

Family History Research Group

Newsletters 36-40

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Family History Research Group

Newsletter Thirty-Six



AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!

Janice

In the past our group has enjoyed historical walks around local places of interest led by members of our group. Christine headed the trip to Withnell Fold, Anne when we went to Croston and Joan on the visit to Rufford. We were informed about the history of these villages, the people who had lived there and the lives they lived all backed with a wealth of research. Last year we had planned to visit an interesting part of Southport to learn about something I hadn't heard of before, but like so many other things it had to be postponed. Perhaps we will be allowed to go ahead with it one day and perhaps even include a pub lunch as part of the trip!

In the meantime, I hope at a future date to attempt to take you on a virtual tour of Eccleston. To make this work I need some help, so any family stories, photographs or interesting information about the village would be very much appreciated.

I have found a really useful interactive 6 inch to the mile map dated 1888, you will find the link giving access to it below.

- The slider on the map will reveal an underlay so that an up to date map becomes visible. This will help you locate where you are and see how the area has changed.
- Use the + and – to zoom in and out.
- Use your mouse to hold and drag the map so that you can explore the village.

- What makes this a brilliant family history tool is that it is possible to zoom right out then hold and drag so that you can visit any part of the country allowing you to explore places your ancestors lived.
- Another option is to enter the post code of somewhere you are interested in.
- Do travel west to the coast, I found Victorian Southport fascinating and in particular the route of the Cheshire Lines railway.
- There are more maps and information on the website but access to some of this requires paying a membership fee.
- If you think the map is useful, bookmark the link so that you can access it again easily.

The bit of the map that has solved something that has puzzled me for a very long time is the location of Gressingham Old Hall, Gressingham. My Great-great grandfather Thomas Cornthwaite appears there in the 1851 census and is entered as being a farmer of 76 acres. Now that I know, I am looking forward to going there and walking around the area, I have spotted some footpaths to take.

http://www.archiuk.com/cgi-bin/build_nls_historic_map.pl?search_location=,%20Ecclestone,%20Lancashire&latitude=53.647289&longitude=-2.727605&password=freesearch@freesearch.com

I look forward to receiving contributions about Ecclestone. If you haven't got my email address you can contact me on the Family History Research Group link which you will find on the Groups sections of the Mawdesley u3a website.

I hope you enjoy using the map and if you have any questions do, please ask.

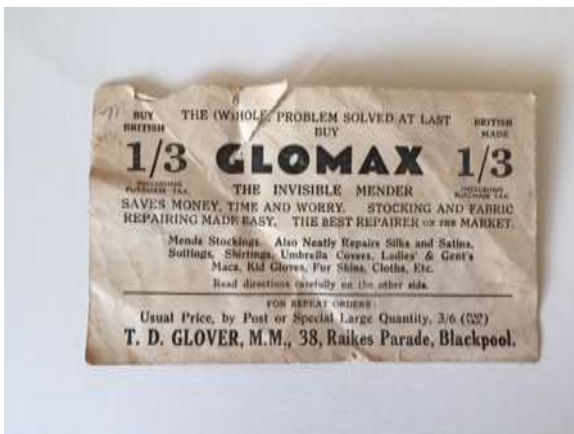
Family History Research Group

Newsletter Thirty-Seven



Make do and Mend

Christine



I came across this pack of invisible mend recently. It got me thinking about how the 'Make Do and Mend' ethos lasted well into the 1960s. Mum would repair items of clothing by darning or adding patches where necessary and clothes lasted until we grew out of them, then items were often passed down within families. I started secondary school with a cardigan which had been worn

by my cousin who had attended the same school. It was a 40 inch chest and I NEVER grew into it! I also remember sitting mending tights in an evening because you didn't throw them away if you just had a hole in the toe. How things have changed!

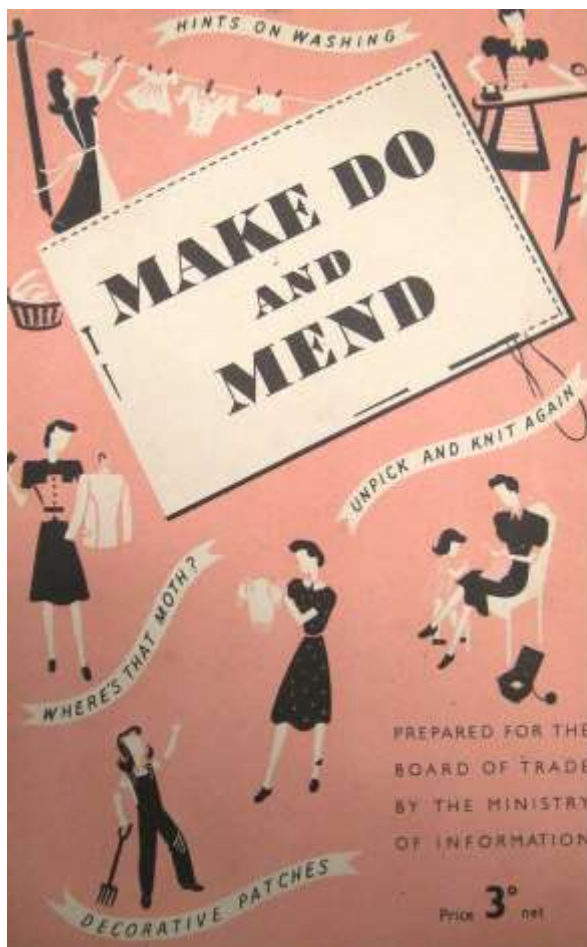
Janice

I don't know why, but I hung on to this card of threads which came along with several other sewing items in Aunt Evaline's sewing box.



Perhaps if lisle stockings ever come back into fashion I will have just the thing to mend them with. I now use the box to store some of my collection of curiosities.





Make Do and Mend was a pamphlet issued by the British Ministry of Information in the midst of WWII. It was intended to provide housewives with useful tips on how to be both frugal and stylish in times of harsh rationing. With its thrifty design ideas and advice on reusing old clothing, the pamphlet was an indispensable guide for households. Readers were advised to create pretty 'decorative patches' to cover holes in worn garments; unpick old jumpers to re-knit chic alternatives; turn men's clothes into women's; as well as darn, alter and protect against the 'moth menace'. An updated version of the book was recently released to coincide with the economic recession, offering similar frugal advice for 21st century families.

The information and pamphlet were found on the British Library website

Mum mended frayed cuffs by carefully pulling out a thread a little way above them, picking up the loops then re knitting in reverse using spare yarn. She then decreased then ribbed before casting off, sometimes adding extra length to allow for growth.

The process resulted in the stitches being offset where they were picked up, but a small price to pay for having a usable item of clothing again.

I was very surprised when recently doing an internet search to find on sale patches in almost any material you could think of including cashmere, leather, denim and even ones with pictures and patterns on. Perhaps the concept of make do and mend is still alive!

Family History Research Group

Newsletter Thirty-Eight



THE THINGS I HEARD

Janice Parr

I can remember so much about the things I heard when I was a small child.

The old bit of Leyland was a mix of ancient village, small industrial town and rural. Like many children living on Towngate we lived at shop premises, so our living room was also a place of work. The phone constantly rang, it was often a customer wanting to book Dad to do some work or order some paint and wallpaper. Mum was always busy so from being very young I had to answer it and say “please hold the line while I get Mum”. When the shop bell rang, if Mum was perhaps changing the nappy of the pesky new baby, hanging out washing or cooking, I had to go into the shop and say “Mum won’t be long” and then chat to the customer till she came. She was a whirlwind of a person and when she had finished what she was doing, the sound of her feet could be heard thumping through the house. Into very old age, she never lost the need to rush about and multi-task.

Before asking for a payment, Mum would talk through her mental calculations for the amount to be charged and a then a bell pinged when the cash register opened. In all the time we had the shop, there was only one minor incident of theft (a half inch paint brush was removed from a selection already placed on the counter while Dad was looking in the drawer for other brushes in the range). He was really upset as he knew the culprit and was too polite to challenge him. It would have been so



easy for anyone to rush in the shop at any time, help themselves to anything and then disappear. Even the cash register, identical to the one in the photo could have been easily picked up and carried away. My parents failed to be at all aware of the need for security though just before going on holiday, any valuables and cash were put in an empty paint can and placed on a shelf with

identical cans. On more than one occasion, the village bobby after finding the shop door unlocked would come up the stairs in the middle of the night shining a torch to see if there was a problem, we would all be fast asleep. Oh, how things have changed!

The air raid alarm sounding would send my brother and me racing through the shop to sit on the front doorstep waiting for the fire engine to screech out from behind the Public Hall with bell ringing and lights flashing. It was the location of the fire station in the 1950's; the air raid alarm was used to summon the fire crew.

This Leyland Merryweather fire engine is now exhibited at the Commercial Vehicle Museum.

<https://www.britishcommercialvehiclemuseum.com/>

Perhaps we should have a FHRG trip there when we are allowed.



A loud rumbling noise would send us back to the step as the sound signalled the approach of the council steamroller. The ambulance station and the council yard were also behind the Public Hall and was the place where amongst other things road patching equipment was stored, there were always many interesting comings and goings.



The photo appears on the Leyland Historical Society website

The sound of planes going over especially at night terrified me, I thought the war had come back.

We had a stockroom upstairs where along with other items, the wallpaper trimming machine was kept, it was hand turned and made a very distinctive scrunching noise. I spent hours on wet days up there with my friend Heather. We sat in great piles of wallpaper trimmings rolling them up into neat coils, making paper chains and crayoning the back of embossed wallpaper samples.

Dad's contraption looked rather like this but was free standing, with a wooden box underneath to catch the trimmings.



The stockroom was the place Granny Parr slept until she passed away in the 1940s, there was nowhere else they could have put her. If only I had been more curious, I suspect I would have found “family treasures” which later got thrown away in the Move and would have given clues about the history of my family. I know that the mahogany chest of drawers in there had belonged to her and had in it amongst other things a large old Union Jack pieced and sewn from woollen fabric, a gas mask and in other drawers bedding and clothes. There were cardboard boxes containing ornaments and goodness knows what else and as the Parr family had lived in the same property for over sixty years could have been extremely interesting. In 1947 the year of the big freeze it was too cold for my dad to work so he wallpapered the room Granny Parr slept in. A family story is that in the middle of the night, there was an almighty commotion, the wallpaper, instead of drying out had frozen to the walls and ceiling and the whole lot tumbled down on top of her (she thought she had been taken to meet her Maker). I have recently realised that I don't know when the room became used for storing stock; did Granny sleep in there among rolls of wallpaper?

I so wish I had a recording of Dad whistling, something he did all the time. He was known throughout Leyland and surrounding villages as the whistling decorator. Nobody seems to whistle today; we have to endure loud music when builders turn up.

Auntie Annie collected me every Friday morning, got a shopping list from Mum and then off we would go round Leyland with me in a push chair. We would arrive at her house in Crawford Avenue a little before lunch and I can still remember the sound of my own screams and laughter when we got through the garden gate. She would always push my pram away from her up the slope to the front door and then let it roll back and catch it. Inside her house was a place of peace and calm compared with my home. After lighting the dining room fire with a gas poker (what a hissing it made), she would carry me upstairs, plonk me on the bed while I witnessed her releasing her industrial strength suspenders, unhooking what looked like steel reinforced corsets, having a jolly good scratch, and saying “eh that feels better”. She probably thought I was far too young to remember any of this but I did. When Uncle Bill went back off to work on his bike after our fish and chips (when I was very small

it was flaked steamed fish in milk with little beads of butter floating on top), Auntie Annie would finish the clearing up, sit me on her knee and we would close our eyes while Listen with Mother was on the radio. We sang the rhymes together, listened to a story and then snoozed. I would often wake to the sound of the Westminster chimes of the sideboard clock and Auntie Annie gently snoring.

Other sounds from my childhood home – controlled explosions from the munition's factory, factory hooters, employees from the saw mills playing football on the rec at lunch time, people leaving dances at the Public Hall late at night, church bells, cockerels crowing, chickens clucking, the church clock striking the hours, steam trains when the wind was in the right direction and much more.

So, what are the sounds can you remember?

Update to last week's letter

Following a conversation, I know that some people didn't fully understand how to use the interactive map and didn't realise that it is possible to use it to visit any part of the UK in 1888/present time. It could be that they didn't read the instructions contained in Newsletter 37 and just clicked on the link to the map. You can still access all our newsletters on our group page. If you are still confused, I will attempt to deliver a demonstration at a meeting sometime in the future.

The link below will take you to Wigan, a place I know some of you are interested in. It has come from the same source and if you look at the link it is based on map references and the WN1 postcode. It can be used in just the same way as the Ecclestone map last week.

[www.archiuk.com/cgi-bin/build_nls_historic_map.pl?map_location=53.54698,%20-2.63229%20\(\)%20WN1%20in%20Wigan&search_location=WN1%20,%20WN1%20in%20Wigan,%20Wigan,%20Lancashire,%20England&os_series=1&is_sub=&pwd=&latitude=53.547152&longitude=-2.633824&postcode=53.54698,%20-2.63229%20\(\)](http://www.archiuk.com/cgi-bin/build_nls_historic_map.pl?map_location=53.54698,%20-2.63229%20()%20WN1%20in%20Wigan&search_location=WN1%20,%20WN1%20in%20Wigan,%20Wigan,%20Lancashire,%20England&os_series=1&is_sub=&pwd=&latitude=53.547152&longitude=-2.633824&postcode=53.54698,%20-2.63229%20())

Family History Research Group

Newsletter Thirty-Nine



Our Virtual Museum of Curiosities

Janice

This week I will tell you about two more of my reading and writing items.

When I moved to Bretherton I soon realised that there was a problem with the lawn. No matter how much it was prodded raked and fed it refused to flourish. Years later when builders stressed it even more, I decided the time had come to investigate.

What a pity we didn't have an archaeology group at the time, they could have joined me down the hole, wellie deep in mud and water (the water table is very high here even in the middle of summer). After removing the turf I quickly discovered what the problem was - the area had been used as a dumping ground and then covered over with soil. It was all very curious; someone had gone to the trouble of digging a pit and then stacking several dozen 17thc bricks in a neat cube. I found lots of broken crockery, animal bones from meals eaten long ago, clay pipe stems, cobbles, and a lot of ancient demolition material. Larger items included the sort of stone fireplace a cast iron range would have sat in, a Belfast sink and a wiring loom complete with fuse box attached. In all this mess I found only three items worth keeping, one of them was a little earthenware bottle. I gave little



thought to what it might have been used for and just put in on a shelf. While researching pen wipers a picture of an identical bottle popped up on a website and I now know that it is a Victorian ink bottle.



As you can see from the photo, my garden eventually recovered.



These spectacles belonged to my mum when she was a child and I think they probably date back to 1918. The lenses are missing because she took a hammer to them. One of the big social events in the 1950's and early 1960's was the church harvest supper. One year it was decided

that the entertainment provided by the children involved us dressing up as old ladies. We wore hats shawls, rather long skirts and wrinkly stockings; we wielded knitting needles while singing and dancing about. I searched the internet hoping to find the words of the song we sang but failed to find them. The words of the chorus were "When no one's looking, no-one to glance, sometimes so softly like this we dance". We then did an arthritic right hand star and then a bit of going forwards and backwards before launching into the next verse.

Thank goodness many things have changed and getting older means that we have time to learn new things, stay very active and enjoy ourselves. The ladies in the photo are Great Aunt Florence standing up, from left to right on the garden seat Granny Brearey (daughter of Ellen Thornton), Granny Parr and Great Aunt Mabel. From the estimated age of my Snaylam cousins, it would have been taken in the early 1930s making all the ladies much younger than I am now.



An update from last week (THE THINGS I HEARD)

Listen with Mother was on the radio, Watch with Mother was on the television. I don't think Auntie Annie had a television in the early 1950s and even then, it would have been in the front room and would have been cold in there. The fire was always cleaned out, made and waiting behind a fancy fire screen, it was only lit when Uncle Bill came home at the end of the day.

I decided to see if I could find out some more information about the programme I remembered and came up with the links below. You will have to scroll down to the picture of Daphne Oxenford then click on the arrow so that you can listen to it.

www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/anniversaries/january/listen-with-mother from a very early episode, is it any wonder we went to sleep!

The very early ones were broadcasted at 1.45pm.

Christine remembered listening to the radio at her granny's and watching Watch with Mother at home. I remember Mum being very excited when telling me that we were about to get a television and I would be able to watch Muffin the Mule. An internet search revealed that Muffin the Mule only ran for one season and the series was launched in 1952 which neatly dates the conversation about getting a television. Isn't it amazing what some very young children remember!

Watch with Mother was a cycle of children programmes broadcast in the 1950's by the BBC. On each day, there was a different programme. Programmes featured on were Muffin the Mule then later Picture Book (Mondays), Andy Pandy (Tuesdays), Flowerpot Men (Wednesdays), Rag, Tag and Bobtail (Thursdays) and The Woodentops (Fridays).

YET ANOTHER CURIOSITY

This is the fire screen which sat in front of the fire at Auntie Annie's house. It is still causing me a problem. Mum and Auntie Annie decided many years ago that it was just what I needed when I moved into the house I still live in. I didn't need it and didn't want



it and I still have it. I tried persuading them that perhaps someone else in the family was in need but they were so insistent that I had to accept and here it still lives sitting on the landing requiring dusting every so often.

Problem possibly solved. I seem to have converted it into a flat pack! When I moved it so that I could take a photo, it fell apart as the glue has dried out. Uncle Bill made the thing before WW2 so it isn't surprising. Perhaps it will be easier to tuck away somewhere now.

Family History Research Group

Newsletter Forty



TOILETS THROUGH TIME

Joan Quinlan

The mention of Izal toilet paper in a previous Family History newsletter brought all sorts of related thoughts into my mind.



In the 1800s, in industrial cities in our country, the 'privy midden' was a toilet system that consisted of a privy (outhouse) associated with a midden (a dump for waste). They were difficult to empty and clean, and were replaced eventually by pail closets and flush toilets. My granddaughter was amused by this privy on a visit to Quarry Bank Mill.

When I was a child, two of my aunts in Mawdesley had not dissimilar toilets. The container underneath was emptied when "Dan, Dan, the lavatory man" came round with his specially constructed vehicle. Newspaper was cut into squares and hung on a nail to use as toilet paper.

Back at home in Rufford we had a full bathroom. However, another aunt and uncle along the road had a bathroom upstairs containing only a washbasin and bath, and a proper flushing toilet with pull chain in the back yard. I remember one night I went to sleep there when my parents were away. The back door was locked, and my aunt, uncle and I had gone up to bed. I had completely forgotten that there was no toilet, so imagine my horror when I went into the bathroom. I was too afraid to knock on their door and ask to be let outside, so after some concern over my discomfort I confess that I did what was necessary in the bath and swilled it away! Maybe there was a pot under the bed for such use, I don't remember. A chamber pot was known as a 'guzzunder', because it guz (goes) under the bed.

Since 1999, it has been possible for women to buy a 'she-wee', in case of being caught short where no toilets are available. However, a device called a 'Bourdaloue' dates much further back. Shaped to fit the female anatomy, it looks like a gravy boat. It is allegedly named after a Jesuit preacher called Louis Bourdaoue whose sermons were so long that ladies need a way to relieve themselves without leaving the church. It would be the job of the lady's made to take it away. This one is on display at Dunham Massey.





Looking further back in time, on a trip to Turkey we visited Ephesus where these tourists were learning about communal toileting. This wasn't unusual in England either. There are communal latrines at Housesteads Fort on the Hadrian's Wall Estate. Romans would discuss the news and gossip whilst sitting on these. For bottom wiping, a piece of sponge fixed to a wooden handle was used – and shared by everyone!

In the Middle Ages the wealthy built 'garderobes', which were little rooms jutting out from the walls of their homes. At Little Moreton Hall in Cheshire, the garderobe tower contained closets where the waste fell to a cess chamber which was flushed out by water from the moat. Commodes were a common feature in stately homes, and it was the job of the chambermaid to dispose of the contents of the pots.

Surprisingly, flush toilets are not as modern as one might think. In 1596 Sir John Harrington invented the first water closet with a proper flush. Queen Elizabeth I was so impressed that she had a 'John' built at her palace.

There are many names given to this essential facility. Our Royal Family never use the word 'toilet' – it is 'bad form' – the correct term is lavatory. In the United States of America, they prefer to say 'the bathroom'. However, US soldiers stationed in England during World War I took to calling the toilet 'The Crapper', named after Thomas Crapper who was an English businessman and plumber. He designed the floating ballcock, and improved the S-bend in 1880 by inventing the U-bend. The 'bog' comes from the word for an open cesspit. The khazi probably originates from 'm'khazi' meaning latrine in an African language. The Australians refer to an outside toilet as 'the dunny', which viewers of 'I'm a Celebrity' will have heard. Loo is derived from the French 'gardez l'eau', which means 'watch out for the water'. This is advice that people in medieval Europe literally had to follow, as people simply emptied their chamber pots by tossing the contents out of the window and into the filthy street.

I have never been good at 'going behind a bush', but sometimes needs must. We were on a full-day safari in the Serengeti – just the two of us and a driver in a Toyota Landcruiser. When we had eaten our packed lunch, that time had come. Our driver assured me that there were no lions in the immediate vicinity as the wildebeest and zebra were happily grazing nearby, so it was quite safe to go behind a rock.

We also visited the Olduvai Gorge, one of the most important paleoanthropological sites in the world, where Dr Louis Leakey discovered fossils which proved that human evolution was centred in Africa. Here we were directed to an open-air outside 'toilet'. This was a hole in the ground with boards flat to the ground around it. It was covered in excrement and absolutely disgusting.



On a later holiday to South Africa, we took a day safari on the Amakhala Game Reserve. After a picnic lunch on a small river craft, we were shown the way to the toilet. This was completely open-air, but to our surprise was a proper flushing toilet. There was a washbasin too. It was very clean, but if you look carefully you will see that an animal had had a nibble out of the seat.

On a tour of India, we were often on the road early in a morning. We noticed that people were dotted about crouching in the fields. Our guide explained that it was the practice for the men and boys to go out very early in the morning to 'perform', and an hour later the women and girls would go. In urban areas we were amazed to see for ourselves that people just did what they had to do on the railway tracks in full view of others without any embarrassment. Nearly 950 million people worldwide still practice open defecation, 569 million of them in India. Their Prime Minister set a target to free villages of this need by October 2019, but even where facilities have been provided, there is an unwillingness to change long-established habits.



On a holiday in the Far East, my husband shocked the locals. In traditional restaurants it was the practice to eat with one's fingers rather than cutlery. Harry, being left-handed, used his left hand to the dismay of our companions. We learnt that the right hand is for eating, and the left hand is for toilet purposes.

My worst experience of the lack of a toilet facility was in Tunisia. Whilst riding a camel, I realised that I needed the toilet. Holding myself rigidly to avoid an accident, whilst failing to master the art of the rising trot, the experience bumped me up and down so much that I cracked a rib.



All over the world there are squat toilets. Traditionally they are like a shower tray with an appropriately-sized hole, and imprints to show where one should place one's feet. However, there is now a choice of modern styles.



Public conveniences vary widely. The dirtiest, smelliest one I ever visited in the UK was in Henley-on-Thames, an upmarket town which had probably had too many disrespectful tourists. At the other extreme, there are modern coin-operated facilities in the streets of some large cities, with the hygienic system of the whole closet being washed down and disinfected after each use. They even play music whilst you are inside. The funniest thing we saw was in the centre of Berlin. A mother and adult son were members of our group. She used the toilet whilst her son tried to keep the door from closing completely so that they would only have to pay once. As the door was not closed properly, it automatically opened again to its full extent showing her sitting on the toilet in full view of the group and other passers-by.



Novelty ideas have crept onto the scene. In a restaurant where we had lunch in West Yorkshire, the water closet was a fish tank.

I am not familiar with gentlemen's toilets, but this musical theme is a novel idea, seen in a pub in Freiburg, Germany.



Closer to home, men can claim to have watered the flowers at Barton Grange Garden Centre.



On holidays when I was a child, we never expected en-suite facilities. There would be a washbasin in the bedroom, with a shared toilet on the corridor. This was even the case on our honeymoon at the Regent Palace Hotel in London. Nowadays we expect our own private facility wherever we go, and many homes have not only an en-suite, but also a guest en-suite as well as a family bathroom. University Halls of Residence are built with en-suite rooms too.

At home, we have a summerhouse which contains a shower room. One day, a friend went in to use the facilities, and screamed. There was a frog in the toilet! How on earth it got in there, I don't know, as this is a separate room within a well-insulated building. My husband was summoned to rescue the poor creature and return it to the garden.

Camp sites are available with 'posh pitches'. Each has its own 'pod' consisting of a private toilet, shower and storage shed, so there is no need to visit a communal block.



The Royal family members are afforded the ultimate in privacy and luxury. On Royal tours, the Queen gets her own designated loo that nobody else is allowed to use. Her staff ensure that a supply of the correct toilet paper is provided. This is likely to be Andrex as the Queen granted the company a Royal Warrant in 1978 as a mark of recognition that Andrex is the regular supplier to the Royal households.

Other members of the Royal family are cosseted too. We were at a charity event in London, where Princess Anne was the principal guest. When I went to visit the Ladies, I discovered that I had to wait outside in a line with other women, as Princess Anne and her lady-in-waiting were in there. That turned out well; the person next to me was Vera Lynn and we had a lovely conversation!
