'to pluck a rose', but instead used a chamber pot in their bedrooms 'to ease their worst necessities'. More discretion and privacy was called for inside the home and water closets and chamber pots could be disguised behind or within the most elegant pieces of furniture.

As long as domestic labour remained cheap and plentiful, the chamber pot prevailed. When Beatrice Wild inherited Elizabethan Warcop Hall in