

The Diary of a Toiletgoer

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Published: 2014



Monday Jan. 9th

Nearly got into a spot of trouble this morning. I'd been delaying going to the toilet, instead sitting at my desk working, when suddenly I realised I'd better get a move on.

I headed off down the corridor and entered the toilet in the nick of time. I really could have gone an hour earlier.

It all came out thick and fast – very relieving in fact. It piled up on the side of the toilet nearest to me, for it's always been a policy with me never to shoot directly into the water beneath.

I find it quite strange that some people seem to aim deliberately for the pool, thus risking a backsplash of water up the exposed anus. Yet I've had plenty of first hand evidence of this practice, since the splash created is necessarily heard in the adjacent toilet.

Due to the consistency of my output – it was pretty much a mush – it was all taken off in the first flush; quite a satisfying sight, I must say, to see it all carried away by the powerful and rushing waters, and such a delight to see the inside of the toilet reduced back to its shiny, white best.

Nevertheless, I make it a rule always to use the toilet brush, even if at first glance this may appear superfluous. Thrusting it in and giving the sides a rigorous scrub always ensures that any excrement lurking in unsighted areas is removed.

I completed my toilet by applying toilet paper to the seat, thereby ensuring a pleasant environment for the next user. I returned to my work.

Thursday Jan. 12th

Again I had to make a quick exit to the toilet this morning. When I got there though, I was somewhat annoyed to find the toilet in an unclean state.

Why can't everyone do as I do? I don't know why people have so little respect for a public lavatory. They just don't seem to care.

Ultimately it's the cleaner who has to wipe it up; or, as often happens, *conscientious arse holes* like myself. I've always said that if everyone just wiped up their *own* mess we'd live in a much better world.

On the other hand it's probably true that these people don't worry too much about making a mess in their own toilets.

Indeed on reflection I've been inside many people's homes and I have to say I've found their toilets in a lot of instances to be quite messy. It just doesn't seem to bother people the way it bothers me.

Perhaps I should just chill and do as they do. I'm really quite envious of them, they're so *laissez-faire*. But the truth is that, once you're aware of this sort of thing, there's no putting it out of your mind. I clearly envisage spending the rest of my natural life worrying about the cleanliness of toilets.

If truth be told, it wasn't really that bad. There was only a fairly light spattering of crap stains arranged around the sides, marking the efforts of previous users; worse was that someone had managed to urinate all around the seat and some had splashed onto the floor as well.

I set about mopping it all up with a good wad of toilet roll. The place was soon tidied and I settled myself for what I'd come here for.

The results were very much akin to those obtained in my previous entry; I need not describe things in more detail.

Saturday Jan. 14th

No work today, yet all the same, I thought I'd keep the diary going, after all shit happens on the weekend as well.

Out shopping I popped into M&S for a café latte, and of necessity had to pop to the loo thereafter. The toilets here are quite decent in fact.

I settled myself in my usual squatting position, having already stripped myself pretty much naked – one does take one's clothes off in a nice toilet.

Anyway I was just waiting for the action to commence, when in came a man with his little boy. I have to say, it could have been worse – I've been rumbled by men with their little girls in the past.

Needless to say I had to put a halt to things. For the slightest noise made is quickly picked up upon by these youngsters, and the anticipated giggling and hilarity is a natural consequence of the toilet sounds.

Instead I had to listen to the proceedings of the young boy taking to the lavatory, assisted by his father, next door.

Good God! It's one thing for a little boy to comment on the process of toileting, going into graphic detail, giving a blow by blow account of the whole thing; but please, why does his father have to join in, in baby talk, encouraging his young son, using all the childish toilet-terms and generally entering into the spirit of it all?

For the delicacy of your better self, dear diary, I hope you don't mind if I choose to omit the insightful commentary of the child. As Henry James once said – regarding the writings of Zola (and I paraphrase) – 'there are some things in life one just doesn't wish to know about.'

Dissatisfied, I dressed, left M&S and, crossing over the road, entered British Home Stores.

I toileted upstairs, on the third floor, in a decent and well provisioned toilet, without interruption, and in the most comfortable and relaxed circumstances. On completion, I soaped my hands and left.

Friday Jan. 20th

Nice progress tonight. I was rather in the mood to prolong things.

One question that has always concerned me, and which reoccurred to me today as I leant over the pot, was whether everybody strips down naked as I do, when taking a dump.

For when I have the time, and when I'm in the security of my own home, as I was tonight, I always find it very natural and indulgent to strip down totally naked – with the exception of my socks.

This developed quite naturally out of the routine I was taught as a boy, which is presumably the standard procedure, whereby one simply lowers one's pants and pulls up one's top, holding it up by pressing one's chin against one's chest, with the shirt or jumper sandwiched in between.

It was the potential for misdemeanour that this routine presented – for example the possibility of losing the grip of the top, which would fall down to one's waist and get dirty, or the chance of excrement and straying splashes of urine falling below into one's pants, or even the dirtying of one's sleeves in the process of bum wiping – it was for all of these reasons that eventually led to me going the whole hog and stripping naked, the pile of clothes lying a safe distance from the pot. In addition the liberation one feels is most thrilling.

Yet it's often crossed my mind as to whether other people do this, or whether, if I told them what I do, they'd find it rather weird.

I suppose it's one of the profundities of human life, that however long we may know each other and however well we may know each other, always and forever, some things will remain private to ourselves and we'll go to our graves having never discussed them.

Monday Jan. 23rd

Good to get back into work after the weekend. I do love the quiet calm that reigns in our office on a Monday morning.

At 10:33 am, pleased with myself for doing so much work, and feeling tired and in need of a break, I get up, stretch and head down the corridor for the pleasure of the mid-morning dump.

You know, dear diary, since you're going to have to put up with all my shit for a year, I thought I might do you the courtesy of describing the office toilets – the major rendezvous of much of my engagements – which are in any case worthy of a sketch on their own merit.

They are to be found at the end of a long corridor, leading from the office, and on entering, one passes through an outer room, in which there are two wash basins, and arrives at another door, through which one discovers the toilets proper.

Herein lie two communicating toilets, in the sense that, though they are divided by a wall, this wall does not run all the way to the ceiling but falls slightly short.

The first toilet on the left as one enters the inner door is certainly the worst of the two, and all the connoisseurs of these latrines seem to know it.

For a starter, the flush on this toilet can only be said to be indifferent at best. Not only is it inconsistent, and often limp, but the slowness with which it recovers after one flush is so great, as to exasperate, infuriate and waste the time of the user like myself, who likes to make many flushes in one sitting.

In the second place the toilet brush apportioned to this first toilet is somewhat below par.

In shape it might well be likened to the brush used in former times by a chimney sweep. The bristles are incredibly weak – they're so feathery and pathetic – so that cleaning up the bowl after usage is a lengthy and unpleasant affair (the bristles are just not up for the fight).

Moreover it seems that the design of the brush or the nature of the bristles is such as to be a sticking point for left over excrement, which stubbornly adheres to the bristle-tips.

To add to these woes the stand in which this brush sits, when not in use, is a quarter full of the most yellow urine, so that when the brush is on duty, one must contemplate this awful spectacle.

Actually, to be honest, it very much resembles apple juice. Given the volume of it, one is tempted to think that some ill-intentioned knave has gone to the length of relieving themselves therein, rather than that it's just accumulated over time, lifted, drop by drop, from unflushed toilet to stand, transported on the bristles of the lame toilet brush.

Yet the latter explanation seems to be true and the slow flush of the toilet admittedly plays a role in this: the hasty toileter to impatient but to thrust a brush in a urine-illuminated toilet pool.

In addition, and very much related to the last fact, one finds that wet toilet paper sticks to the bristles. In fact some of these, when the brush is replaced back in its stand, fall off and float around in the urine; so that, when the brush is on active duty, they look like tadpoles swimming about in a pond.

This then is toilet number one. His poor flush and the bad brush, when bolstered by the fact that the lock on his door is faulty means that no-one likes taking a number two herein.

Preference is given to the second toilet, whose effectiveness I'm just about to analyze. However I should say that, as a facility in which one can shoot down a quick piss, this toilet is as good as anywhere.

In contrast to the first toilet, the second toilet on the right has something to be said about it. Indeed it's in every way good as the other is bad.

Its flush is incredibly powerful, is never limp and recovers in unusually fast time, so that on many occasions I've carried out a series of almost *successive* flushes.

Further, the toilet brush garrisoned here is of a different class and style altogether, this one being best described as a large toothbrush, the sought one might find on the set of a TV show about giants.

Its bristles are firm, the head is clean, that is to say no shit collects on it, and it's housed in a much taller stand – like a vase – which is not only perfectly clean but, as a special exhibition of its love of duty, displays a little residue of green disinfectant at the bottom.

Since the lock works on this toilet, I'm sure you can appreciate just why, dear diary, this toilet, toilet number two, is so sought after by myself and those of my colleagues who like to toilet in a place of hygiene.

You know although I stated earlier on that the connoisseur of these latrines knows that the second toilet is the best, still this connoisseur status does not confer itself upon everyone in the office.

To my deep consternation – as I seem to understand so many of my peers so little – it would appear that to some of my colleagues the deficiencies of toilet number one are neither here nor there.

Horrible as it may seem dear diary, these people will simply toilet anywhere.

Monday Jan. 30th

Getting rather tired of my work, and somewhat sick of my office surroundings, I thought I'd take some time out and go to the toilet. I guess it's my way of relaxing.

The toilet was in a good state, since the cleaner had just been in, and I settled myself for a number two.

I've got to say, I'm much happier, and therefore more relaxed, when using this office toilet, than when using my own at home. It's all very simple in here – a tiled floor, drab, cream coloured walls, a dull blue door – the toilet is basic and functional, industrial and minimalistic.

The lighting is dingy which is appropriate for any den of vice. Yet at the same time it is clean, especially when the cleaner's just been in, that I actually quite like it here. And it's airy as well, I mean there's a draft, so that a pleasant coolness caresses one's naked backside.

Yes indeed it's pleasant to come here and relax and meditate. More pleasant than sitting on one's own toilet. For there, in your own home, not only is it often too hot, but also the decor, lit up as it is by the bright lights, is luxurious and plush, and since it's your own, you always feel that you don't want to spoil it, and especially the toilet bowl, by executing one's bodily functions therein.

No, it's especially stressful to check that the toilet is clean after use, when it's your own toilet in your own home. Don't get me wrong, I always take pains to make sure these office toilets are clean after I've used them. But I never get so stressed.

No coming here is really quite a treat. It's so lonely and other worldly. It's like coming to the edge of the world to relieve oneself. And importantly, usually in the morning they are completely dead and deserted and one can just take one's time and meditate.

Thinking things over, what a pleasure it must be to go to the edge of the world to take a dump.

The Eskimo in Alaska who leaves his igloo to go and poo in the deserted and lonely snow land, or the mountain man, alone and isolated, relieving himself in the solitary comfort of the barren mountain peaks must know this only too well.

And concerning the in-house toilet, I will say this: prehistoric man must always have split from his brethren and left camp to defecate. For the nastiness of excreting on the soil you call your home when contrasted with the pleasure of stealing off from your piers to relieve yourself all alone on the outskirts of your camp, is such that he must always have done the latter.

Tuesday Jan. 31st

I spoke too soon! I'm so angry.

Today when I went to the toilet, I was in a good mood and expectant too. Yet I found myself frustrated from the off, the promised relief not arriving as anticipated.

I sat there for something like five minutes tensely waiting for something to happen. Then much to my chagrin some son of a bitch came in to occupy the toilet right next to me.

You know that was bad enough in itself. But the way he came in, banging one door then the next, good God it really exasperated me, I mean I was gnashing my teeth.

To be sitting there tense and expectant in the solitude and quietude of your own company and to have some fool blunder his way in, banging not one but two doors, so that my nerves were absolutely electric – ugh! It was so infuriating.

You know to barge in like that, to invade someone else's space, when I'd clearly marked out that this was my territory, what kind of a person can do this? A blundering fool damn him!

He obviously couldn't care less that I would be privy to all the sounds and smells of his bodily action. I just sat there, for the time calling off my own efforts, simply cursing him inwardly and looking daggers in his direction.

Now it transpired, after a few minutes, that this stupid sod was also having difficulties.

He'd begun by breaking some wind and things were looking promising for him, much to my annoyance. But things hadn't gone as expected, these signals of intent of his had come to nought, having more bark than bite, and he hadn't come up with the goods and was now getting irritated.

We both of us sat there in total, total tension. An absolute intensity of pregnant silence had descended upon us, and each of us, feeling the silent heat turned up, would fain burst the thermometers of our tense nerves.

That son of a bitch was so infuriated by all of this that he began breathing heavily, each breath an aggressive, infuriated, snort.

This absolutely incensed me. I mean it was an extra turn of the screw, one more pluck of my overstretched nerves. But I held out and wouldn't do the same. I held my breath though I would have huffed and puffed and my chest felt fit to burst. I wouldn't so implicate myself. I mean it was almost as though he were giving away his identity by this heavy breathing.

He proceeded on, breaking some more wind, seemingly unconcerned by my presence. You could have cut the tension with a knife. I sat there, tense yet determined, although unsure of what to do. Should I carry on? Should I just act as if he weren't there and get on with it?

Perhaps I shouldn't be so embarrassed. My identity would not be revealed by any sound or smell that would go his way. Why not just proceed heedless? What mysterious force was holding me back?

And in terms of the aggression I felt for him – that he obviously felt for me too – it would be a good move to fight back, and try and put him off. After all, I was here first, and had marked my territory. It was my right to toilet here.

I took the bold step of proceeding, giving vent to some excess wind that I had previously kept in check; and though at first he fought back with the same, I soon got the impression that he was struggling amidst the tension. The son of a bitch was infuriated and was cursing under his breath.

Probably if truth be told, it wasn't so much infuriation with me – although that's how I took it – as with the situation. He had felt himself ready for a dump and had probably come here looking forward to the action, expectant and in high hopes; and when he found me already set up, stealing his spot as it were, he must have been mightily frustrated.

Then he must have faced a dilemma: to stay, get on with it and make the most of a bad situation; or leave, hold on for a bit, and come back when he might have things to himself.

To stay or not to stay, to go or not to go, to toilet or not to toilet, these were the questions. Perhaps he didn't have much of a break and he must take his opportunity now? Who knows? In any event he'd chosen the former course, but he was probably ruing it now.

The fight went on and I found myself winning. I could sense he was getting more and more frustrated, and I just sat there absolutely determined to hold out. One of us had to leave, we both knew that.

He had obviously hoped it would be me, when he first stole in, presumably calculating that his aggressive entrance would be enough to oust a sensitive toileter, and leave him all on his lonesome, even as the grey squirrel had once displaced the red.

But I wasn't going to be his victim. One of us had to leave and damn it I was going to make sure it was him. This was my toilet, I was here first, and that son of a bitch could get on his bike.

We both of us were in silent communication about all this. We both knew what was at stake: one of us had to go.

I could sense that son of a bitch cracking, and he could sense that I would stay here all day if necessary. It was like a game of chess in its absolute tension. He was waiting for me to make a move, but I was going to take all day.

Finally it was over: I knew it straight away. He called things off, stood up, pulled up his pants, flushed the chain and left, cursing angrily like a bad loser.

Yes! Victory! Get off with you, you damned son of a bitch!

Let this be a lesson for anyone who tries to invade someone else's territory when they're trying to take a dump.

Wednesday Feb. 1st

Today I went into the toilets looking forward to a nice dump.

When I entered though I found the first toilet occupied and the second free. I instantly knew, from the silence and general air of expectation and tension that emanated from the first toilet, that the person therein was doing a number two and not a number one. Yet I was come here to take a dump, was very confident of my form today and moreover with a meeting to go to in five minutes, didn't have the time to come back and toilet later.

Hypocritical as it may have been, I now insinuated myself stealthily into position, and without committing any acts of indiscretion, hoped that this show of arms on my part would force the hand of my protagonist. That I would win this head-to-head combat without firing a shot and displace his sorry ass from the arena.

Settling myself, I was soon given to understand that 'we were already for lift off'. However I didn't seem to have ousted the toileter next door. Should I just proceed? Yet with my finger on the button a muttering sound with an undercurrent tone of annoyance came from next door.

I thought it was my boss Dave. He was evidently having problems. Probably, if I began, and he got wind of it, he would find it even more off-putting, given that I felt totally up for it today – I was very much in the zone.

Thinking it over, if that was the boss next door then the rules of engagement were clear: belt up and back off. It was not my job to steal his thunder, nor either was it my desire for I liked him so. No, I didn't like to take on Dave in this way.

Thus I called a halt to the proceedings, only urinating to give authenticity to my visit.

You know it gets me thinking, these tête-à-tête toilets I've been having lately: today attempting to smoke-out a struggling adversary – only desisting when I discovered it to be the boss; and yesterday holding my ground and winning the day, against an unknown opponent who thought he could trump me.

An unknown opponent; though I'd put money on it, bearing in mind his somewhat rude behaviour as he entered, that it was one of the workmen who's been in the office lately doing repairs. And as such I think a lot can be read into my actions on both days.

Psychologists will no doubt tell us the profound connections there are to be had, in terms of relationships with our peers on the outside world and our consequent antics in the toilet. I mean really, when you're in the office with your colleagues all day, entangled in a network of complex interrelationships, then the toilet goings on somehow provide a dramatic backdrop to this, like a translated reality in which tensions may reach a peak.

For the whole nature of the toileting here, the privacy of it yet the inevitable sharing of facilities with the twin toilets set up so that two people from the department are placed head to head with each other, is almost like a contrived plot device, in the soap opera that the office is.

Thus in the manner that a gladiator fight may culminate a Roman drama are the toilets so of import here. And as such a blow by blow account of the action in the lavatory is nought without some mention of the folk with whom I work.

The *dramatis personae* in our computer company, begins with Dave, a kind honest and friendly guy, who is the boss on our floor. The workers in the department split into the (more permanent) British and the (less permanent) non-British – Asian students mainly – who work here for one or two years before returning home.

Amongst these last is my friend Vishnu who I immediately took to, for he talks to you constantly, is very intelligent and ironic in his chat and is always good natured. He is incredibly lazy, in the age old Indian style, always putting work off to just before the.....but you know on second thoughts, I think I'll just introduce the office cast if and when they crop up in the world of the toilet.

Tuesday Feb. 14th

A new woman joined the department today, a student in fact from the Czech Republic, on a three month placement here.

A lovely girl but oh dear, what a smell! It was unfortunate that I entered the toilet just as she was leaving. Our eyes made contact – she knew it couldn't be avoided – and she hoped she could get away with this most embarrassing of situations by giving me an ironic, knowing smile. It was fine, for I answered with the same.

This is of necessity one of the situations that arises when one has to share toilets with women. Thankfully men are in the majority here, so this is essentially

a male toilet and the burden of embarrassment falls on the shoulders of any women.

The stench was so overpowering – there are no windows in here – that I had to call off the possibility of a dump, and instead satisfied myself with a number one. I was relieved in a minute and quickly left, thankful to reach the fresh air of the corridor.

Thursday Feb. 23rd

Today I had things to myself, though ironically I wasn't exactly in good form. As I 'sat' there trying to come up with the goods, I began musing once more on the practices and procedures of toileting.

I think I previously passed comment on my propensity to strip naked while I toilet (in my own home), and as to whether this is the typical routine among all humans or merely a personal quirk of my own.

But on a similar theme I have to raise the issue of 'sitting' on the toilet. For it's language such as this, and also the name toilet seat, that leads me to believe that other people genuinely do sit on the toilet whilst defecating, and that moreover, they're actually quite comfortable with this.

Frankly, I have to confess that I squat over the toilet, my hands resting on my upper thighs and with my naked buttocks poised above the seat, in exactly the same stance a Sumo wrestler adopts at the outset of a match when he bows to his opponent: to be clear, no contact is made twixt myself and the toilet.

And this seems absolutely correct to me, for a toilet seat is no source of hygiene, no halo or virtuous circle, I mean you wouldn't exactly eat your dinner off it now would you. Indeed, the idea of placing one's own naked backside upon a seat that's played host to countless other naked backsides is incredibly odd, not to mention repulsive.

I mean forget about the fact that urine or even crap may be splattered on the seat. These, you may say can easily be wiped away with a bit of toilet roll. Although in truth, if you want to make a proper job of it, and if you're a stickler for this kind of thing, then you should really apply some sort of disinfectant, especially in the case that pap is involved.

But putting these things to one side, and supposing that they can be dealt with, still, the fact remains that by placing ones derriere upon a toilet seat you're placing it in communion, as it were, with all the derrieres throughout history that have graced that unholy perch.

Yet my gut feeling is that by and large people actually do sit down when they toilet and that they don't make any particular bones about it. Probably if I raised the matter in public, and made it plain that I squatted rather than sat, I'd be tried by a grand jury and convicted of foul play.

But a simple calculation is most revealing. If the office toilet that I use is sat upon by ten persons a day, so that there are fifty 'hits' per week, then this leads to a grand total of 2,500 per year. And given that this toilet must have been in place for at least twenty years, it follows that by utilizing the toilet today and sitting thereon, my butt would in essence be the 50,000th inheritor to the throne.

Monday Feb. 27th

An incident took place today that leads me to take back, to some extent, my previous entry; or at least it highlights a disadvantage of the squat technique.

Precisely it was this: in settling myself in position and then unleashing into the bowl my excrement of the second kind – and simultaneously, though not intended, excrement of the first kind – it came to pass that a portion of it ended up on the toilet seat (and dangling thereoff) rather than going through the hole as it should have done.

This was very much an annoying development of events. Nothing is more detrimental to the relaxed state of mind induced by toileting than the burdensome stress of having to concern oneself with cleaning up crap. Unfortunately there was nothing for it, but to interrupt play and commence a clean-up operation.

The first stage was to pick off, with loo roll protecting my bare hand, the main body of excrement; the second was to wipe up the remainder with another piece of paper; the third, to chase away those stubborn little remnants that wouldn't give up their hold on the seat – this last task being undertaken with water-soaked toilet paper.

You may wonder, dear diary, from whence did I procure the water. For it's both embarrassing and inconvenient to leave the toilets when one is in the no man's land, the obscure shadow zone of the mid-toilet tango, and saunter out and collect some from the wash basins.

But if you haven't already guessed it diary, a clean supply of water can be found, of course, at the bottom of the pot. And provided you're willing to dip your hand into it and thereby wetten the paper, you have at your disposal a never ending supply.

One point that I think is worth mentioning, is that, having removed the muck on the seat, which now looked spotless to the naked eye, I then raised up the seat to inspect the underside.

For if you're like me, you'll have observed the amazing 'creep' properties of both types of excrement. In fact, one thing you can be sure of, is that in lifting up the seat to its vertical resting position, a dribble of urine will run downwards from the highest most point of the seat and travel unerringly down and around the seat edge.

I don't just know this from my own experience. On plenty of occasions I've headed into the toilet for a number one, and, on raising the seat, witnessed the sight of urine circumnavigating the upright seat rim, just as when a soft-boiled egg is opened and some yoke inevitably runs down the side.

Of course if you're unlucky enough, you'll get wet hands when you lift the seat. In any event this has always been an indication to me that the previous user had a number two, and thereafter was too lazy to raise the seat and wipe its underside.

On reflection, I should say however that this phenomena is probably restricted to the male of the species; for the positioning of the female genitals, at least as they are described in the classic text book 'biology for beginners', would probably

lead me to conclude that in the world of women all urine arcs pool-bound and not one drop lands on the seat.

To return to my original theme. The haphazard of shooting wide would seem to throw cold water on my idea that the squatting position is the most clean and effective of techniques.

Yet on thinking it over something occurred to me that really struck me as very profound. For why, in all of my years of employing the squat technique have I had the seat lowered? I just can't think of any good reason for it.

It's as if by pooing with it raised would somehow be sacrilegious or taboo. As though I was a pervert. Yet it only serves to narrow the angle when taking aim. And if one was to raise it when squatting, then it would eliminate the possibility of crap striking the seat and moreover increase the goal mouth as it were, so that the rim would be less likely to fall foul of my discharge.

And rapidly, I came to a decisive conclusion; there was a general consensus within myself, and I decreed to myself that from now on, the lawful method of alleviating myself of a number two would be to do it with the seat raised.

Let the Gods of toileting be damned. Lavatory lore is not written in stone.

Tuesday Feb. 28th

I don't wish to labour my point, but I feel that I must just make one more entry vis-à-vis the squat technique. In any case, my toilet happenings of today are nothing to write home about.

Recalling to myself the time when I was first taught, as a fledgling, how to take to the practice of toileting, in the adult manner, it occurs to me that I always had a fear of falling down into the toilet.

Notwithstanding that a 'child seat', a device that one places upon the toilet seat, and which is nothing more than a portable and freelance toilet seat equipped with a smaller hole than is typical, to accommodate the diminished dimensions of a child's backside – the equivalent of arm bands or stabilizers in the world of toileting, designed precisely to help a child master the skill of adult toileting – notwithstanding that this device might be put in place, still this fear of mine was really quite rational.

For the tiny posterior of a child is always going to struggle to balance itself over the pot, one cheek resting on either side of the seat and upholding the body of the child in a parted 'buttocks-bridge' above the hole.

In addition, if the child's feet are unable to reach the ground then he or she will naturally find themselves in the extremely precarious position of potentially falling, bottom first, down into the lavatory, their whole centre of mass seeming to be concentrated and focused in their posterior.

Such fears are logical and it's not difficult to conceive that to a child, toileting, just like swimming and cycling, is regarded as a mysterious and dark art, a sub-human feat not to be attempted by the scaredy-pants novice.

I remember having a nightmare in which I did fall into the bottom of the toilet. And down there I stayed, kissing Amy French, a girl in my class, who was now my

co-inhabitant and toilet-pool lover, and eating mini pancakes, or dropped scones as they should correctly be called, by frying them on the wet lower reaches of the toilet. Amy and myself living in the pool and swimming about as semi-human toilet tadpoles. It was a foul nightmare.

But it's easy to forget the fear a small child may have of a toilet. Its huge size and the relative easiness of falling in, the ever lurking danger of losing one's foothold and skidding luge-like down the sides and plopping into the pool, are quite a menace after the breeze of straddling a potty.

Indeed the confident and vain-glorious toddler, sat proud and chest-pouting upon their potty, two hands on the handle-stirrup, serenely surveying their dominions as master or mistress of their toddler kingdom, would do well to humble their opinion of themselves and prepare for the rights of passage of being thrown in at the deep end of the big boy's toilet.

And so in conclusion, dear diary, it's probably true that my adoption of the squat technique grew out of my fear, my childhood fear, of falling in: as a child it was reassuring to keep my feet planted on terra firma.

However, perversely, it must also be accredited to a rather different and essentially opposite cause: as an adult my legs are so long that sitting on the toilet would be extremely difficult.

Thursday March 9th

Of late constipation seems to be something of a recurring companion of mine. This morning saw me in a twenty minute long fruitless sit-out. There was essentially no result and I always liken such miseries in the toilet to a cricket match that's cried off due to rain.

I guess I've always been somewhat reluctant to diagnose myself with constipation when it visits me as it does, because I always feel that I'm at least partly to blame, since I expect to toilet too much, it being something of a source of recreation with me.

Yes indeed, I've always made a meal of my toileting needs and generally protract number twos to lengthy engagements. Generally, even though I'm at work, I can get away with taking these extended breaks, my boss Dave not caring too much, provided I'm an effective worker, which I am. In any case I don't smoke, so don't take smoking breaks.

But still I think my colleagues are aware to some extent of my partiality to excessive toilets, and if I were to get the wrong side of them, or to rub them up in an incorrect manner, they might use this fact against me, it being something of an embarrassing chink in my armour.

Anyway all of this seems relevant today, because, as I had been sat there for something like five minutes in silence and in tension, a colleague of mine entered the toilet next to me.

This is what happened: he locked the door; then there was an expectant pause for all of three seconds; then the flood gates opened and he shed his load.

It was evidently a collection of firmly formed, individual pellets. They slipped out of his backside and fell, bouncing off the side of the bowl in a perfectly elastic

collision, before finally dropping, still intact, into the water. (The consistency of his output was evident to me from the noises it made when falling to its destiny.) After that he tore off some toilet roll, and presumably applied it, and thereafter the chain was pulled and he left.

To be sure the whole affair lasted no longer than a minute, and as I squatted there next door a wealth of emotions flooded me: surprise, shock, incomprehensibility, anger, envy.

For starters I have to confess my envy at the consistency of his output, it being clear from the sounds that I received and the lack of need of toilet roll, that his excrement comes out in firm little bundles, almost like stones, in contrast to the mush-pulp, all in one, coagulating mess that is my faire on days when I'm not constipated.

I really can't remember the last time I gave up a carefree little collection of firmly formed number twos, I really can't. Slushy pulp-mush seems to be a speciality with me.

Naturally, you might say, there's more to life than whether the man next door is producing a better quality of excrement than myself; and of course that's true. But still, I can't help resent the lengths I have to go to, to clean up my backside after use.

I mean I always, absolutely always, have to apply wad after wad of toilet roll to my derriere to rid it of the traces of toilet that infest it after the passage of my excrement. Probably I'd say that something like twenty percent of the main body of excrement is lost, on its way into the toilet, by getting itself enmeshed in the vicinity of my anus, and failing to negotiate the obstacle course of my coarse hair.

Actually that seems a little over exaggerated. Probably it's more like ten percent. But in any event the need to use piece after piece of toilet roll – I'd say on average I might use ten or fifteen pieces – is exasperating and time consuming.

You know on plenty of occasions I might reach the tenth wipe and discover, by examining the sheet in question, that I need yet more wipes. And believe me it's often the case that ten wipes later, still there's evidence that I'm not clean and must continue with the wiping process.

Indeed part of the reason behind my protracted toilet, must be ascribed to this annoying clean up procedure.

And on those occasions when I have been in a rush, to reach a meeting or the like, I've always found myself angered to see just what quantity of toilet roll must be consumed to reach a satisfactory state of affairs.

It's at times like this that I envy the man next door, with his solid excrement that removes the necessity of toilet paper; the man next door indeed! He'll get to his meetings on time.

Yet further, two other things bother me. For what reason does a man not wish to protract a toilet? For what reason would he wish to make it a brief affair? True he may be in a rush, he may have business, but still such men seem alien to me and I can't help feeling that we're worlds apart.

For me toileting is a natural, revitalizing break, a welcome respite, a relaxing, solitude-filled moment wherein one escapes from the world, and alone, almost in meditation, one seeks a kind of inner peace.

For me toileting is like a happy stop off point on the long-haul through life. It's like fishing or preying or smoking a cigar; and as such it's not something you'd want to rush. On the contrary it's a time for chilling out and reflecting.

The other thing that gets me is the lack of worry. You might say that if a man has firm poo he need not worry about applying too much toilet roll or making use of a toilet brush. But still I have to say that even if I found myself in his lucky position I wouldn't neglect to use several pieces of toilet roll and to make a routine application of the brush.

Yes indeed, I have to confess that it's not only a desperately dirty backside that leads me to apply so much loo roll; it's also my love of doing a job thoroughly, of doing things correctly, of having a worried mind – whatever way you wish to look at it – you can say I suffer from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder if you like – but whatever, I like to do things properly. Everything must be perfectly clean, full stop.

My basic toilet goes like this. On entering I first clean up the toilet. Then I squat and attempt to relieve myself. Then we have the lengthy wiping process involving many flushes. After that I clean the toilet with the brush. The final task is then to ensure that the brush itself is not dirty. The whole thing is therefore a lengthy affair.

But as I squatted over the toilet, thinking these things over, I knew that today – regardless of my envy for the man next door – I would have happily traded in my constipation for any sort of mush-pulp I could muster.

Tuesday March 14th

Went for my usual mid-morning dump today. In fact I could have gone much earlier, even as early as 9 o'clock, but I'd been delaying, instead sitting at my desk working.

It's quite a nice feeling actually, to feel the storm building, the tides rising as it were. And to know that at any minute you might just take off and go and gratifyingly relieve yourself.

Of course if you leave things too late you can end up in trouble. Whereas conversely, going too soon can spoil the whole event – I mean you could fail to maximize the enjoyment potential. But without wishing to boast I generally get these things spot on, much as a gourmet chef saunters his meats for just the right amount of time.

In any event getting soundings that now was the time, I broke free from my desk and made to the toilet. After wiping clean the toilet rim I readied myself in squat position. I waited.

I waited still further. Everything was there, I was sure of that – but for some reason it was not forthcoming. I waited and wondered still. There was some noise. Was this a prelude of what was to come?

It seemed it wasn't. I continued waiting. Finally something came forth – not much though, it has to be said. Not at all what I had expected. For all the soundings I had gotten, and all the promise I'd been given to expect, this was a rather poor deliverance, a shabby return.

Yet I continued to squat there, in the hopes that something might happen. But as the clock ticked by my hopes dwindled and eventually I had to resign myself to the fact that, at least for the meantime, I would get no further satisfaction here. My mid-morning toilet was over.

Applying several pieces of loo roll to my backside as I remained squatting over the poo-chamber; and then being satisfied, by an examination of the contents that the worst of it was removed so that I might have no fear of standing up, I did stand up; and then flushing the chain to take away the accumulated contents, I proceeded to apply a second wave of toilet paper.

Now I don't know what it is, I really don't, but as soon as I'd mentally accepted that there was going to be no more action, and stood up and started wiping my backside; no sooner had I done this, than 'ding-dong' I started getting very definite signals that I should take to the toilet once more.

My annoyance at having once already gone through the motions in vain, was soon dissolved in my anticipation of some relief. I squatted once more and readied myself.

Yet for all the signals I'd been given the output was very minimal to say the least. I discharged some minor quantities of crap; and then sat waiting, my expectancy gradually souring into anger and incomprehensibility.

Disappointed, I called things to a halt, wiped up and once again stood up.

No sooner had I applied a first piece of second-wave loo roll then I was again given signals of the most vehement nature. Now this was really getting beyond a joke.

My body was telling me, nay it was damn-right ordering me, to assume the position since all hell was about to break loose. I was so angry, so sceptical. I wanted to say to my body that if I took once more to the toilet nothing would happen.

But it was so sure, so absolutely sure. Realising there was nothing for it but to cooperate, and being foolishly seduced by the deceitful mirage of excrement steaming on the horizon, I once more pointed my posterior toward its target.

Needless to say nothing but some pathetic dribble of cack was the result. I called things to a halt once again, this time resolving that I would not be fooled by any false signals when I got to the second stage of bum-wiping.

Indeed, when I got there such signals were communicated to me and my body petitioned me with grave earnest, that I should do something; just like a beggar woman who begs yet once more for alms from a rich gentlemen.

And now I, just like the rich gentleman when he realizes he's being had, ignored the petition, strode away from it, only showing it my contempt and anger.

But to be sure diary, as I left the toilet proper, and entered the wash basin area, and as I walked back to the office and to my desk, I found much to my chagrin that I was breaking wind with ease.

The whole mid-morning toilet was something of an irritating farce; the lack of action being compounded by the fact that several wipe-up operations, each starting from scratch, had to be conducted.

This sort of bodily behaviour leaves me in something of a quandary; and I can't help being reminded of the children's game 'knocky-door ginger'; in which children knock on the door of a house and then run and hide; only to come out once more

and repeat their misdemeanour, once the homeowner, who having come to the door and found nobody there, has returned back inside in bewilderment.

Wednesday March 22nd

A pleasant morning today.

For breakfast I partook of a different kind of beverage than usual, a rich, aromatic, dark roasted filter coffee, which was not only satisfactory to the palette, but had the added bonus of manifesting itself, ten minutes later, as a rather full-flowing, rich, semi-diarrhoea type excrement.

Indeed as I was just sitting back and digesting it, reflecting on its powerful taste, and feeling myself come to life, I just had to get a move on to the toilet and there relieved myself almost instantly of my breakfast waste; the new coffee apparently acting as a catalyst or diuretic in manipulating my breakfast through the gut.

The powerful and loaded output; the accompanying sounds, also powerful; and the semi-diarrhoea nature of my discharge was all very satisfactory.

And in the process of bum-wiping I noticed a green tinge in my crap, presumably due to the presence of the coffee.

I flushed the chain satisfied, the flush having no problems in taking away the mush, and the toilet being returned to its Sunday best.

However I should say dear diary, I don't intend you to be some sort of simple crass log book, wherein I day by day commit to you a list of foods eaten and drinks consumed, followed by a graphic depiction of the consequent toilet.

Though I make a slight exception with this entry, I intend this scrap-book diary of mine to be more philosophical in nature, shot through with a class and elegance, and a slap-stick treatise on toilet thought.

Monday March 27th

Although I've pretty much sang the praises of toilet number two thus far, unfortunately this morning I was unlucky enough to discover one of its weaknesses.

Precisely, when I entered the booth, I found the floor on the left side of the toilet aflood with water from a leaky pipe.

This is one of the few drawbacks to toilet number two that besets it from time to time.

It didn't look good. Since the first toilet was free I figured that the sensible option was to go there instead.

But weighing things up in my mind, and deciding that I would never be able to relax and have a decent dump in poor old toilet number one with its awful toilet brush; and that despite the puddle I could probably remain here, in what I regarded as my home – nay it was a sort of sanctum to me – and take a comfortable dump, I did exactly that.

Naturally I had to take extra care in the removal of my clothes, it being nothing short of disaster for me if they fell into the water.

Having stripped down partially naked, I squatted over the pot.

Now, this was the important part. Since the floor on my left was puddled it was necessary to rotate the position of my feet clockwise around the toilet perimeter so that my squatting position of today was at say a 70 degree angle to my normal squatting stance.

On consideration of the toilet bowl as something of an even circle, one might be led to think that one can squat at it – or indeed sit on it, if that’s how you do it – from just about any angle except of course directly from behind.

I mean on paper it seems fair to postulate that one could rotate one’s position above the toilet to a different position, for example east-facing, west-facing as well as south-facing with the same ease with which an owl rotates its head.

However I found out today that it’s actually a lot more easier said than done.

Due to the narrowness of the floor on the right side I found myself forced to squat with my legs too close to the pot; so that there being an extra strain in my legs and a constant tendency to be pulled backward and topple over, I was unable to relax properly and fully enjoy my toilet.

Moreover, although I don’t make use of the walls, in the forward, or standard squat position, still they are there if you need them, and in case of unbalance you can rescue yourself by extending your hands and gripping the sides; this is clearly lacking when one employs the side squat position.

Yet above and beyond these practical difficulties there is seemingly just some innate human reluctance to adopt this unnatural position, the explanation for which is probably quite psychologically subtle. Anyway it feels somewhat perverted and taboo.

Nevertheless, even though I ran into difficulties in the new position, it was fairly effective, and it *can* be done.

In sooth, I think that this positioning of both legs together to one side of the toilet best deserves the name *side-saddle*; it being akin to the way in which ladies, in days of yore, were taught to sit a horse, in order to protect their modesty.

That people throughout history have no doubt employed the side-saddle technique for reasons similar to mine is surely true; but it does make me wonder as to whether or not in days gone by, when young ladies were taught by their female servants, on how to take to the toilet in the adult manner, whether they were instructed in the side-saddle position or whether to the contrary all modesty was thrown out of the window in the pursuit of a more comfortable technique.

And as a postscript I guess there must be some people out there, crazy fools or cool-as-hell kids who do the unthinkable and straddle a toilet.

Friday March 31st

On a weekend trip to visit a friend, I found myself tonight travelling on a train.

It being a lengthy journey, it wasn’t possible to do without the toilet, train toilets of course being notoriously bad.

For whatever reason they're usually unclean, and the locking mechanism is always so complicated and mysterious that there's always a risk of exposure.

Moreover the sharing of facilities by both men and women – and both sexes are well represented on a train – leads to awkward situations.

I once remember a lengthy queue outside a toilet; and when a young man came out, seeing that he was passing on the baton to a young lady, he decided, making a decision on the spot, that it would be best to explain to this lady, returning with her back inside, some revolting misdemeanour which he obviously didn't want to be blamed for.

Whatever it was he was justifying to her, the young lady took it in a most mature and sensible way. And then the young man left.

Being something of a nosy parker I couldn't help take a butchers at the contents of the toilet when it was vacant later on (it had been abandoned by the queue a short while after).

A good sitting of cack and toilet paper resided in its bowel.

What had the young man had to say for himself? Was he explaining that he'd tried in earnest to flush it, but that the yank had gone out of the handle? Or was he passing the buck, claiming that it was there when he first arrived?

In any case it was a foolish mistake on his part; he would have done better just to have run off.

Nevertheless, when the need arose, there was nothing for it but to make use of the facilities.

When on a train, I always prologue my routine, by making a thorough scrutiny of the locking system, checking the door is locked not once but twice; and even then, when I'm in position, I usually squat with one or even two hands on the door, in order to resist its violation by any would be intruder.

For this it's usually necessary to ride side saddle. I say ride, for the uneven motion of the train, both when it's at full throttle and when it's breaking into a station, is enough to giddy one as though on a horse.

Thus I journeyed. 120 miles per hour. Side saddle. Concentration. Tension. One eye forever on the door in case of intrusion. Squatting over the bowl. Fear of the bowl beneath me, of loosing balance and touching its horrible stained surface. A real fear for the turbulence may throw me backward at any minute.

The seat tries to fall down but is stopped by its checker and rattles. The mirror in front of me, allows me to see myself for once in action.

Amidst all this stress I have to try and get my shots off as quickly as possible. Aim and fire – aim and fire.

We experience turbulence. It makes me think of Star Trek, and those scenes wherein the actors were forced to shake themselves when their ship, the Enterprise, was fired on. Though in sooth we never saw captain Kirk with his pants down, side-saddling over his toilet, trembling to the after quake of Romulan phaser fire. Or captain Picard engaged in the men's room, all at sea and having trouble shaking off Klingons.

For some strange reason I was desperate to complete my toilet before the train got into the station. As it slowed almost to a halt, I experienced an absolute agony of nerves, and realizing that my work was far from over I came to the conclusion that I would have to recommence my struggles when the train took off once more.

Because for whatever bizarre reason, I could not and just would not carry on as the train lay motionless in the station.

I don't know whether this was due to a lack of motion or of a rather foolish feeling of self-consciousness – that somehow as we lay in dock everyone on the platform was (through the frosted window) watching me – but whatever I could not proceed.

As the train stood stationary there was nothing I could do but wait. It seemed to be at rest forever. I was so impatient, I felt a real agony of the nerves.

However if I commenced, while all about me were at rest, then I would feel foolish and alone, just as an athlete must when he or she false starts in a running race and is 'guilty' before the eyes of the crowd and their competitors.

Eventually we were up and running and once more I boldly went forth to disengage my anus.

At one point an unknown life-form attempted to force the door. I reacted like lightning and held on to the handle for dear life. But it turned out I was being over cautious, for I'd employed the lock correctly.

Later on at Kings Cross Station, I made a routine dispensation at the public toilets, paying twenty pee for the privilege, though I'm not one to baulk at such tariffs, since they fund a beautifully clean toilet system.

I left feeling much lighter and boarded my transfer train to Penzance.

Sunday April 2nd

Returning, this Sunday evening, back home after my trip, I found myself on a rather fancy hi-tech train with rather fancy hi-tech toilets.

The toilet door is one of those rolling or sliding doors that opens, closes and locks by the touch of a button: in other words it's all mechanical.

The drawback with this sort of door is of course that when you press the open button, and the door rolls itself open, for those ten or twenty seconds while it's opening – and the door moves slowly so it is this long – for those ten or twenty seconds there's nothing you can do to it but let it open.

The same applies when the door closes. And the locking system, being also activated by the touch of a button, easy though it may sound on paper, is no more comprehensible than the usual train toilet locks, especially to the techno-phobic older generation.

Thus a more stupid and potentially embarrassing toilet door could not have been designed.

Anyone who enters and fails to initialize the lock properly before sitting themselves down, is in perilous danger. For an unwitting newcomer, believing the toilet to be unoccupied – the engaged sign does not light up if you fail to activate the lock! – may innocently press the open button.

And thus the door is opened, slowly rolling back, giving out a thunderous, rumbling noise, the sort that hi-fi, futuristic, hermetically sealed doors always make, and which could not be more pretentious even if it was a Star Trek toilet door.

And so begins the slow and embarrassing procedure as the door lethargically slides itself to one side, revealing, to the newcomer and any passers by in the corridor, the hapless and misfortunate victim paying their debt to nature.

To repeat, the mechanical set-up of the door means that, until it's fully opened, one cannot counteract its motion or close it, but must instead wait until it's fully to the other side.

This has the effect of prolonging the torment of the exposé, and is rather akin, I feel, to the tactic employed by a knifeman, of rotating the blade once he's already stabbed his victim's body.

And to compound the misery of the luckless occupant, in order to close the door once more, one can only press the appropriate button, and wait as the stately door with dignified bearing, reluctantly retraces it's path with much pomp and ceremony in the opposite direction.

Moreover by some insidiously evil aspect of the inventor's stroke torturer's mind, the toilet is placed at an agonizing distance from the door so that even riding side-saddle one's hand would not be able to reach the door-handle, if the door did have a handle on it, which of course it doesn't.

But to be clear, even if one assumed an extreme position, like that taken up by a long-jumper just before they hit the sand, with their backside further most back, forming a hair-pin bend, and with their arms and legs stretched fully forward – even then one would struggle to reach the door.

But in an added twist of cruelty, the toilet door is so wide that if one does suffer the humiliation of exposure, then truly one is really exposed.

Where exposure in a standard toilet might involve a private viewing by an individual pervert, here the entrance is so large as to be able to accommodate a host of avid spectators, so that you're truly performing to a wider audience.

Of course in the classic incidence of exposure, when one happens to rumble a sitter, a number two toileter is caught like the unfortunate rabbit in the headlights. I mean the onlooker is treated to a full on frontal exposure.

Whereas here the beholder obtains a side view of the proceedings. Although this might appear at first glance to be something of a small mercy in the design of the toilet, a redeeming feature as it were, I can't help feel that if I was to get caught out I'd prefer to be facing my enemy.

With this toilet, being viewed unawares from the side, I don't know, but I think I'd actually just feel more vulnerable.

To be sure though, I've never really had the misfortune to expose someone or be myself exposed, although I have heard stories to that effect.

Probably, the inventor of these toilets had only in their mind, when they designed them, a zealous desire to tackle the very apparent, dismal state in which train toilets were truly in.

And presumably on paper, their invention would have appeared to have resolved all of the major flaws inherent in the designs of previous models.

But in practice the toilet fell straight into all of the usual pitfalls, and seems to capture in its design all of the worst features of train toilets, exacerbated to unusual lengths.

But in sympathy with their designer, I can't help think back to my school days, when for my CDT project, I came up with what I thought was a marvelous

invention, the curer of so many of our ills; only to be cruelly mocked at by the entire class when I finally constructed a prototype.

Moreover, now that I think about it, I should very much take back some of my previous comments, especially concerning the overly large toilet entrance.

This is of course to make the toilets wheel-chair accessible, and as such, the designer and train company should be given much credit for their enlightened thinking, given that previous trains were probably not able to offer such facilities and that the joy of travel was thereby denied to certain sections of our community.

In fact the same goes for the elaborate door opening mechanism, which is no doubt a lot easier to negotiate for a wheel-chair user than a typical door.

Yes indeed, now that I come to think about it, I've actually been talking a load of rubbish: the toilet design has clearly been geared toward making wheel-chair access possible, and seen in this light, the design makes perfect sense.

No, I think I speak for the majority of people when I say that, in the interests of progress and a fairer society for all, I'm happy to be seen toileting once in a while, happy to be caught in compromising positions and happy to bare backside, manhood and all.

And if I *am* going to be made a spectacle of it might as well be to as large an audience as possible.

And at the end of the day I must admit that a lot of all this is in my head and perhaps I'm guilty of being a bit paranoid; since when I did make use of the facilities I had no problem whatsoever.

Sunday April 2nd – later

Ha! It wasn't all in my head after all!

Stepping up from my seat to go and relieve myself, I pushed the open button and the door thunderously and laboriously rolled back, revealing a middle aged man, bearded, ear-ringed and tattooed hose-piping his effluence asunder.

To be sure this could have been much worse – I could have caught him doing a number two.

The irony of the situation was that had he been in a standard toilet, then, in the number one stance, only his back would have been visible, and the rest would have been left to the imagination, (albeit the sound of urine splashing into the pool essentially completes the picture in the mind of the onlooker).

Of course it's a debatable point as to which is best, but whilst a standard toilet does at least protect a (male) urinator, this one reveals side-on, both types of excretor in all their glory, in each of their time-worn and classic postures, paying their respective homage to the Gods of external elimination.

Though it was he who had fell foul of the lock and not I, still the guy was acutely annoyed and passionate and started berating me, like his life depended on it, to shut the door.

Now being something of a good citizen I not only accepted and forgave his angry curses and nasty looks, but I immediately, with eyes now resting honourably elsewhere, attempted to wrestle the door with bare hands.

My aim was first to arrest its movement and then secondly force it, against all odds, in the opposite direction.

The task was a tough one but to that guy, unable to disentangle himself from his urination – he was in mid-flow and completely paralyzed – I was his only hope.

He was pleading with me to save his bacon and I had to act like my life depended on it.

So much of life is an uneventful journey, wherein we must simply plod on, corpse-like, like robots in a factory. So much of life is like a long crossing of a barren desert with nothing but camel dung to enliven our spirits.

But just occasionally, just like an oasis sprouting up in the middle of the Sahara, something extraordinary occurs, and we are recalled into life, and must act like heroes.

This was my chance to be a hero and by God I was going to take it. I'd felt as if I'd been born for this very undertaking.

To increase the tension of the situation a woman was approaching along the corridor; it was now or never then or else all was lost for that poor man.

My palms being so sweaty I struggled to grip the surface of the handleless door; but eventually, though it stubbornly wanted to go its way, I brought it to a halt; and then, like the superhero I always thought I was, desperately grappling with my want-away robotic adversary, I went one further, and with a mighty effort, *reversed the polarity* of the door, forcing it with ever growing surety and conviction back to the other side.

When it got there it stayed there, though I had thought it might take off once more and expose the urinator again. My mission was over.

Anyone who's ever committed an act of heroism, knows that the deed itself is more than sufficient reward.

Thus my work being over, I immediately made myself invisible, and indeed later, when I happened to pass my exposé, recovered now after I had rescued him from the jaws of death, I held my eyes honourably ahead and sought no recognition for my act of heroism.

Later on, on another trip to the loo, I was again in the position of making an exposé.

Actually, although it's such an embarrassment for the person caught out and I'd hate it to happen to myself, still as I stood there hands on the button I couldn't help feel a thrill of excitement as to who I might foolishly expose when the door rolled back.

I know this makes a monkey's mockery of my earlier heroics but I just couldn't help acting so disgracefully. I needed another high after my previous excitement, and in the aftermath of my door shutting exploits, with the world returning to normal and with no-one seeming to have paid any attention to my noble deeds, or to care to take an interest in me, I now wanted to fill the void of lonely emptiness with some fun. There was a devil in me and frankly I think I'd gotten a taste for exposing people.

You know I don't know what it is, but it's really quite a treat when the door rolls back slowly and mechanically, just as it did all those years ago on 'Blind Date', when the couple would see each other for the first time.

The whole thing is just so perfect, I mean the way the door just rolls back so slowly and unemotionally to reveal its hapless victim, that I can't help think that this would form a solid basis for a new Saturday night game show, wherein contestants, perhaps even celebrities, would have to toilet, at the risk of being exposed, in order to win prizes.

I'd love to be the game show host, the man who goes around exposing people. Truly I would. This time however only an empty toilet was revealed.

On the theme of excitement though I can't help recalling the old game one would find at an amusement park, where one was invited for a cost, to fire a shot at the door of an outside toilet to reveal, much to his chagrin, a red-necked middle aged man, pants around his ankles, sat upon the pot.

Funny that revelation in this way is quite a cause of hilarity in our society, yet I don't know of any verb we have to express it.

Whereas conversely, we often make use of this concept to exaggerate a similar situation. For example you might say that Dorothy, when she drew back the curtain, caught the Wizard of Oz with his pants down.

Monday April 3rd

Glad to get back in after the weekend and having spent the first two hours of the morning working hard at my desk, I decided it was time to hit the toilets and take a relaxing break. However when I got to the cubicles I found the cleaner employed therein.

For whatever reason, I don't know why, the cleaners employed in our office are contracted to start work at 8.30 am and labour throughout the morning, instead of working at the crack of dawn or after hours.

Thus it's sometimes the case that when one enters the toilets for a morning dump, the cleaner is there at her machinations.

Whether she's mopping clean the floor back to its slippery, shiny best; or down on her honkers scrubbing the toilet rim in her fancy pink latex gloves; or pouring disinfectant into the pool – whatever it is she's doing, there's no way in the world one can set up next door to her (in the cubicle she isn't cleaning) and calmly go about one's business.

No sir, there's no possibility of that, for even if she wasn't a woman, even if we had a male cleaner it would still be the most off-putting thing in the world.

I think in a prior entry I gave vent to how I couldn't perform in the presence of another person, a competitor as it were. Yet how much more impossible it is, how much more stressful and inhibiting, when you're up against an anonymous antagonist, a neutral bystander, who doesn't share your pains.

A silent witness, privy to all your sounds and smells yet immune from any personal dishonor. Labouring with cold and frigid features, just like a termite that steadily gnaws at the newly weds honeymoon bed; or a virus; a cold and deadly virus, ice-heartedly destroying its human host.

No it's no level playing field that's for sure, and as such I wasn't going to play ball.

To be honest neither I nor most of my other colleagues get along with the cleaner, the difference in our education and social status awkwardly stifling anything more than a shallow acquaintance, and meaning that there isn't much love lost between us.

Added to her meaner standing in the classification of life is the fact that she's also a lot older than most of us.

You know I'm really not that comfortable with the situation and I feel sorry for her, and if I could, I'd level things out more, and give her the respect she deserves. But that's never going to happen and you've just got to get on with life I suppose.

Yet for sure any social tensions that might exist already between us, are heightened, and indeed exasperatingly – almost cruelly – rubbed in, by the fact that she has to clean up our shit.

And that's no exaggeration, since my colleagues relieve themselves in all manner all over the toilet surface and don't make any bones about cleaning up afterwards. You know I've got total sympathy with her I really have, but what can I do?

But thinking it through I don't think my metaphors – in likening the cleaner to a termite or virus – are far wrong.

Human history is littered with examples of one division of people subjugating another and treating them as inferiors: Roman slavery, African slavery, Russian serfdom, take your pick.

But whichever example you wish to choose you can bet your bottom dollar that the sort of social tensions I've sketched here between myself and the cleaner, were present in all these societies. And, though I don't wish to sympathize too much with the ruling classes, probably the ladies and gentleman of the old school were equally as irritated and annoyed to have the resentful under-class amidst their daily life as I today.

The huffy maid or the silently suffering slave a constant worry in a happy home. And more than that: a bad omen of the revolution upon the horizon.

No, to paraphrase Tolstoy in War and Peace, the facts are that, whatever else you may wish to denounce them for, the institutions of slavery and serfdom in whatever form they take always burden the masters with problems they are better off without.

Anyway such tensions exist between us and I can't help thinking, although there's no real truth in it, that she enjoys thwarting me like this as way of revenge, even though I personally have always been pleasant with her and take pains to maintain toilet sanitation.

On mornings such as this one can only take a deep breath, return down the corridor to one's desk and postpone the action for ten or twenty minutes. Patience is a virtue and good things come to those who wait.

Saturday April 8th

This morning after going swimming, I decided just as I was departing that it would be a wise move to go to the toilet before I left.

In fact being in a relaxed mood and being in no rush to do anything else on this leisurely Saturday morning, and being more than ready for a number two, I envisaged taking a long and relieving dump, perhaps lasting for ten or twenty minutes.

However just as I headed in the direction of the lavatory the girl at the reception desk caught sight of me.

I don't know what it was, perhaps the whiteness of my top or the fact that I'm tall, but in any case her eye fell upon me and we made brief eye contact.

Now, I have to say that, being something of a regular she knew who I was fairly well. And this subtle clocking of me had put me in something of a quandary.

For my immediate thought was that if I now had a long and drawn out toilet – in the style that I was looking forward to – then when I resurfaced some time later, I would have to pass this very same girl and once more she'd clock me.

You know it was as if, like an animal in an experiment, I'd been mentally tagged by that reception-desk observer. Of course you may argue that it hardly matters since as a professional she's not going to say anything.

But the fact remained that when I re-emerged later on that girl would make the observation that I had been missing in action for a while, from which she would deduce that I was having a lengthy dump.

This is one of the peculiarities of polite society: you can count 110% on the discretion of people never to pass comment on what might be an embarrassing situation; but by the same token, and in complete contrast to that ethic, it's a perfectly natural instinct for humans to make observations of people's private habits and to derive the worst conclusions therefrom.

Whatever reasons may have drawn that girl's eye to me, her one thought when I went past her again would be that that tall man with the white top, who comes here quite regularly, has just been having a long-drawn out pap in our toilets.

Anyway, deciding that I was too old to care about such things, I made the momentous decision to go ahead with the prolonged toilet.

Halfway through however, having second thoughts, and thinking once more of the girl, it occurred to me that as I left I might just mention to her, casually, as a passing remark, that I'd been being sick in the toilet.

I thought this would be a very reasonable excuse to give her: I would just tell her as I walked past her, and she would say 'oh! I see! That explains it.'

But dear me diary, what kind of a crazy idea was that? Why was it that I was ashamed to have people think that I was protracting a toilet of the second manner, but that it didn't bother me if people knew I was being sick? What foolish thoughts!

Throwing aside my deluded ideas and deciding that if I was in for a penny now I was in for a pound I proceeded with my protracted toilet and didn't worry about the girl's observations anymore.

Wednesday April 12th

Although it's not a habit of mine to whinge, from time to time the state of the toilets gets me down so much, and makes me so uptight, that I need an outlet through which to grumble.

When I entered the toilets this mid-morning – in a good humour it has to be said – for my usual dishing out of the dirt, I found the toilets in a very discouraging state.

You know, accepted, whomsoever may be its clients, a public latrine is a public latrine, and always, as par for the course, one must expect to find low-levels of excrement therein, stains and residues of yesterday's toilet, witness and testimony to their improvident sires, chalking and besmirching the lower reaches of the toilet bowl.

One must accept this of course. But today the bar had been raised somewhat with divers of my colleagues competing with each other to leave their mark, to have their say, nay to unveil their masterpieces on the inner bowl of the lavatory, that, having been looking forward to a relaxing dump, I now found myself angered and quite pissed off to have to enter this disgusting environment and herein complete my toilet.

In further detail, an analysis of the toilet bowl led me to conclude that there were three different perpetrators, or authors as they may wish to think of themselves, who'd found self-expression whilst on the pot.

My conclusions were based on several identifying features, the primary one being the different gradations of brown with which the artists had executed their works.

In addition the varying consistencies and thicknesses of the marks; their placement at several and quite different locations about the bowl; the way in which the skids were directed; and also their lengths and patterns upon the surface, which gave a good hint and an extrapolated guess at the trajectory of the artistic missile and indeed the location of the shooter – all of these things pointed to several toileters, targeting their toilets from different locations and stances around the toilet perimeter and unleashing their projectiles with varying degrees of force.

Don't give me any magic bullet theories here please. This was no lone and deranged toileter firing out magic pellets. All the evidence pointed to a team of toilet assassins, a conspiracy if you will.

The would be receptacle of my exploits lay before my eyes in a disgraceful state.

To describe the three stains: the first was a little, light brown, almost mauve mark, that could be seen on the left hand side of the lower reaches of the bowl, just above the water level.

In pattern and shape it reminded me of a love bite. Admittedly on another day this mark wouldn't have upset me, and would have just been 'background noise' or that which one must always expect with public toilets.

It was its two bulkier playmates which really got to me.

The first of these was a thick and apparently recently laid on mark that skidded its way in a south-westerly direction, commencing on the left side of the middle of the bowl, and slipping down the toilet inner surface to terminate in a central position on the near side of the lower reaches of the bowl.

The second, again of fresh composition, was higher up again this time, on the right hand side of the very upper reaches of the bowl, which slid down to about halfway where it terminated.

The position of this last, so high up and nestled as it were in the alcove of the bowl that was protected by rim and seat, begged a lot of questions of the position employed by its creator.

Moreover this last mark came with a good spattering of cocoa-coloured polka dots; which scintillating spectacle had obviously been sprayed on in a semi-diarrhoea form.

A charming effect that patterned both bowl, seat and rim, and which, however you may not wish to make the comparison, reminds one of bubbly chocolate.

Anyway such was the artistic disgrace of the toilet before me. I was really angry I have to say.

Why on earth could the people who'd done this not clear it up? Had they failed to realize what they'd done? Had they been blind to the revolting signatures they'd inscribed upon the enamel?

It just baffled me completely. When I thought to what pains I always went to ensure that the toilet was clean after use, when I thought how ultra-aware I was of any marks I'd made and of how anal attentive I was to them, it struck home to me just how little I understood the people who could do this sort of thing, what a mystery to me my very colleagues were.

On reflection perhaps they'd never been taught the use of a brush, or perhaps they were in a rush and did not have time to apply it.

Or more cynically, perhaps they chose to dirty the toilet so as to make a statement as it were, an outcry, a retribution – although a rather unjust one for it targeted only the cleaner – against the company and the powers that be and against their masters to whom they had to work for.

In any event, for whatever reason, they had committed their crime and it inconvenienced me now.

Although I could have stayed and got by – as an aid I could have lowered the seat and placed toilet paper across the upper surface of the bowl to block out some of the sickening view – I chose instead to move next door.

It would never have sat well with me to place my posterior in the vicinity of those stains, and the disgusting though irrational fear that they might leap out of the bowl and strike my naked and defenceless buttocks was too much for me to stomach.

So I moved to toilet number one, he with the limp chain and other assorted ailments, and toileted therein, though to be sure I wasn't best pleased today.

Thursday April 13th

Although I laughed off yesterday's events to some extent with an exaggerated description of the collage and artistic impressionism on the surface of the bowl, still, an undercurrent of anger remained with me especially directed toward the perpetrators of the toilet-mêlé, those bastards who were determined to spoil the quiet meditation of my mid-morning toilet.

Their unhygienic and uncleanly outtake on life or their anti-establishment and renegade regard for civilized ways were both mysterious mindsets for me to grapple with, yet all the while I had to contend with the fact that these people were drawn from the colleagues with whom I worked, were precisely one and the same, those colleagues of mine, the majority of whom I got along with, who were civilized, polite, helpful and educated.

Today then I was just that bit disgruntled as I went in to use the toilet, since not only was toilet number two in such a ghastly state (I entered the cubicle and found the toilet perfectly preserved as it was yesterday), but also because I had now been relegated to the use of good old toilet number one.

Anyway, be things as they may, I proceed with my toilet, and finishing earlier than usual –the environment was not conducive to lengthy toileting – I set about cleaning up.

But then disaster struck. Not being a regular customer of this toilet and naively believing that toilet number one could eat up, in one mouthful, just as much mush and toilet paper as her next door neighbour, I found on flushing the chain, that the waters rose and rose and that I'd blocked up the lavatory.

That horrible feeling, that time of regret at not having flushed sooner, that awful sight as one realizes that the waters are not going to go down but are rising relentlessly and uncompromisingly upwards – that was where I was now.

You know to be honest I have to confess that I've done this from time to time before; and yes dear diary I have to accept some portion of the blame on this and on previous occasions.

For I always make a meal of the wiping up process and apply far too much roll or 'eat it' as my mother used to say.

Yes sir, it's true, to a large extent I'd brought this all on myself, though toilet number one should also take its fair share of the blame too – it evidently was defunct in this capacity as well.

But in sooth, on all the occasions when I have blocked up the loo, and seen with terror the welling up of the waters inside the bowl; their ceaseless elevation in the opposite direction to which they should be going; their forceful and irresistible ascent like a sure-footed animal as if they were going to leap out and attack one in revenge for all the misdemeanours that we've sent their way over the years; never on all of these occasions have I ever seen the water rise above the level of the rim and flood out onto the floor.

And so too this time: when the water was at rim level it ceased its advance and kept at bay; and I, who had been cautiously fearing the worst and backing off, came down off my tiptoes and inspected the full-to-the-brim pot.

On past occasions it's sometimes been the case that with a massive and powerful gurgle the waters forcibly and rapidly retreat, and with much relief and a lighter conscience one can leave the toilet and return to other things.

But that wasn't going to happen this time, I could see that.

The high tide waters, strewn with torn shreds of toilet paper, floating about like ticker-tape; with a quantity of dirty paper and excrement sitting at their base, right at the very heart of the maelstrom and forming part of the congestion – these waters were going to go down slowly and in their own time.

In fact an inexperienced onlooker might descry no perceptible ebbing of the waters. But I've been here many a time before and I knew that, slowly but surely, the waters would drop, as was evident after several minutes when the upper most reaches of the bowl were left dry once more though stained with a brown mottled residue.

Well, although I wanted to see things returned to normal and although I didn't want to bump into a colleague on the way out who would then find out what I'd done, there was just no time to wait here and baby-sit the toilet as its waters retreated to their standard position.

There simply wasn't the time and ironically I ended up completing my toilet next door, in the company of those filthy stains. I returned to my desk.

Later on I ventured out to inspect the condition of toilet number one, to see if the waters had gone down.

In fact they had, but on flushing the chain – the real test of things – I found that the waters ebbed up again to that alarming and unnatural level.

The toilet then was permanently fucked. Pardon my language, dear diary, but it's not such a wonderful state of affairs. For now all I've got to use is that disgusting shit hole next door.

Monday April 17th

Not happy. What an awful, squalid, pig-farm environment to have to take a dump in.

No really, it's a fucking disgrace. I mean it. It's been there some six days now and those bastards are showing no signs of cleaning it up.

Is it just me or is everyone else oblivious to it? I really just don't know. And the cleaner's not going to clean it up either, and why should she? I'm absolutely one hundred percent behind her on that score, it's not her job to wipe up the shit that those disgusting frigging animals were too improvident to wash away.

No it's an absolute fucking disgrace that's for sure. I'm really not happy.

Tuesday April 18th

Just to add insult to injury toilet number one is throwing up some wonderful surprises as well. I had a look in there this morning to see how it was getting along.

Someone had evidently muddied the waters. Truly there was a good quantity of crap in the bowl and the water around it had turned almost black like the water holder used by an artist when they wash the black paint off their brush.

Yet the water level was down and it might be that the blockage problem had gone away? Irresistibly I pulled the chain: but alas no – the thing flooded up once more, this time with the vilest of sewage-infested water.

Later on I returned to have a look to see if the water level had retreated once more. Throwing back the door my eyes met with the most revolting and exceptionally strange spectacle.

The waters had indeed retreated to their normal level, but as a legacy of their former standing, the inner surface of the toilet bore the most eye-catching and patterned design.

Beginning below the rim, alternating stripes of white and brown streaks ran counter-contour down the surface of the bowl.

Precisely like the patterning on the body of a skunk, the alternate stripes tapered down toward the water, the brown-mauve stripes having the sort of consistency – that airy, bubbly type – that would suggest that they were sprayed on.

But to be clear, the hint of purple in the stripes, the fact that they were not completely brown, and their apparent sheen as one looked into the bowl – all of this gave one the bizarre impression that someone had painted those markings on, that they were man made.

I mean if someone had have told me that it had been graffitied onto the toilet in an act of self-expression I would have believed it.

Really that's how it appeared: as if the pattern had been spray-painted on. Yet this wasn't the case. It was purely an act of the toilet itself.

To correct myself slightly I should mention that the white stripes were not of purest white. Indeed they too were mottled with brown-purple spray paint, but to a much lesser extent.

Yet if this was the direct result – the alluvial deposits – of those muddied waters that I'd attempted, some four hours earlier, to flush away, then this was an incredible feat of design and engineering on the part of nature and put to shame those man made mishaps depicted next door.

Returning to the office I instructed my Indian colleague Vishnu, to go and take a look; he returned two minutes later with a broad smile on his face:

'Oh! It's like eighth wonder of world man!'

It seemed to get about in the office that afternoon that toilet number one was very much out of action. Accordingly, at the end of the day, not wanting to have to be forced to catch any further glimpse of that magnum-opus anymore, I shut the door on toilet number one.

For the time being it was completely kaput. Goodnight and thank you.

Friday April 21st

Despite everybody getting the willies about entering toilet number one, no-one seems to give a shit about the state of number two.

And really it's no laughing matter either, for most assuredly I'm stuck in here for good now. It's going to be a while before number one is back on its feet.

After completing a very brief toilet this morning I entered the wash basin area and there met the cleaner. We both fell immediately to talking about the one thing that was uppermost in our minds.

The cleaner was understandably angry and upset at the state of things, and thoroughly scrubbing the taps and basins as we talked, gave vent to some of her pent up anger.

Telling me how, although it's never in a particularly pleasant state, it had really gotten beyond a joke this time, and there was no way at all she was going to clean it up, not on her wages.

I listened sympathetically all the time, and when the cleaner's like this, quietly angry, but at the same time trusting her words to me; a quiet, musing and thoughtful pain written upon her face and perceptible in the way she went about her chores; in short the angry yet almost calm mien of an experienced person who's seen a lot in life, and is a long way over the hill of being sick with it – when the cleaner is like this I do rather like her.

Yet I knew fine well that probably, eventually, she would end up cleaning the worst of it up.

She's like that you see. Unfortunately for herself she has that fatal flaw in her character – she's a person who cares about things and wants to do her job properly.

In fact we're kindred spirits in lots of respects I too liking life to be lived properly and in a correct manner. And for that very reason I've feared since the first time I saw that mess in there, that it would be yours truly who would end up doing the dirty work of those malicious bastards, cleaning the toilets back to their best.

It's true I've done it in the past, for on prior occasions it's been just too much for me to live with; and rather than go about my business with countenance downcast and melancholy, I've thought it better to spend five or ten minutes of my time, cleaning the toilet up, after which the sunshine will pour out of me once more.

But not this time. This is one time too many. The anger and rage I feel against those scum-bags is too much and I'm not going to get them out of jail this time.

To add to all of this, I'm not having such a good time of it in the office either. Dave is putting so much work my way that it looks like I'm going to have to work over the weekend again. What's that man thinking of?

Monday April 24th

This morning, being quite sick and tired – I didn't get much fucking sleep last night – I went off for five minutes of peace and quiet in the toilet, only to find the fucking cleaner labouring therein.

Excuse my French diary, but everything's really getting on top of me at the minute, and to find the cleaner thwarting one yet again, when one just wants five minutes to oneself; to have to bump into that stubborn and bitter old woman – who I found today, unlike the other, quite an obnoxious person to be around – to have to bump into her when all one wants is to relieve oneself in solitude; I'm sorry but this sort of thing always gnaws at me to the point of using foul language.

Instead of returning to my desk for ten or fifteen, I just stood outside in the wash basin area waiting on the cleaner to finish. Standing there with my arms folded in resentment, looking tired, angry and out of sorts.

And although one of my colleagues might enter and see me like this, evidently waiting to take a dump, I was decidedly indifferent on that score, I just couldn't be bothered and was too tired to care.

Finally she exited and passed me by. As she did so her deep set, worn out, bag-weary eyes met mine, that were also somewhat stony and out of humour. We said nothing.

When I settled down inside, that constipation, that keeps coming back to haunt me, was once more with me and I sat there, buttocks above the stains, in angry and undelivered expectation, feeling quite sore at the end of it all.

I was so tired, so angry, so bitter that I felt like striking the bastard of a toilet roll holder.

I don't mean to complain, but just one simple point that I have to get off my chest diary is the foolish toilet paper policy employed by the idiots at this place.

I'm not going to whine about the sub-standard, thread-bare, non-luxurious toilet roll which they provide. That I accept as a necessity of good house-keeping on the part of the company.

The rough and military-style paper, is not after all sandpaper as some whiners would have it, and leads only on occasion to slight soreness of the saddle.

However it's the practice of locking up the loo rolls in their holder that really irks me, so that, except for the cleaner who's got access with a key, mere mortals like myself can only pull it out through a hole in the bottom of the dispenser.

Why on earth the company keeps its toilet paper under lock and key like this is really quite confounding, and in suggesting that we're going to steal it from them, is not only penny-pinching on their part, but is also an insult to us who work here and have to use it.

To fully illuminate the exasperating nature of this locked up paper, I should describe precisely the structure of the holder.

It's a simple rectangular metal box, attached to the wall, that houses two rolls one above the other, the lower of which has its tail hanging out of a small hole on the underside of the box, through which a toileter is supposed to be able to access the paper.

But on a day like today, when the cleaner had just locked up two new fat rolls in their cell, the flaws of the system were fully brought to light in the most agitating and exasperating manner for me, the poor toileter, squatting with dirty backside above that disgraceful pit, and simmering all the while with rage at my constipation.

It was impossible to find the beginning of that damned new roll and turning it around in its place, a difficult task because the presence of its bulky cell mate sitting right on top of it was keeping it forced down, I could only try and tear at different places to attempt to get it started.

From the offset the new roll appeared to offer no clear beginnings. Indeed the end was glued on, strongly since these were cheap rolls, and forming a closed little bundle as it was, it gave the impression of not being very given to outsiders.

It was like a little animal that wished to protect itself from violation. The two loo rolls were like a pair of overfed, nasty little guinea pigs that wished only to remain in the hutch and who would bite if you tried to pick them out.

The way the top of the roll seemed to be glued to the bulk underneath really foxed me. I snatched at it with my fingers to try and get it going; but the force of the second roll pressing down on it so that it was difficult to roll, added to its

already predisposition not to unravel, meant that the shred in my hand tore after a small rotation.

What I had in my hand was not only too small as to be useless but was also a thick wad of paper and as such a total waste.

You see in trying to get a foothold on the sheet, in my efforts to get it started, I'd taken off too thick a layer.

Thus I continued, repeating this same stupid process, tearing off scrap after useless scrap, unable to build up any momentum as I rolled the sheet, as ever and anon it tore and broke down.

Clawing at the roll too deeply in an effort to make a new beginning; and wastefully peeling off shred after shred as I created a tatty, shredded loo roll whose scarred and stratified surface was built up of many different layers, and which reminded me of one of those satellite pictures we see of the planet Mars.

Remembering Arthur Bruce and the spider that kept on spinning, I continued in my travails against the stubbornly resistant toilet roll.

Yet in an effort to break the stalemate all hell broke loose.

I tried tearing the roll at one side, and, getting a foothold, I now meant to unravel the roll, whilst at the same time allowing the *partial-tear wave-front* to propagate across the surface of the roll, so that after say a couple of spins, I would be tearing off a proper full width strip.

But this went pear-shaped as the partial-tear wave-front refused to migrate to the opposite side but instead hovered around the centre for a while, after which it chose to move back and hug the sideline from which it had come, remaining there and skirting the perimeter for a few spins more just to waste my time, before finally ending itself and coming off the edge.

I was left with a long, thin scrap of paper in my hand which was of no use whatsoever and wastefully went down the toilet.

In this day and age of global warming, it seemed like an extravagant waste, a disrespectful improvidence to the trees waylaid in order to create the toilet paper.

Anyway eventually, after huge amounts of wasted time and paper, I finally unraveled a decent portion.

Nevertheless when I continued to unravel after that, in a quest for further sheets, although the roll had now a 'clean' surface and was unraveling layer by layer, still the bulky presence of the new roll above, impeded the radial momentum of the roll beneath it and forced it to halt on different occasions, tearing off the piece I currently had in my hand before it was ripe for plucking.

Thus my sheet size was determined for me today and in the end I just had to accept it and make do with the scraps I was given.

Monday May 1st

Do you want the good news or the bad news diary?

The good news is that somehow or other (this morning?) those nasty stains have been removed from toilet number two. Great news eh?!

The bad news is that they've been replaced by a new and exciting exhibit. The good citizens of our department lost no time in filling the void left by the dearly departed stains.

And thank goodness for that! It is an absolute joy to fucking see it! What an absolute disgrace.

The pig who's done this has managed to go above and beyond the backside-work of his predecessors and taken toilet artistry to a new and amazing level.

Not only had he matched those prior efforts inside the bowl – there was a thick skid of crap on the upper reaches – but he'd also extended his work to the upper parts of the toilet as well.

Specifically, the whole skid actually had its origins on the upper face of the toilet rim and then spilt over, hugging the inside of the toilet rim before it began its descent into the maelstrom.

Moreover, at myriad locations on the rim surface and the underside of the raised seat there were splatterings of chocolate sauce, and a lowering of the seat revealed that their creator had not failed to target the top surface of the seat either.

What had the artist intended with this free-spirited, post-impressionistic piece of naïve artwork?

What was the significance of the raised seat?

What did the thick layer of shit in the bowl represent?

Did the elaborate display of excrement across the rim depict an abstract interpretation of the Last Supper?

Oh how I would have loved to have stayed here for hours just to contemplate this joyous spectacle.

A more disgusting and abandoned toilet mess I had not seen, and again I was struck by the shocking mentality of the criminal who could do this and then leave it be, with no seeming burthen of conscience.

Of course the elaborate array of excrement and the fact of its dwelling in so many hard to reach places begged a lot of questions of the stance employed by the shooter; and although I was much chagrined and out of humour at the time, still I couldn't help think that these markings provided strong evidence that other people defecate with the seat up and that they employ the squat technique as opposed to sitting. I didn't feel so alone anymore.

Yet worse was to follow. I don't know why but as I stood there contemplating this awful scene of carnage, my hand inquisitively pulled out the toilet brush from its holder.

Incredibly its bristles were covered with thick lashings of excrement and tipped with little pieces of urine-soaked toilet paper.

Not only was this an irritating and revolting thing in itself, but it pointed to the sheer improvidence and stupidity of the perpetrator of this act, whose ears I wouldn't have minded boxing right now.

Presuming the brush-dirtier to be he who had fouled all over the pot, then what the hell had he been playing at, what the hell had he been thinking?

Had he so dirtied the brush in an attempt to clean up the toilet bowl which stood there in such an ungraceful state?

I couldn't help being reminded of a real-life crime book I'd read – Homicide by David Simon – in which the author comes to realize that so many criminals who by the damage they do would appear to be ill-intentioned bastards are actually nothing more than complete stupid idiots.

As I held the brush in my hand and gave it the once over I couldn't help feel afraid at the sheer stupidity of some people.

I toileted in record time and then fled the scene of the crime.

Toilet one by the way is still as it was. No-one seems to have contacted the plumber on this score. In fact there would appear to be a conspiracy of silence over that lavatory and its chef-d'oeuvres.

But let me end this entry with some words of instruction, consigned to my diary as they may be, but nevertheless let me say them, in the hope that there is some sense in the heads of those delinquents out there.

The role of the toilet brush is to clean away the sticky leftovers of one's toilet. It is not an instrument of preservation that one sticks into the toilet to collect all the shit-bits and toilet paper shreds that would otherwise be flushed away and lost forever down the blackhole of time.

Thursday May 11th

It's been over a week now since I made my last entry. Things are still as they stood, and I'm not in a good humour at all.

Toilet one is still blocked up and two remains in a complete shambles.

You know the longer it goes on the more worried I get that I'm going to give in and just say sod it and clean it up myself.

I can't cope with it I really can't. It's absolutely got me down. And on top of that I've been so overworked this week, Dave has revealed himself to be a real slave-driver, I feel so sick and tired, and indeed I am tired because I've had so little sleep lately.

And that's left me irritated and annoyed and because I've had so little sleep, and because I've been drinking so much coffee and eating badly and irregularly as a consequence, I only seem to have encouraged that constipation that I've suffered from recently.

Damn I'm angry! You know the more I get constipated, the more I get angry and annoyed. It's a vicious circle that's for sure and I'm on a downward spiral.

Bloody constipation! Fuck me I'm sick of it. Disgusting fucking toilets! Piss-irritating, fucking toilet roll holders – I swear I'm going to smash that cunt off the wall one of these days – stupid bloody toilet paper, idiot bosses, never ending work, no sleep.

Oh Please, somebody, get me out of here!

But to be clear there's no way that I'm cleaning up that mess. I've been a mug in the past but not this time.

There is no way on earth I'm going to clean up other people's leftovers ever again. I'm absolutely adamant on this score, I really am.

In fact I'm setting it down here and now in writing as a confirmation of my intent: here me now diary, I'm not going to clean that mess up.

Friday May 12th

Today I cleaned up the mess.

Well I was feeling light-hearted and in a good mood. Forget what I said last time, I'm in such a happy mood today that it doesn't matter.

You see not only did I – and also the rest of the department – manage to tie up that project that's been getting us all down lately, but also this morning Dave called me into his office, and indicating to me that he was really pleased with my work, told me that I'd be getting a bonus.

You know I really like Dave and shook his hand there and then. He slapped me on the back and said it was a job well done.

With a nice feeling inside me I departed Dave's office and gradually as all members of our team were called in and told that they too had done a good job and were to get a bonus, the whole department seemed to take on a new lease of life.

Everybody got the bonus, and, feeling pleased with ourselves we all stood round talking, skiving off our work like a group of mountaineers who'd made it up to the top of Everest and were now basking in the glory of their feat.

And the nice thing was that everybody in our team got the bonus, and Dave thanked us all personally. At different places about the office there were little plates of chocolate bars laid out – this is usual on a Friday – and we all munched happily into them today.

But as a special treat we were going to have a party, beginning at 3 o'clock with refreshments laid on by the company. The clouds that had been hanging over the workplace for these last couple of weeks had suddenly lifted and bright rays of sunshine beamed down on us.

Relieved as I now was, happily looking forward to the party and my whole presence being warmly awashed by a deep seated lazy, lazy feeling; the happy and cheerful feeling of the office, all of which was not conducive to work, (of which there wasn't really much pressing anyway) so that I did very little today; in the midst of all this pleasant abandonment of duty, in the middle of jovial conversations with my peers, my thoughts wandered to the one burden on my conscience, the one bad stain upon the satin of my life, the one dark cloud upon the bright sky before me.

The unclean toilet. Why not just do it? It would only take five minutes. It would be a relief. And it would be out of the way, done and dusted, before the party tonight. I was in such a good mood that I was going to grant an amnesty to those guilty knaves.

Accordingly I found myself locked in alone with my antagonists, ready to do battle with the stains and wash away the scene of the crime.

With forceful application of the brush; with repetition upon repetition of chain flush; with water-soaked tissue paper scrubbing the solidified stains on the rim, so much elbow grease being needed to thoroughly dislodge all of them, and with fingers picking the choice tit bits from the bristles of the brush, and the waters taking away the remnants in a powerful gush, did I thus labour.

Some ten minutes it took, and in fact I really enjoyed doing the work I have to say. Just like one of those jobs you've been putting off for years, such as painting the ceiling, when I actually got down to it, it was extremely enjoyable and stress relieving.

And when I finished I felt really renewed. The toilet was clean again. Job done!

Friday May 12th – later

What a party we're having. We're some two hours in now and we've all had too much to drink.

I've drunk too much alcohol on the brain. Dave says I've pissed but this is nonsense. I've got a glass in my hand and am just taking a piss of champagne (it's drivelling all over the place – I've lost control of my coordination).

I've just popped up to my desk for a second (not a second glass, I mean for a moments piss and quiet) – we're having the potty in the staff room – to write this entry.

The champagne's been cheers I don't mind if I do. Those Chinese whiz kids have had complete alcoholics. You see, it's legal in China to drink until you're twenty-one. They can't handle they're drunk.

I'm barely on to talk. I'm completely cracker-jacked. I can hardly keep my eyes from need to sleep. I just had to shit down.

I've been back and forth to the latrines all nite and couldn't stop urine everywhere. On one tie, I went in with Wan, a young Korean student-employee but both the cubicles were occupation.

We couldn't wait an eternity to wee in the stinks. Showing Wan house it's done, I unzipped my pants and taking out my pianist – ooh my little gerbil! – aimed it at the Wan-basin. Wash followed soot but unable to rich as he was not as smaller than me.

Anyway he didn't seem to quite careless actually. He just aim his gun at the floor.

We both stool there holding our little winkabells and waiting. Wan says 'to pee or not to pee that's the question'. Then we both started sipping, me into the sink and Wan into the floor.

But I completely out of control and soon started mis-frying all over the place. There was a little rivell falling along the flow and flooring down the whole.

I said to Wan 'I've been he a hundred times tonight already turning wine into water and everties I'm sipping mide of the wark. That's ankle-hol for you, it enhances the desire but takes away the performance.'

And then I came up here to clean my head. What's that?.....ugh! Vishnu come here son. It's Vishnu come to cheek on me. 'What you are doing man,' says he.

'I'm just typing up my toilet diarrhoea.'

'You're drunk man and so are all the peoples – it's a wrong thing na?'

'I know, I know, I've pulled out the wrong straw and am completely Kerplunk. Hang on I'll just save my dear diarrhoea.'

'What's that man?'

'My toilet diarrhoea.'

Monday May 15th

Pleased to get back in today. You know I always feel fresh on a Monday morning, but what with that project completed and a reasonable workload in its place now, and what with the bonus and the party, I was really feeling in good spirits.

And now I was going for my mid-morning toilet I couldn't help think happily that the lavatory was back in its clean state. You know these last few weeks have been angst-ridden, tense and dreadful and it's a relief to have the toilets back to their pure white best.

As I was walking along the corridor I couldn't help smiling to myself over the party the other night. Good God I was drunk! I can hardly remember a thing. Yet it was a good laugh that was for sure. Smiling to myself I entered the latrines and then the toilets proper.

Yet in the midst of this happy reverie I was about to be given the most horrifying shock of my life.

Like an innocent little lamb I pushed back the door of toilet number two, absent mindedly recollecting the party, when all of a sudden, in the flicker of an instant, my mood changed completely, my pulse raced and my eyes gaped aghast as they met with the most terrifying of sights.

Instead of the shiny white clean enamel toilet I'd expected, there was a slash of sick swathed across the pot.

It was all too much for me to bare. No sooner had I seen it than I jumped back in terror and ran out of the cubicle, screaming and with my hand to my mouth.

Some few moments elapsed before I could draw sufficient courage to re-enter the booth. When I did I had to make a conscious effort to keep my feet planted on the floor and my eyes fixed on the tragic sight. I wanted to look away and get out, but I made myself stay there, studying the sick, its horrific, lumpy-porridge embodiment, my hand over my mouth.

Anyone who's ever seen the dead body of an animal, will know the enervating shock one receives at its initial appearance; but knows also that one gathers courage and returns to look at the corpse, not out of curiosity or for some shallow cheap thrill, but out of a very profound feeling of reverence for the mysteries of life; out of a feeling of wanting to pay respects to the animal, to honour its spirit somehow and to feel, for a fleeting moment, connected to the sacred reality of life.

So too now had I returned to look at the sick. I just had to view it. To see it in all its awfulness. To contemplate just how things had come to pass. To meditate on the succession of events that had brought about its genesis.

Evidently it had happened on Friday night. Presumably its owner had been too inebriated to clean it up.

I should describe it: the toilet seat was up. The streak of sick draped itself across the rim, with part running down into the bowl like the Milky Way galaxy spread majestically across the heavens; and the other end falling over the side of the toilet rim and – with an interruption of free space – continuing its path outwards across the toilet floor.

In terms of consistency and colour it was a pasty pink and yellow and bore much resemblance to a (seafood selection) lentil soup. In addition, if you got close to it, it gave off a powerful acidic stench, the odour of which, as I now write, I can still bring back upon my nostrils at will.

Creeping up cautiously toward the toilet, I pulled the chain, flushing away the swathe of Milky Way sick that had been resting in the bowl.

However the sphere of influence of the toilet waters did not encompass the outer reaches of the toilet bowl, and the sick positioned on, and hanging over the toilet rim could only be removed by human intervention alone.

There was absolutely no possibility of toileting like this. This toilet was out of action. So too of course was toilet number one.

Thus did I find myself back to square one. Things were in a right mess again.

Yet I was extremely philosophical this time, there was something very final about all of this, just as the man condemned to penal servitude at first resists his shackles and attempts to break free, but eventually, after so many whips of his overseers chain, comes to the solemn and sad conclusion, that there's nothing he can do and accepts his fate.

Or even, more specifically, I couldn't help recollect the struggles of the Nez Perce tribe of North America and their diplomat-leader Chief Joseph as they attempted to resist the encroaches of the white man and made off time and again from their reservation.

Only to concede, after so many marches, battles and struggles, after so much injury and suffering to their men, women and children, that there was nothing for it but to accept defeat and bow to the inevitable onslaught of the pale face.

When he finally gave up so said Chief Joseph: 'I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed; Looking Glass is dead, Too-hul-hul-sote is dead. The old men are all dead.....It is cold, and we have no blankets; the little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food.....I want to have time to look for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs! I am tired; my heart is sick and sad.....'

My heart was sick and sad too.

In any case I had a plan B up my sleeve.

During all the toilet drudgery of the past few weeks, I'd often considered ditching these lavatories, and instead opting to use the downstairs ones, which are, admittedly, somewhat further afield.

Now my mind had been made up for me.

Looking gravely and profoundly just one more time at the sicked-up toilet; and placing one hand on my heart whilst raising my other arm aloft I looked Heaven ward; and like Chief Joseph had once done a century or so before me, I proclaimed: 'from where the sun now stands, I will toilet here no more forever.'

As a ceremonial gesture I shut the door of cubicle two; the door of cubicle one stood likewise. As I walked out I thought of the improvidence of the sickly vomiter.

Of course when you're in the throes and passions of being sick; when you're kneeling on all fours with your head down the bowl and your hands desperately grasping the sides; when all you want to do is lie down on the floor and die; and when your vision is blurred so that you can't see clearly anyway – when you are in

the throes of this agonizing ordeal then you're not really in any fit state to wipe up your sick.

Nevertheless, surely in the sobering light of day, when you realize the full horror of the crime, surely the sick perpetrator when he saw his mess would have conscience enough to wipe it up.

Yet I could see which way the wind was blowing: everybody would complain about it, everybody would blame each other for it, everybody would pass the buck as it were. And the cleaner wouldn't do it either. So would it remain.

But as an addendum to this entry I have to pass comment on my own ill-behaviour on Friday night.

According to my last entry, though I don't at all remember it, I pissed all over the floor.

True as things now stood there was no evidence of my scrawled name writing on the tiles. Nevertheless, I have to concede that we're all given to excess and anti-social behaviour at one time or another, some more than others it's true; yet all the same in light of my misdemeanours I was in no fit state to judge others.

Tuesday May 16th

So did a new life begin for me in the downstairs toilets today.

They're situated on the bottom floor of the building – our department is on the seventh – and are therefore reached by way of a lift.

In theoretical terms it would be correct to state that these reception toilets are almost equidistant to our office as our own toilets are on the seventh floor.

But the machinations of the lift, its temperamental nature and inconsistent arrivals when you call it, means that there's much ado to get on to it, and when you are on it, it seems to go hither and thither and stop at every other floor.

Thus should it be regarded as time wasting this foraging abroad of mine for an alternative toilet; except if anyone does complain, I'll just point them to the sicked-up and shit-gloried states of toilets two and one respectively, and thereby justify these wanderings of mine.

The thing about the toilets at reception is that, according to standard practice, there are separate ones for both men and women.

Thus do I find myself back on the safe-ground-homesoil of the little boys' room. As such, in addition to a row of three lavatories, there's also a little row of three urinals.

As you enter the gents you walk past these urinals if you're headed to one of the cubicles.

Now it's not my intention to immediately start sharpening my knives and getting out my handbag over the state of the reception toilets, on the back of all the shit that's been happening upstairs on seventh floor.

But nevertheless there's no way in this world that I can just brush over the presence of urine pools on the floor of the gents, in the vicinity of the urinals, which were presumably the intended resting place of the puddle forming pee.

Notwithstanding that such pools are in themselves offensive, in the present instance they manifested themselves just to the right of my walkway into the

cubicles; and though treading carefully I might avoid them, still, I felt they were too close for comfort.

As I squatted in the cubicle over the pot, I couldn't help getting myself worked up once more over human improvidence.

Damn those ruddy fools, those misfiring knaves who couldn't hit a barn door from ten paces! Damn them, those incorrigible and eternal antagonists of the anal attentive, obsessive-compulsive, uptight hygiene freak such as moi.

I tell you, till the day the human race breathes its last, I'll guarantee you, even if they enlarge the size of urinals in the post-modern world that is our future, still, some men will always shoot wide of the mark, even as in football, so many Englishmen will miss a penalty. T'is our destiny.

But seriously, that the requisite skills of eye-coordinated aim and fire necessary to carry out a clean-flowing, target-hitting urination are also of substantial import in related fields is borne out by the fact that, on both occasions that I've been to Germany – a country where scoring penalties is as commonplace as going to the lavatory – I've found the toilet floors there to be immaculate.

In light of our nation's recent and eternal mishaps abroad, with many commentators calling for penalty taking to form part of the National Curriculum, I here propose that we must go that one step further and tackle the roots of the problem.

By insisting on the misfiring of urine as a crime, with on the spot fines, Antisocial Behaviour Orders and three strikes and you're out for offenders, not only will we bring our toilet floors into a higher state of grace, but also will we encourage the crucial skills needed for penalty taking.

If we are to advance as a nation, if we are to keep up with our European neighbours, and if we are finally to reclaim the World Cup as our own then such measures are essential.

Thursday May 18th

You know one of the drawbacks of working for a computer company, where so many of the employees are middle class and of liberal bent – readers of the Independent, Observer and the Guardian – is that you're always going to have colleagues who care too much for the environment and who go to extremes to protect it.

I mean please, I'm all for saving the planet, 110%, but I don't see that we have to be so radical about doing it.

Today I had to work late into the evening.

At 7.30pm, the office pretty much deserted, I took off for a well-earned toilet break. But halfway through the machinations and in mid-defecation, an unknown colleague of mine entered the toilets, and, after urinating, decided to do the world a good turn by switching off the lights.

During his presence at the urinal I had been completely quiet it's true, not only as there was little forthcoming at the time, but also because I didn't want to embarrass myself in front of him, as foolish as that may now sound.

But still, I think he was entirely to blame for leaving me stranded like this, and planted in position as I now was, like a jelly fish that's missed the tide, I could only scream and curse at him for his stupid act in the vain hopes he might hear my pleas; but all to no avail for he'd long gone.

Thus I found myself, angered and enraged, sightless and abandoned, impudent and in the dark.

The wheel of fortune had cast me adrift and set the cats of catastrophe creeping dangerously toward the pigeons. The dogs of destiny had barked out their orders and the four horsemen of the apocalypse had saddled their mounts. The hands of fate had left me teetering on the brink of an all out dirty pants disaster.

As the noose of iniquity tightened around my neck it seemed that I had two options ahead of me: either stay, remain in position and wait until another colleague entered, and when he did, alert him by some sort of sound to my perilous position; or, throwing caution to the wind, tidy myself up to some extent and as best I could in the dark and then sally forth out into the open, hoping to reach the holy covenant of the light switch.

Deciding that, with few people around at this time of night I might have to wait forever, and that in any event it would somehow reflect badly upon me if I revealed, even without giving up my identity, that someone had blacked me out in this fashion, I resolved my dilemma and decided on the latter course.

Many risks lay ahead of me.

My first task was of course to carry out a first phase wipe up operation, to get my bum into some sort of working order.

Though of course in the dark you could never be sure 100% and the risk of some excrement slipping through my radar, and then surprising me later on and dropping to my pants as I walked was a very real one.

But of course in battle, and indeed in life nothing is certain. If it were our time upon this planet would not be worth living. The uncertainties of life, the mystery of the unknown, the random revelations of the Russian roulette, the whys and wherefores of our very existence – it is these that define us as human beings.

In addition, when I thought I was clean, should I raise my pants up properly and risk almost certain dirtying? Or should I keep them down, and wade out pants around the ankles, to the light?

Of course in both instances I ran the risk of a colleague of mine entering the toilet, switching on the lights and catching me. In the first instance I would only be discovered to have been the victim of a cruel blackout; whereas in the second case I would be lit up baring all, exposed like a flasher, no doubt frightening the life out of my co-worker. In either case my path was fraught with peril.

I thought it through. Even if I *did* keep my pants down, there was every chance that excrement might, in the process of waddling, disengage itself from my butt and fall down on my pants.

Thus, really in both plans I was likely to get my clothes dirty. The *pants-up* plan therefore seemed the most sensible option.

But then, even though I was likely to soil my clothes in the pants-down ploy, there was a chance, however small, that I might make it unscathed.

It would be a gamble that was for sure. I held council with myself and thought it over.

Eventually I smoked the pipe of war. Cometh the hour cometh the man. Generals are made on the battlefield not in the classroom.

Having a rush of blood to the head, I decided to chance the second option, and for some reason, perhaps it being late evening on a Thursday night, a wave of adrenaline spread through me and I was desperate to undertake my mission.

As I stood before the door I felt really pumped up: it was like waiting to be landed by the ferry before storming the beach at Normandy. 'Let's do it!' I cried.

Unlocking the door, I slowly proceeded. Caution. Stealth. Concentration. Night-mission. Night-hawk. Night-fox.

The old adage 'more speed and less haste' seemed appropriate here since it was imperative to reach the switch ASAP, but at the same time not to dash out so heedlessly that I might dislodge, any cast off excrement entangled in my coarse hair, that would otherwise, provided I moved gently, remain where it was.

Of course my whole motion was thwarted by the pants around the ankles, and my manner of propagation, across the toilet floor, was somewhat in the manner of a three-legged-race competitor.

I proceeded steadily, halfway to my goal. It suddenly crossed my mind that the position of the urinals in close proximity to the switch might mean that when I walked to the light, my pants – touching the floor as they were – might get a good soaking in the urine puddles.

I stopped in my tracks cautiously. Hadn't I seen, when I entered, exactly such a puddle, beneath the urinal and in direct opposition to my course? I thought it through. Damn those improvident misfiring knaves!

I stood in contemplation. For a second, in complete abandonment of my situation, I felt a total thrill at being naked like this. I mean it was pure liberation.

And then all of a sudden I heard a noise on the stairs. Someone was coming!

I leapt back, my heart absolutely pounding. Desperately I scrambled back as best I could, yet at the same time I tread carefully to try and avoid excrement-dislodgement.

When I got back to the booth, I quietly, quietly shut the door, and there inside, thrilled to have got back to my base, I found myself on such a high after my dare devil escapade that I wanted to burst out laughing. But I kept myself in check only going through the motions and opening my mouth in a mock scream.

My heart was absolutely pounding and I waited for the entrance of whoever it was with an agony of nerves.

I couldn't help being reminded, in reviewing my exploits, of a prisoner with chains around his feet who tries to escape his captors when they're not around, only to have to hobble with pace back to his cell, when they return to visit him.

Yes indeed, shackled as I was yet determined to free myself from the confines of this night-time toilet dungeon I was another Kunte Kinte, the never-say-die African slave who ever and anon fought to steal off from his masters.

Yet something was wrong here, for no-one had entered. They must have been going elsewhere. Thus I would have to wait still further for my reprieve.

Five minutes later, I sallied out once more, and this time activated the light and returned to base. Mission complete!

The only casualty that I could descry was a wetted stretch of pants – this was due to the urine puddles. In terms of crap-related injuries I seemed to have escaped unpunished.

Ten minutes later I marched out of the cubicle with my head (and my pants) held high. The trousers would have to be washed when I got home but otherwise could I count my lucky stars for so delivering me.

Tuesday May 23rd

Unlike the toilets upstairs, where the two cubicles are separated by a wall that begins on the toilet floor, the toilets in reception have cubicles separated from one another only by walls that begin some ten centimetres or so above the floor.

Now in the midst of my mid-morning toilet today, I found myself rudely intruded upon by some colleague who would fain set up shop next door to me.

Annoyed as I was by this, there was no possibility of calling it a day, as I was, so to speak, halfway to France across the channel.

Thus would I have to swim to shore with this neighbour of mine upon my back. Unless however he was just here to urinate?

Taking a moment during his ensuing pre-toilet tension, and bending my head down to my knees as I squatted there, I was able to look through the small gap between wall and floor and so ascertain the foot direction of my co-toileter.

But it was bad news: the feet faced outwards and not inwards, pointing toward a second-style toilet and not a number one.

My colleague now made a start to his business not only with a tremendous amount of noise of his own making, but also with a full cacophony of resounding toilet-bowl echoes that chimed in Calypso style, and complemented his own particular tune.

So did he volley and thunder with his excrement splashing into the pool with a perfect kerplunk!

Now, dear diary, unhappy as I may be to report this, it was abundantly evident from the reverberations and echoes of the toilet bowl, as this chap relieved himself, that he was sitting on the toilet.

For the echoes so produced could only have been made by someone who not only placed his posterior close to the bowl; but more than that, by someone who shut out the possibility of air escaping the bowl, in short someone who, with the addition of his backside, formed a sealed off and tight-knit drum of a toilet bowl.

Thus had my clever use of echo-location brought me evidence of the *sit-technique*.

Well, each to their own as they say. I guess I shouldn't be too put out or depressed.

After all I've had previous evidence that there are other squatters out there. Who knows, perhaps in the fullness of time, the truth will out, and squatters other than yours truly will come out of the closet.

Although he'd begun with little inhibition, my neighbour now desisted from proceeding further, presumably out of embarrassment that he was the only one of us who was daring to break the silence.

Of course since his entry I hadn't had the nerve to continue and was as quiet as a mouse.

And now that awful, awful tension had descended upon us, that horrific pregnant silence, infested with the unrelieved desires, anguish and tension of the two combatants, that agonizing pressure cooker scenario.

Neither of us would dare make a move, I could see that. Yet I couldn't bare the tension any longer and wanted desperately to put an end to my toilet.

Accordingly, I came up with the ploy of flushing the chain, thereby buying both of us a bit of time in which to toilet freely. It was a window of opportunity for the two of us.

Yet I soon found that the window was closing. As such I once more brought a halt to proceedings as the flush quietened itself down.

And now the silence and tension resumed. Although in one further flush I could probably reach fourth bay as it were, I felt very self-conscious of pulling the chain again, because I sensed that my neighbour, listening next door, knew the chain flush to be only a ruse on my part, a camouflage for myself under which I had license to poo, a tactic of the field, a diversion created to mask my ill-sounding deeds.

Yet throwing aside these thoughts as foolishly paranoid on my part, with tremulous hand I yanked once more, and in the passage of time so afforded, affected a finish to my toilet.

On completion of wipe up, I left the cubicle, and after washing my hands, the toilets.

Later on as I was coming up in the lift, this time after a different visit to the toilet, we stopped at floor two. A middle-aged man got on.

I've seen him around quite a bit. I think he's fairly high up in the company, perhaps third or fourth in the hierarchy. He often comes onto our floor to speak with Dave, his inferior.

He has a moustache and doesn't tend to smile much, but on the contrary has a concentrated, serious expression.

In fact I've often found myself in the lift with him, just as now. And though it's my habit in general to smile politely and make eye contact with my colleagues, on those occasions when my eyes have alighted on the eyes of this chap, he's always moved them askance and appeared to be displeased by my presence.

True, you might say that's just to be expected since he is by far my superior and also my elder. Yet all the same, it's not very nice for me, and I've always felt like an unwelcome passenger as we've gone up silently in the lift together.

For all these reasons, when ascending with this chap, I usually just keep my head down and eyes fixed on the floor.

Yet today, well, lo and behold! I recognized those shoes. Now where had I seen them before?

Ha! They were the outward facing, second-toilet-indicating shoes of my co-toileter this morning. He of the echo-reverberations.

And now, thanks to my nifty detective work, I had matched not only the shoes to their owner, but also the crime to the perpetrator. It was nice to put a sound to a face.

On floor six the lift halted. And the gentleman got off.

As I proceeded to floor seven alone, I couldn't help laugh to myself. Somehow or other, by acquiring this secret information on this chap, not only had I brought him down to a more basic human level but I'd also gotten something on him, and felt myself promoted up the ladder.

I didn't feel so inferior now as if, in a moment of revelation, I'd seen that the playing board of life is not linear, but that there are sneaky secret paths and devious short-cut wormholes through which to advance.

Friday May 26th

It's been a week now since I've been in the seventh floor toilets, and, getting sick of making the lift journey, I decided to make a visit to our own toilets.

You know as I walked along the corridor I was quietly optimistic that by this time the sick may have disappeared; yet on the other hand, knowing fine well just how these things went, I didn't really get my hopes up.

Rightly so as it turned out.

Stepping cautiously in, I once more became silent and with the reverence one assumes when viewing a corpse or some mind-bogglingly mysterious manifestation, I became unaware of all else around me and engrossed myself in studying the sick.

It lay precisely as it had done a week ago, perfectly preserved, the same colour and in the same position – draped over the toilet rim, falling backwards and to the right, and finishing itself on the floor.

The only difference was that it had hardened up (like porridge when it gets a skin on it; or better still, like a scab that appears after a cut on the knee). It looked like fungus, hardened fungus, or pebble dashed stone encrusted on the toilet rim.

Had it not been sick, then to touch it, to run one's hand across its rough and tough texture, would have been a joyous and nerve-relieving sensation like stripping naked and rolling about on the rocks like a dog.

Anyway if anyone was going to remove it now, then a mission of mammoth proportions lay ahead of them.

Getting myself into a tizzy once more over the improvident culprit – whoever it was who'd done this must have been ashamed for Heaven's sake! – I left the cubicle giving it up for hopeless, my faith in humanity rapidly dwindling.

One piece of good news however is that toilet number one would appear to be partially back in play.

Whether it's blocked up or not I don't know; but the revolting patterns which coloured its sides have now been removed.

Still, I think I'll continue to use the downstairs toilets.

Tuesday June 6th

I don't know what it is with some people, but on several occasions I've observed workers in our office's entering or leaving the toilet with a book in their hand.

Today it was some guy who works downstairs. As I was walking into the toilets, he came out, carrying a crime novel, casual as you like.

I mean it's not just the fact that people may read in the toilet that gets me (though I'll confide to you dear diary that I find such people thorough weirdoes).

But putting that to one side, what really irks me is that these people, like this chap today who strode out so confidently with a paperback in his paws, don't seem to be in the least embarrassed.

If I was he I would have hid it in my pocket, or, if it was too large for that, I would have wrapped it up in my jacket and carried my jacket.

But not for this guy. Oh no. He was nonchalant about others spying his book. In fact I'd even go farther and suggest that he was proud; there was a certain amount of bravado in his step as he swaggered out macho-pose from the toilet, his novel under his arm.

If truth be told the majority of men who adhere to this cult do seem to be of the older generation. Perhaps it's a rites of passage thing I don't know, and maybe I'll take it up too when I come of age.

However it's the bravado of it that gets me: it's like they're saying to the world and his wife, I'm a man, I'm a fully grown man, I'm one of the chiefs and I'm going out, with the good book in my hand, to take a manly dump.

And just like a priest setting forth with his Bible, ready to convert the unbelievers and supremely confident in his own calling, so to do these men go to the toilet.

In fact on one occasion I saw two of these 'priests' meet each other, book in hand outside the entrance.

One was going in, the other going out. They stopped for a parlay, completely heedless of onlookers.

It puzzles me, it really does, that they should act like this. What if some women saw them?

Sunday June 11th

What a beautiful day! We're having such an Indian summer that on a day off like today I just had to wear my shorts.

Having been out for a day in the country, I returned home via town and stopped off in M&S for a dump. Stripping down naked as usual – an easy task when you're just in your shorts – I assumed the squat position and began the transaction.

Due to the vehement outpouring of my output; and to the slip-slop diarrhoea nature of its form; and also due to the casual, rather complacent positioning of my buttocks in relation to the pot, it came to pass that I discharged a poorly controlled shit-shower; of which several bits of straying excrement failed to find their target and ended up on the floor and on my legs.

Now currently as I stood I was in no position to attend to my legs; it being impossible to reach them and look them over properly without standing up, and it being too perilous at present (dirty backside in mind) to give up the squat position.

Thus I decided to hold my current position, proceed with the toilet, and thereafter sort out my legs.

But temporary amnesia blighting me, after completing my toilet, I redressed, washed my hands and returned to the interior of the shop, it only dawning on me now that I hadn't bothered to scrutinize my legs.

My immediate reaction was to turn around on the spot and go back into the toilet. But not wanting to arouse suspicion I realized that my only option was to run the gauntlet of shoppers and try and reach the safety of another toilet in another shop.

This I did, keeping my head down and walking at pace, and imagining all of the time that my legs were dotted, like a Dalmatian dog, with the fallout from my recent discharge.

When I reached the new toilet – in British Home Stores in fact – a preliminary examination of my legs quickly allayed my fears and showed that I'd been worrying about nothing; in sooth I could find no evidence of excrement, though at the time of impact I was of the firm belief that I'd received *multiple shit-hits*.

Nevertheless it highlights one of the risks involved in wearing shorts; risks that we don't often consider and of which no public or private agency warns us.

Wednesday June 21st

Agh! What a splendid holiday I'm having.

Today I visited Beamish, an open air museum, an incredible place, a sort of recreated 1920s village with all manner of houses, shops, coal mines, railway stations, schools and farms preserved as they were eighty years or so ago and with antiquated trams and buses in which to ride around the province.

On climbing a hill on my way to the farm, the beautiful sunshine hot upon my back, I saw to the left of the meandering path what looked to be a tiny shed.

My curiosity taking me yonder, and opening up the door, I realized to my delight that I'd stumbled upon an old fashioned out-house toilet.

It couldn't have been more simple: wooden walls, a wooden ceiling and a wooden floor; upon which floor was a wooden box or step, or more accurately just a bench on which you would normally sit except that cut into this bench were two holes side by side.

Beneath the holes, the space inside the box was occupied by a grey ash, which rose to such a level that the gap betwixt it and the holes in the top was probably less than the standard – backsplash creating – distance between seat and pool that one finds today in our modern lavatories.

What a remarkable thing it was. I have to admit I spent a good ten minutes in contemplation of it, during which time, struck deep in meditation, I assumed the position in order to try and transport myself back to the lifestyle of our ancestors.

Yet one detail that had immediately struck me as exceptionally odd was the fact that two holes should be thus cut out in tandem so to speak, so that two people could use the facilities, simultaneously, side by side.

Really, this did appear to be rather peculiar. Who on earth in their right mind would toilet with their neighbour, hand in hand as it were, throwing to the wind all notion of privacy?

It reminded me of the situation in prisons, where the policymakers have gone to all the trouble of walling off the prison into rooms holding just two people; when it would seem to me that if you **are** going to compartmentalize the jail, it would be well worth going that one step further, and reducing each of the cells down to two further separate ones, so that the inmates are not given the chance to become bedfellows.

Indeed I could well understand, given the poverty of our antecedents, a toilet-bench constructed with say ten holes carved out of the wood, so that it formed a veritable firing range.

However the installation of only a pair of loos next to each other in duality appears to me to be quite obscene. Who knows perhaps our forefathers were more liberated than we are today, and enjoyed bonding with their pals as toilet-fellows.

Incidentally, the proper toilets here at Beamish were in excellent condition (and catered for single toileters like myself), as I had the privilege to discover on several different trips made at various locations on the site.

Saturday June 24th

Ha! Ha! Ha! Oh! What a holiday this is turning out to be! I really can't believe it.

Today I visited an excavated Roman fort. A talk was given inside the associated museum by the curate, to an audience comprised mainly of parents with their children.

When the talk was over the curate asked if there were any questions.

Raising my hand, I inquired about how the Romans toileted. This brought forth a good burst of laughing from the audience, children and parents alike, although the curate himself seemed quite annoyed with me. He gave me a brief answer and then tried to move on.

However I wouldn't be put off and pursued my point; and seeing that I was in earnest, and was very much interested to expand my knowledge on this score, the general mirth of the audience soon gave way to something like shock and disbelief before finally subsiding into fear; and giving me strange looks from askance, parents grabbed hold of their children's hands and evacuated the room.

It having quickly emptied, I was now left alone with the curate.

I persisted with my enquiries, though he tried in every way to deflect them. I could see that he was keen to tell me of other facets of Roman life such as the armour worn by soldiers, of the Gods to whom they prayed, or of the mysterious decline the empire suffered in the latter stages of its life.

But later on, when we headed out to look around the fort, he took me to the remnants of the toilet block. Becoming quite impassioned, he explained to me the toilet system employed.

Apparently the Romans toileted in a communal block, a relatively large building with a row of 'seats' running down both sides of the two largest walls of the room; and with a gutter underneath the seats, in which ran a little channel of water that

carried away the Romans gift to our nation, spreading it to the neighbouring countryside, where it enriched the soils, a legacy to this very day.

Thus it was a communal thing, and later I saw an artist's impression of some Roman men toileting in good spirits. I mean they were having a whale of a time, chatting to each other, jesting with one another, and larking about as they each sat upon the bench in defecation, totally unashamed of their nudity and bodily functions.

You know I take back what I said in my last entry about it being obscene that two people should toilet together. My eyes have been opened now, I've seen the light.

How natural and liberating, how much good fun and amusement it amounts to, what male bonding does it bring about, this toileting in groups like this.

No, team-toileting is the way to do it. Modern man has lost his way. The ancients knew how to live. We've become isolated, lonely individuals cut off in flesh and blood from other men.

We are no more than mere automatons with the state as central controller, separated and apart, each to their own, each man for himself, alone in our homes, disconnected from the heartbeat, blood-rush sensual life-reality.

It is symptomatic of the current plight of man; a symbol of our severance from the cup of life.

We must return to the old ways, the dark secret ways of the ancients: men who understood with their hearts, men who bonded together in sensual activity, men who were perfectly at ease with their animal nature: the life-blood-phallus philosophy of primitive man.

In their hands many of the men had little brushes like the kind you might use to do the washing up nowadays – you know the ones which are essentially only a handle, at the end of which you apply a sponge – which they used to wipe, or perhaps I should say wash, their backside after use.

The curate informed me that it was still a matter of some controversy as to whether the brushes were communal or whether each individual had their own.

We chatted for some time, but eventually hearing so much of this subject and becoming a tad tired, I told the curate of my desire to just spend a few minutes or so by myself, in contemplation.

At first he didn't seem to understand, but then realising what I meant bade me goodbye. He walked off over the hill.

I was left alone at the sight. Standing bolt upright and with serious and passionate eyes I gazed out over the fabulous countryside, the sweeping valley and hills, the Roman road hastening its way forever onward in a forced march across the pastoral panorama.

The sun on the opposite sky, the clouds few in number and fleeting. No-one was about me, I was perfectly alone, only a solitary crow, a little way off came down to land and then took off again with a mournful caw-caw which seemed to hang in the air eternally.

The toilets of former times lay in tatters before me, their threadbare ruins a ghost-shadow of their once upon a time glory; I paused and reflected on days gone by.

Thursday June 29th

Squash tonight. Before playing I always like to partake of both incarnations of toilet and thus relieve myself of excess baggage before the evening's events.

Going into the toilet area, I entered one cubicle only to find it devoid of toilet paper. Likewise, when I entered the other I found nothing but the miserable and corpse-like cardboard inner tube of a once no doubt bountiful toilet roll.

Deciding that I just couldn't do without the toilet, I headed boldly to reception to acquire some more.

Fortunately it was a man I found there manning the desk.

Now, however bold and sure of myself as I was, still I had trouble getting my words out, became tongue-tied and indeed even when the guy asked me to repeat myself, I could only but whisper the words once more, hoping that my facial expressions, indicating quite exaggeratedly that this was an altogether awkward situation, might give hint to him enough to appreciate just what I was getting at.

He understood what I meant the second time and went out back to get some.

At this point I immediately set off back to the toilets, meaning for him to carry the new roll there himself.

For I'd gone through this in my mind: if I was stupid enough to transport the paper there myself then I would have to traverse a corridor full of people with it in my hand, an emblem of my coming deed, a statement of intent, a poorly-disguised portender of things to come.

Indeed the picture would speak a thousand words. Whereas if I left it to him to take it, not only was that what I might expect as a paying customer, but in any case as regards himself being seen with some toilet roll, well, nobody would care, since they would just think that he was doing his job.

Having returned to the toilets and standing nearby, a passage of several minutes was ended with the arrival of the sports centre employee and the requested loo roll.

I'd expected he'd bring in one or two bouncy, big new rolls, but in fact all he had were the last leftovers of a well-spun roll, the remnants of toilets past, in short a few short scraps that he'd evidently had to scrounge from elsewhere. Nevertheless, giving it a cursory glance, I thought it would suffice.

However, as the attendant came over to me, and as we made eye contact, he decided that he shouldn't pass me the paper directly, which now, as I stood safely in the inner bowels of the men's toilet I was happy to take; but should instead deliver it to the toilet for me, and leave it there, somewhat anonymously, like a drugs package drop off – this being his respect for the etiquette I'd put in place of *non-identification of toiletgoers*.

Though truth on tongue, I don't believe he really understood this etiquette – he was more ladish than I – and cast upon me a peculiar glance as he went by.

Anyway all of this was fine, except that I forgot to mention that when I'd originally gone into the toilets to make a provisional check of the toilet paper on offer, I couldn't help but notice that at the bottom of one of the toilets, there sat a king-Kong super-dump, stubbornly lying at the base of the pool.

Bathing in the waters and refusing to be flushed away; arrogantly and obnoxiously brooding there like an overfed animal in its lair; and shrouded in a yellow-golden mystic nebula; an aurora that it gave off and which diffused throughout the environs.

As I followed up the attendant as he surreptitiously set down my gear in its place, I noticed that his eyes were tempted toward the hole and got a snap-shot glimpse of the beast that lurked therein.

Now I knew, I knew it only too well, that when he turned around to go and leave me in peace, he couldn't help but take a sideways glance at me and accuse me – nay silently torment me in what he'd deduced was my hour of agony – of not only being father to that over-inflated, overfed and arrogant little shit, that sat there insolently at the bottom of the pot; but also of having had to leave my offspring in its incubator as it were, while I sallied out, in the most inconvenient of circumstances, in a desperate hunt for toilet roll.

Yet there was nothing but to accept this accusation, since it was only a silent one and therefore I couldn't refute it.

In fact if I had have protested my innocence there and then, I would have only have been digging myself in deeper.

That guy had put two and two together and made fifty; and I couldn't help conclude that appearances can be deceptive.

Monday July 3rd

This morning as I stood waiting for the tube, I had one of those awful nerve-ridden Monday morning moments, when carrying out a routine break of wind, I thought that I might have failed to control it and that I'd accidentally gone to the toilet in my underpants.

Some five minutes later however when the tube arrived, still unsure as to what the precise state of play was, I threw caution to the wind and chanced to find out my fate by *sitting down*.

If there's one thing I've learnt in life it's that *man is improvident*. Fortunately however, it would appear that all was well and that I'd passed this Russian roulette test of mine.

This sort of thing happens to me quite often, especially in the morning when I'm full of nerves and especially since I'm the sort who's disposed to worry.

Yet in truth, I find that only once say in every ninety-nine times out of a hundred have my worst fears been realised and my pants taken a soiling.

In the majority of instances it turns out to be a hoax. Nevertheless one has to deal with each call as if it were real.

But as to the method of discovering my fate: I think it's inherent in our genetic make-up to play Russian roulette like this, and to take risks for a quick hit rather than just tread the steady line of standing all the way to work and learning the outcome there.

And in truth I think it's more than just risk-taking that is involved here.

The human psyche is a strange one and I can't help feel that some part of me craved that worst case scenario, of having to head to work on a Monday morning

with dirty underwear, and that by sitting on my backside, and so forcing it unceremoniously together with my underwear and enflaming the situation thus, I was trying to compound my misery and let all the dogs go to hell.

For the dreariness of life is such that we humans need disaster, danger and chaos to help us through the drudgery of our days.

When I got to work I rechecked more scientifically and in a non-destructive fashion, that my butt was clean by providing a backside smear sample: the results were negative.

By the way, I'm back in the toilets upstairs these days, the times of the hardened sick having long gone.

Thursday July 6th

Speaking of Russian roulette, it strikes me that by keeping this diary as I do, that's exactly what I'm playing.

For where I might as yesterday write smugly about having escaped a worst case toilet-in-the-pants scenario, I might very well on the next day set myself up for the most disastrous of falls.

Truly I'm dancing with the devil in keeping this diary, and if Beelzebub decides he wants to up the tempo of this memoir, and plunge me into an abyss of toilet horrors, then I guess I'll only have myself to blame.

And in relation to that I can't help feeling I've gone a bit too far at times with this diary, gorging myself on the banquet of schadenfreude put my way.

Relating the tale of the guy on the train who showed a girl the contents of his toilet; or going on about the guy I exposed or the student exchange girl who stinked out the privy.

True I didn't name and shame them or anything like that, but still those people might have expected that, even if I had borne witness to their embarrassing situations, I might have honourably kept it to myself, instead of committing it to writing and setting it down in history as I've done.

I had been ready to go to the toilet for some half hour or so this morning, but since I was keen to finish off a bit of work I remained at my desk till it was done.

Yet when it was, all ready to head to the toilets as I was, Dave came up to me and asked me if I had a minute? 'Of course' said I, in polite, pleasant tones. There was some important business he wanted to tell me of.

Yet it transpired that the 'important business' involved only Dave explaining to me things – concerning one of our projects – that he'd already told me how to do.

As I stood there listening politely, nodding and yeahing as we went, I wondered why he was telling me all this again.

There was nothing new in what he was saying. What was up with him? Was his memory going on him? Or had he simply got sick of working on his lonesome and decided to come have a change of scenery and chat with me?

I couldn't tell but in any case, with all my polite façading, when all I really wanted to do was race off to the toilets – oh boy was I exasperated. And believe me, the shit was desperate to get out of my arse.

It had a will of its own. Just as when you're speaking to another adult and one of your children stands at your feet bored to tears and nagging you to be away; and though you sympathize with them fully and want to be away yourself, but know that you must keep up appearances and talk politely with the adult – so too did I find myself now.

My toilet offspring would fain be out. It wanted to be out! Please daddy! And it was beginning to be agony to hold it back.

I could feel it coming as though its end was already pointing out my posterior and touching my underpants. Just as the head of a baby emerges from out of its mother's womb.

Finally Dave did away and I was free to toilet.

Yet unbelievably, just as I was singing the good Lords praises under my breath and setting out for some seventh Heaven toilet relief, he returned to my desk, a bit preoccupied and asked if he hadn't introduced me to the new girl, Catherine?

'No' I said with false pretence, hiding my agony, and intimating – as Dave so wished it – that I wanted to meet her.

So did we go over to Katie's desk and, with the usual pleasant but meaningless smiles and bon-hommie that accompany introductions did we thus say hello.

Dave doing all the talking, singing Catherine's praises and talking her up as his new star girl; Katie smiling all the while, pretending to be pleased by this lavish praise and attention, and at meeting me; and myself smiling and from time to time making eye contact with Katie and pretending to be delighted by Dave's words and surprised and happy as well – and all the while totally beside myself trying to avert an imminent toilet in the pants catastrophe.

It would have to be the boss and the new girl at a time like this wouldn't it! With anyone else I would have just said outright that I needed a shit.

But I was unable to show my true hand here and had to put on this poker face. And truly were the boys in the hen-coup desperate to get out and kick on with the action.

As though in the tunnel, waiting to run out onto Wembley for the cup final did my faeces now find themselves.

The introduction came to an end eventually, and I was able to head down the corridor liberated and enter the bathroom.

Yet in fates cruelest twist, when I passed through the wash basin area and entered the toilets proper I found both doors shut, both cubicles engaged.

No more room at the inn! Oh how I could sympathise with the pregnant Mary. The poor girl having to keep her legs crossed till Christmas day with the saviour of men determined to be out.

And what were the chances of that happening?

Actually you know, on reflection, I'm surprised it doesn't happen more often, given that there's near on twenty people on our floor and only two toilets. Though on second thoughts, I'm sure that if you sat down and did the math, you'd find that the chances of one meeting with 'double-doors' in the bathroom is very slim.

Nevertheless, it was today of all days that the roulette's ball had chanced to fall on number thirteen and I was in agony to see her do so.

Returning to the wash basin area, I there waited, requiring now all my concentration and effort to be employed in my sole aim of holding back the shit which threatened to leave my backside of its own accord.

Truly I was in the most terrible labour pains now; it just felt as though it would burst out without regard for anyone but itself. Desperately I took deep breaths, counted to ten and tried to relax and put it out of my mind.

If someone came in to the toilets now it would be necessary to enter into polite conversation with them. Good god I couldn't do that again!

The very thought of it made me bad and upset my concentration. I tried refocusing anew. I needed all of my energy steered toward one thing entirely. It was bad enough that I was in this state. But if I was to be so then I must struggle alone – only then would I have a chance of averting danger.

I was like Ghandi when he determined to starve himself till there was peace between India and Pakistan: setting himself his task and focusing with stoicism on that alone until the time came when it would all be over.

Accordingly, like one with something on their mind, like a lazy student who's spent the night before an exam cramming, and won't have their thoughts interrupted by man or beast as they enter the exam hall, did I now absent-mindedly head for a little off-room (a sort of store cupboard) in the bathroom and put up shop there in solitude to await my calling to the toilet.

Yet it didn't come quickly enough. Whomsoever were the bastards in there, they were both having marathon sessions. How some men sit back selfishly and satisfy their own bodily lusts while others are struggling in all out agony!

I now decided to go away in a manger: to the downstairs toilets and quick.

Walking the corridor and then through the office, with stiff, heavy legs as though I had cramp, did I thus reach the lift and press the button.

Now though there were two of them, one son of a bitch was out of order. Thus I waited on the solitary lift.

But it did not come. Bastard! You stupid piece of trash!

I could hear the bastard doing its rounds. I heard it come up to our floor; but then instead of stopping it went beyond. And I heard it descend to our floor but it halted not and continued below.

And I heard it stopping at various floors; heard the doors open, heard people get on and off, and heard them chat as if they had no worries in the world. I couldn't do this anymore!

Truly could I feel the spike of poo coming irresistibly out of my posterior. Resistance seemed futile.

The lift was next to useless. You know perhaps there would be a toilet free now.

Thinking it over I'd been stood here some several minutes. Surely one of those two would have finished by now. I headed back to the bathroom.

But alas no! 'Double-doors' awaited me shrouded in an aura of pregnant silence.

I now returned to the lift once more. Come what may I had determined to wait on it, take the ride, and reach the downstairs toilets, where, God-willing, there would be a free cubicle.

Eventually it arrived. I took my place and with grave, almost death like face, and stiff, concentrated posterior made my descent.

We stopped once at floor three; but whoever it was that got on, I saw them not, showing to them only an averted and tense face.

Then finally did we reach ground zero.

A child was to be born. The end was nigh. I could feel it coming. With haste I dashed to the toilets, found a free cubicle and dropped my pants.

But having come this far I didn't fail to undertake my usual pre-toilet ritual of wiping the rim with toilet paper. Partly because I'm a stickler for routine and partly because I'm a dare devil and now that I'd come this far, I wanted to prolong my agony a tad and so heighten my pleasure that bit further.

Deliverance finally came. In the most incredible and dramatic outpouring, the flood gates opened and a fledgling was ejaculated into the world.

Though it lasted but a second, I experienced a consummation of ecstasy, an instant of pure, pure relief, a moment of earth-trembling multiple orgasms.

Oh! Oh! Oh! I moaned. May the light of our Lord shine forevermore from the heavens. Oh my Lord, my saviour.

Wednesday July 19th

There's a gentleman in our department, a colleague of mine, whom I had something of a run in with today. I guess I should give a brief history of our relations.

His name is Jay, he's slightly older than myself and we both commenced working for the company on the same day.

In terms of physical appearance we are rather alike, and since we began together at the same time, people frequently got mixed up between us, often dubbing us as twins, a remark which neither of us finds flattering.

Jay is an intelligent, sensitive person, and if he's in a good mood he'll tell me this and that and I'll politely listen.

But if he's in a bad mood – and he does often get irritable – he's unable to keep this to himself and takes it out on his colleagues. If it's me he chooses to have a go at, I usually placate him and try to be nice to him and this keeps him at bay.

You see, we're something of kindred spirits, I feel, as regards personality, I too often getting irritable. The difference is though, is that I know how to control myself.

And of course as much as I feel sorry for Jay, in that he can't hold back his annoyance, still, since I can, I can't help feeling a slight contempt for him.

He's criticized me for several minor things in the past, for example not washing up coffee cups after I've used them; a petty, pathetic complaint, and not really true – in fact it's he who's often guilty of this crime – but one which I usually accept and thereafter put on a show of washing things up just to placate him, since as I say, I kind of feel sorry for him, and it's the honourable thing to do, and after all he is my senior.

But of late I've come to get a bit sick and tired of him and his whining, and moreover I can't help thinking it's actually a bit dishonourable and indeed unhelpful to Jay himself to just accept his complaints in silence, and then to inwardly despise him.

It seems to me, I'd feel far better – and so too would he – if I just stood up to him and told him to sod off. That way he wouldn't be allowed to get away with his unreasonable behaviour, and in as much would be happier, since who in this world enjoys being uncontrollably obnoxious?

Anyway such is the state of affairs we've come to.

This afternoon I made a brief visit to the toilet to disengage myself of a numero uno.

I know I've thus far pretty much restricted my entries to descriptions of toilets of the second persuasion, but I don't think I here break the rules by depicting a mid-afternoon urination.

The scene was, as usual, the office toilets located at the end of the long corridor. I left the vestibule area and went into the toilets proper. Each was unoccupied. Thus I entered the first choice, toilet number two.

Raising the seat and lid, and dropping my pants, I took hold and waited. Silence. Nothing but silence and tension. I felt a tightness in my chest, and felt a slight anger; but I calmed myself down and kept patient.

One cup of coffee and two cups of tea were on their way, and when they came there would be plenty – it was just a matter of patience. Silence. Still silence. And then relief.

Due to the powerful flood of urine and the suddenness with which it flowed out, I was initially caught by surprise and found myself shooting wide and flash-flooding the floor; but reacting to this, and readjusting my aim after this *first sighting*, I soon corrected my discharge and sprayed it happily into the pool.

The sound of my powerful urine arcing its way into the water was most splendid: a deep and penetrating, soothing, rhythmic melody.

However it's something of a policy with me to aim at the sides: specifically, I put a tractor beam on any stains of excrement that previous users were too improvident to remove.

You might argue that that's their business and not mine, but as a respectful member of the community, I feel it my duty to do whatever is in my power to maintain toilet sanitation.

Thus I re-sighted once more, and for the remaining duration of my discharge hosed down the sides – or more or less for the duration, since maintaining control of the flight path is no easy task, especially when the supply runs weak.

Aiming at two specific targets, which I alternated between, I attempted, by a lengthy and powerful inundation of yellow wine to dislodge their stubborn footholds; but though in theory the acidic content of wee should be a perfect agent in tackling these foul stains, anyone who's tried implementing this clean-up strategy, will be well aware that it's pretty ineffective.

At the end of the day, subjected to the rigours of my tractor-beam fire as they had been, I'd made only minor inroads into those tough-gripping, die-hard little remnants.

I should point out that twice during my honourable discharge the flow cried off and came to a full stop altogether; on both occasions, knowing fine well that there was still more in the tank, I merely held my stance, and waited patiently; it was not long before the reinforcements arrived.

The action being over, I began a full scale, top to toe, mop up operation, wiping dry the rim and paying especial attention to the floor to ensure it was restored to its puddleless state.

Thus ended my toilet and so too today's entry, I guess. Except that one further little incident occurred.

As I was halfway through my toilet, an unknown colleague of mine entered the cubicle next to me. He too began a urination, as became immediately apparent soon after his arrival.

However midway through, with his systems running at full capacity, he committed the most foul and dismal act: he broke wind, producing the most horrific, miserable little noise. It sounded like a duck-quacking.

Now I know that it's very tempting to do this, when one urinates – the muscles involved in bodily discharge being to some extent *dual coordinated* – but still, I have to say I would never do this, never ever.

No, as my honour and integrity are witness, I repeat, I would never commit such an indecent assault on the senses, especially in the presence of other people.

But the mystery culprit next door obviously did not hold allegiance to these principles of manly honour of mine, and he'd disseminated a foul little noise.

Actually, come to think of it, the way in which the sound escaped him; its exceptionally slow release; half furtively and almost shy and embarrassed as it was, did suggest that the gunman had in fact attempted to use a silencer.

But that unable to perform the necessary bodily coordinations required of him, his butt-muscles just unable to cope with the stress put upon them, the ill-sounding deviant had slipped through the net.

And the truth is I guess, that had he have just gone for it and let rip recklessly, then the sound would have been more pleasing on the ear. Anyway, whatever the case may be, the sour-full sound so produced meant that I couldn't help but despise him.

As I left my cubicle and walked past toilet number one I couldn't help notice, since the door was ajar, that the culprit with his back to me was none other than Jay.

Moving to the washbasins and washing my hands thoroughly I heard the chain flush in the next room, and the door, connecting the wash basin area with the toilets proper, was opened.

Now for whatever reason I immediately looked in that direction and as soon as Jay came into sight shot him a pleasant smile and greeted him as is my usual want with him.

But he didn't take it well. He seemed resentful and gave me something of an angry look as if to question my impudence, my impertinence. Then finally he greeted me back.

I have to say that truthfully, I only wished to be nice to Jay and address him as usual.

Yet I have to confess, I really have to confess, that on some subconscious level, my intentions were totally malicious, and that my smile was not a pleasant one but an ironic and knowing smile, and that I greeted Jay as much to say I've got a little file on you now, which records that on Wednesday July 19th, you committed a foul little act. Ha! Ha! Ha! I'll never let this down.

And this much he seemed to read into my smile. Evidently he was embarrassed by his dishonourable discharge, just as much as I would have been if I'd faux-compared publicly in that fashion.

And I'd compounded his misery, I'd rubbed salt in his wounds by giving him a knowing smile and telling him that I knew everything. Though again, in truth you know, I think I smiled at him as much to say 'Okay, so I know what you did, but still that's just life my son, I'm not going to hold it against you.'

Yet the effect was that he assumed me to have been cocky and malicious. In retrospect I should have kept my eyes glancing straight ahead and have left the toilets having kept my mouth shut.

But Jay was clearly annoyed, although he would never be able to prove a case against me. It hadn't done much for our already strained relations, and I couldn't help think of relatively minor incidents in history, such as the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by the Black Hand, that had been the precursor for much larger scale calamities.

Sunday July 30th

At the National Gallery today. I don't know who it is that determines toilet-planning policy here, but I can't say I approve of the absence of a toilet brush in the cubicle.

Actually this practice is rather widespread, with many shops, institutions and public places opting for a no-toilet brush strategy, presumably believing it to be more of a hindrance than a help in the war on toilet terror.

True, I've had first hand experience of it myself, of seeing the toilet brush misused and abused, seen it covered in crap and paper, seen it up to its neck in urine, so that it only becomes an additional collecting point for the toilet stains that be and a breeding ground for germs and disease.

Nevertheless, as a committed believer in the toilet brush, I do like to have it on hand.

At the end of today's proceedings then I found myself faced with a very dirty inside bowl.

Now not only was this not to my taste but it meant that it would be immediately visible to whomsoever entered the toilet after me.

You might think that I could have just lowered the lid so as to hide my crime. But alas no! For the toilets in the National Gallery are, rather controversially, *lidless*.

Thus would my masterpiece, my Turner prize nomination – it was probably too sophisticated to win – be nakedly exposed as I departed the cubicle.

And the horror of it was, was that I knew, since there had been a queue when I'd gotten here, that probably some unknown person would be waiting on me to finish, and, clocking me once as I came out, would then get a private viewing of my latest work.

However I could see there was nothing for it. If truth be told, things weren't really that bad, I was a man amongst men after all, and by and large nobody cares less about this sort of shit.

Brushing aside my anxieties as flowery effeminate niceties and telling myself to get along with it and to quit acting like a big girl's blouse did I thus open up the door of my cubicle, only to discover that the worst possible scenario of all had played itself out.

Not one but two little girls stood patiently before the door waiting for me to finish.

Evidently they were sisters. No sooner had I withdrawn myself than their father, conscious that other people were waiting besides, hurried them in with the words 'in you go girls'. The girls entered and the door slammed to.

Now I should say that not only were the girls going to get a detailed and in depth private viewing of my masterpiece, but also they were going to be choking on my malodorous stench, especially as they had been so hurriedly sealed off in there with the cubicle not given a chance to breathe.

Conscious that at any minute the girls might open up the door and rush out in a bid for freedom; conscious that they might come screaming out to their father; and conscious that I might be arrested for the asphyxiation of two minors, I made a very hurried exodus from the wash basin area and hastily abandoned the vicinity.

Yet on reflection the most bizarre thing of all, and indeed the most embarrassing for yours truly, was the age of the girls: they were at least eight if not older.

What perverted mind their father had, to bring them into the men's toilet instead of allowing them to go alone into what one would think was the more safer and more becoming women's toilets I do not know.

Saturday Aug. 5th

During a trip to town today I had to make a visit to the toilets in the food court.

Now I'll tell you dear diary that the food court itself is a fairly respectable eating establishment. Not so the toilets.

Really it's quite shocking, to find the toilets serving such a clean, well-frequented and happy eating house in such a grungy state.

A foul stench, a rotten, heavy odour accosted and choked one upon stepping through the door of the gents.

Not just the stink of toilets past; but truly something more macabre. A straight forward, sickly poop-poop gas on the surface of things; but underneath, once you'd smelt it a bit, there lurked an insidiously evil, rotting-fish come semen smell, that suggested that somewhere along the line the drainage system was very much faulty.

Horrible. And the toilet itself, well you name it, it had it: lewd graffiti all over the walls, urine splashes on the seat, excrement sweeping majestically across the bowl, dust on the rim, pubic hair on the rim, burn marks from cigarettes dotted on the seat, cellophane in the water – in short a toilet from hell.

And though the lock worked on my cubicle, the other cubicle which I'd originally tried to enter was lockless. For as I pushed back the door and tried to make an entrance, I'd had it rudely slammed back in my face – I hate it when that happens.

What is called for to improve the state of public toilets?

The answer is simple. Just as restaurants and hotels are given a star rating, so too should each and every public toilet in the land, those of cafés, cinemas and train stations, those of schools, libraries and hospitals, those both of town and country, be assessed and held accountable, by a team of trained inspectors, published results, league tables and all the rest of it.

I'd be happy to do the job myself, to tour around the nation – and indeed the globe – a modern day Chichikov or Tecumseh, stopping off at all the toilets of our nation, weighing up their pros and cons and detailing my experiences and publishing my findings in the official good guide to toileting. I don't know why no-one's ever thought of it before.

As I was desperate for a crap, I decided to stay and pay my due. Yet halfway through mid-toilet, a loud group of youths interrupted my meditations and entering with much noise and bravado immediately uttered the immortal words 'Aaargh! It stinks in here!'

How tactless youth is. I knew that I was being blamed for the smell, that those words of disgust were intended for my ears, the concentrated lone-toileter in his cubicle, shrouded in pregnant silence.

And indeed I hold my hands up and admit I was in fact partly to blame. But in my defence, though the youths were not to be reasoned with, it had been bad when I entered.

As I sat there in the toilet, cautiously trying to proceed, I felt threatened and under siege by the voracious hoodlums. And it had been a real, straight-to-the-heart insult as well: they'd said that I stank.

I tried to continue, hoping the youths were just in for a Jimmy Riddle; but alas no, as it soon transpired that one member of the pride was waiting for a free cubicle.

'Why don't you just use that one?' said one of his friends.

'The lock's bust' said he curtly and angrily in reply.

Fuss pot! Good grief what a girlish whim from such an otherwise aggressive loudmouth yob. I knew he was waiting on me; I knew he was eyeing my toilet.

Thus I found myself yet once more in a tense, tense situation like a stressful game of chess.

Yet as I toileted in my cubicle today, with my antagonist outside huffing and puffing, I really felt myself under the cosh and at a disadvantage.

It was an awful, awful fight. That pregnant silence reigned eternal: inside the cubicle yours truly not daring to break wind; outside a waiting, impatient and prowling youth. Good God the tension was too much!

I felt so harassed. It was as if in that dreadful silence, I just felt the eyes of that youth savagely and hungrily on me, as if he would tear me to pieces. And he wasn't being very reasonable about it either.

He huffed and puffed with renewed ardour; cursed under his breath; and in a really enervating and terrifying moment came and rattled my door – under the auspices of checking that the toilet was in fact occupied, but really, and I well knew it, it was a form of intimidation, a threat to hurry up.

I knew not how to keep the wolf from the door and there was nothing for it but to call it a day and wipe up.

But as I applied piece after piece of toilet roll, my backside just wouldn't seem to get drier. It was so dirty and I foresaw that many more wipes would be needed.

Yet that youth outside was growing evermore impatient, like a starved beast in a cage. Good Lord what pressure cooker was I in!

I tried to skip to it, tried my hardest; yet my backside being so dirty, as I attempted to tidy it up, I foolishly plunged myself into yet deeper dilemma, as with a poor wiping technique I simply smeared the thick slap of crap evenly throughout my nether regions.

Truly I was getting bogged down in the mire. I could sense how dirty my derriere was and that much travail lay ahead.

And now there was so much papier-mâché in the bowl, that I had to flush the chain, even though I dreaded giving false hope to that prowling youth, who when he found out that it didn't signify the end of my labours might go ballistic.

Nevertheless I did it. The beast outside responded predictably and when one of his co-youths re-entered the toilet to see what the hold up was he answered with the awful words

'I'm having to wait forever. Some fucking idiot's taking all year'.

I was so intimidated by these words, that as I attempted to apply the roll, my hands were so tense and shaky that I struggled to wipe my backside.

With all his aggression the youth had gotten me into a right tizzy, and I was as though caught up in a bad dream or nightmare, in which I wanted to wipe my backside up but just couldn't do it.

Still I laboured on. Still the backside was dirty. I applied another piece. Was it still dirty? Yes. Oh! I felt as if with each wipe I took I was simply moving the crap on. There was more work to be done.

However I could not take it anymore.

Suffering an agony of nerves and tension I decided to cut my losses, to admit defeat and just to escape this fish bowl-cauldron, and get off at any cost – even if it was a partially dirty backside.

I thus exited, not deigning to look at the youth, who made one final demonstration at his impatient wait as I went past him.

If his behaviour didn't merit an Antisocial Behaviour Order then frankly I don't know what does.

Saturday Aug. 12th

Dave invited a few of us over to his place tonight for dinner.

He lives in a really nice house with his wife and three children – two girls and a boy. When I got there I immediately got into the spirit of things and entered into a four-way game of Kerplunk with the kids.

Diary, I'm happy to here record the result: winner – myself, Richard Minto.

Unfortunately the youngest child, Leah, didn't take it as well as I did, (the marbles had come crashing down on her) and she'd burst into tears.

Feeling sorry for her I so conspired, with the help of her older brother and sister who quick-wittedly caught on to what I was hinting at them, and who collaborated

with me most excellently, to so arrange it that Leah won the next game. She was so happy about it.

Dave and his wife had certainly put on a good buffet. Sitting at the table afterwards, stuffed as I was with food, and becoming bored with the conversation, I decided to quit the bright lights, heat and noise of the dinner party and steal off upstairs to the toilet on my lonesome.

What a luxurious toilet Dave's got. What a sumptuous and handsome little Sultan's bathroom I had escaped to!

The colour of the toilet and carpet was a sultry dark pink. The air was decidedly fragrant and sweet – there were little purple pots of potpourri dotted about here and there.

The carpets and towels were thick and luxurious. There were little woven baskets abounding in toilet roll and all was so clean and fresh, yet so cosy and homely.

And whilst the radiators ensured that it was warm and snug inside, if you wanted a blast of cold air, you just opened the window and stuck your head out.

No it was all very splendid. I couldn't think of a nicer place in which to toilet. Since I was in the mood, I decided to remove all my clothes and so heighten the feeling of pleasure and relaxation. I commenced a lengthy toilet – the natural consequence of the gourmet just consumed.

Some few minutes in, my relaxed state of mind was momentarily troubled by the thought that I'd already been away for three or four minutes and that if I didn't make haste and get a move on all sorts of suspicious thoughts would be entering the minds of the diners downstairs.

Yet I was right in the middle of a relaxing dump. It seemed such a drag to have to thus interrupt my solace.

And you know thinking it over, a critical time of some four minutes had elapsed: the others would know I was having a number two, so what did it matter now?

It mattered not a jot. The sands of time had subsided through the egg-timer and the final whistle had blown: if I was going to be four minutes I might as well be twenty.

Half an hour later I found myself in the final stages of my toilet.

Yet in searching for a toilet brush with which to eliminate my side-sticking mashed-up mish-mash from the toilet bowl, I could perceive no such tool. It would appear that Dave and his wife also opted for a *no toilet brush policy*.

In this instance I could understand why. The toilet was such a beautiful place, a veritable sanctum and shrine to the holy gods of toileting, that to place in it the squalid and evil presence of a toilet brush would have been a sin.

Yet what was I to do? I couldn't just abandon my mess like that. Not in this bathroom, the bathroom of my boss.

With toilet paper in hand, and, kneeling on all fours in front of the open toilet, in precisely the position one assumes when one is sicking a toilet, as if you're on all fours worshipping the lavatory, so that one's head peers into the bowl – in this instance to enable me to better inspect the damage done – I set about scrubbing the inside of the bowl. It wasn't so difficult; rather therapeutic in fact.

From each of the four sides I eliminated the worst; and then in a second application, this time with wetted paper, I did away with the die-hards. Finally I dealt with the underwater stains.

These were many and numerous and besides being arrayed on three of the four sides of that part of the bowl that was submerged, included a lengthy and skidding mark traversing the very bottom of the pot.

This last was hard to reach. Yet with arm submerged in the 'eau de toilette' so that my watch, which fortunately was water proof, took a soaking, I eradicated this trace of my toilet with one straight wipe of wet loo roll.

When I felt that all was removed, I flushed away the toilet paper I'd applied, and when the flush was over, once more adopted the age-old sicking position to make a final scouring of the inner reaches of the bowl to make sure it was clean.

A thorough scrutiny of all four sides and of the bottom proved this to be the case.

Tuesday Aug. 29th

Because we had some visitors into the department today and because I had to give a presentation to them, I found myself wearing a suit. (Usually I only wear a shirt and tie.)

Anyway as I went to the toilet this afternoon, I necessarily had to take my jacket off, in order to better facilitate my number two toilet.

I think I made a previous entry in which I stated that whenever possible, if I had the time, I always opted to strip down pretty much naked for both reasons of practicality and pleasure, when having a number two, but also I postulated on whether other people did this or whether I was just a bit odd.

Now strange as it may seem, although I've always known that on the back of the toilet door there is a clothes hook; and although I have sometimes in the past hung my shirt thereon, it wasn't until today, when I used this hook to hang up my jacket – an action which of course every jacket wearer must do – that I realized the hooks significance.

It was very plain evidence that stripping down whilst on the pot – at least partially anyway – is a widespread and common practice, so much so that the company makes it a policy to attach clothes hooks to their toilet doors.

Essentially the company was encouraging people to strip down. Huh! Well then perhaps I'm not such a weirdo after all.

During my endeavours my thoughts wandered and I continued to meditate.

You know it's occurred to me in recent weeks that I have yet more and damning evidence in favour of the squat technique.

Because when I went to France on holiday, some few years ago, there were public toilets in place that were nothing more in design than a shower tray, so that one was forced to employ the squat technique.

True, that doesn't mean that people would employ the squat-technique on a *sittable toilet*. But what it does highlight is that we shouldn't in Britain, get carried away with a *sit-centric view* of the world.

Incidentally, this interest of mine in the design and function of foreign toilets; and the more wide ranging subject of the variety of techniques and postures adopted by the peoples of the world in toileting; and also the various technologies invented for toilet use by differing cultures is something of a major interest with me.

And as well as pursuing the issue further, I might, if nobody's yet done it, write a book one day on the topic, which would in addition be historical in nature, charting the beginnings and evolution of the human toilet, its rise and fall, and its development into the modern era lavatory we know and love today.

Yet in terms of the eternal question to sit or not to sit, I should say that, in the squat technique, one does have the option to croon one's neck, when in position, so as to view the contents of the toilet bowl as they accrue.

Such would be impossible in a sitting position. I guess it depends on the person and whether or not they enjoy viewing their output prior to its disposal.

However as I looked through the window of my legs today, my eye was caught by a very bizarre sight. There was sweetcorn in my excrement.

I know what you're thinking dear diary, you're thinking there's nothing very bizarre about finding sweetcorn in your poo. But I tell you it is bizarre, because I haven't eaten sweetcorn in years.

Anyway such were my philosophical ramblings for today. A million miles away as I was, I made an end to my toilet and left.

As I departed the toilets proper, I happened to bump into Jay who was going in.

Although I made to smile at him, he didn't come across as being too happy – he's been annoyed with me ever since I heard him breaking wind and then subtly informed him of the fact.

Admitted that was a mistake. But what can I do? I guess if he wants to get upset over the affair that's his concern. I suppose I'll just have to get used to it. I returned to my desk.

However some five minutes later, I clocked Jay re-entering the office. He seemed to be marching up to me. I had a presentiment that I was in trouble over something, but I couldn't think what?

He was definitely walking toward me. Very confident as well, not the usual huffy person he's been of late. He appeared to be smiling smugly at me. What did he want?

He was walking with his jacket held out across his arms, as if he didn't want to dirty it. His jacket looked quite like mine actually. Oh crumbs! It was mine.

I must have forgotten to put it back on at the end of my toilet, caught up as I was in my musings. He must have found it hanging there in the empty cubicle. And now he'd *kindly* brought it back out to me.

He was the embodiment of glowing smugness. He'd definitely got one back on me here. He was carrying my jacket very deferentially that was for sure, as if he was only doing me a small kindness. Yet I read the subtext, the smug gleam in his eyes – this was his revenge.

Stopping just short of my desk and holding the jacket out by the collar hook on his index finger, as way of offering it to me, he said 'is this yours?'

But it wasn't so much a question as a mere game of his, for he well knew it belonged to me.

Well, there was nothing for it but to be humble. This was Jay's revenge, it was justice for my crimes against him.

I accepted the garment graciously, smiling all the while, and taking my embarrassment on the chin.

Though I thought that Jay was going a bit over the top with it all, in truth I was happy to see him getting one over on me, relieved to see him give me a taste of my own medicine, thankful at this opportunity to wipe the slate clean and to exorcise my guilt.

Jay was certainly upbeat about it all – funny that this seemingly innocuous little faux pas of mine, of simply leaving my jacket in the toilet, should now result in Jay stealing a march on me as if he saw through me and knew the inner workings of my private self; as if he'd caught me red handed in some secretly depraved act.

And hand upon heart I have to admit that I did feel some secret shame.

In any event he'd exacted his retribution and as such I was happy to call it quits.

I didn't like to be at war with my colleagues, and I was pleased to have called a truce with Jay in this way.

Friday Sept. 8th

I had some friends over for a dinner party tonight. It was quite a success. My guests appeared to really enjoy themselves. And so too did I.

Yet as things wore on, I became more and more withdrawn as if something was weighing heavy on my mind.

At first my friends, not wishing to interrupt their merriment – they were having such a good time in the relaxing surroundings of someone else's house – pretended not to notice my mirthless state.

Yet as I kept up my cheerless, absorbed, worried countenance, they soon came to realize that there was nothing for it but to up-sticks and leave and that the festivity was no more.

I was being a party pooper, a lead balloon and I knew it fine well but couldn't help it. Though they would fain continue this happy little gathering they could see that the sunshine had gone out of me, they knew I was prone to these mood swings and they got the impression, by my silence, that I wanted them to leave. In due course they did so.

As I was waving the last of them off – affecting now a pleasant expression since they were going – my thoughts were on the state of the toilet.

This was what had been preying heavy on my mind.

My friends, good people as they were, couldn't, I felt, be relied upon to maintain the sort of high hygiene standards that I insisted on in my house.

And as I'd watched them, one by one troop upstairs after the meal to go and relieve themselves, my mindset became increasingly distracted by what God awful mess I might discover in my lavatory.

I had had to sit and stew on it. Thankfully however, that distressing time of waiting and wondering was now over.

The last car drove off, I waved my guests goodbye, and now anticipating that I could go and inspect the toilet, I immediately became more light hearted and happy.

Racing upstairs I entered the bathroom and approached the toilet. The lid was down – there had been some female guests – and with trepidation I slowly crept up to the toilet.

My hand on the lid, I now raised it; ever so slowly at first but then with increasing speed, sneaking an (expectantly terrified) look into the bowl as I did so, and then, once it was upright, running off in the opposite direction whilst looking back into the bowl, and giving off little screams of terror.

When I was a safe distance away I turned round and slowly began to saunter up to the toilet.

As I approached the bowl I got a full and steady view of what I thought I'd seen with those few precursory glances I'd previously thrown its way.

My worst fears were confirmed: it was an absolute disgrace with excrement lying not only on the sides of the bowl and the seat; but also, when I ventured to raise this latter, I found it under there as well.

I knew my guests like the back of my hand and could well imagine which of them were the perpetrators. However, though I had my suspicions and though I knew who had eaten what, this was no time to play Sherlock Holmes.

Instead I simply put on my rubber cleaning gloves and armed with a multitude of different disinfectants, cloths and scrubbers etcetera, set about getting on with a necessary and ultimately rewarding task.

Wednesday Sept. 13th

Having to pop down to floor two today on an errand, I happened to meet in the lift on the way back up that straight-faced moustache man, who's high up in the chain of command, he whose shoes I saw in the next door toilet: *he of the echo-reverberations*.

Actually I've seen him in the lift on several occasions since that incident and each time, as he gets on, with serious and pompous expression, I say in a boyish voice – and with a slight hint of cheek – 'What floor is it sir?'

Gruffly and curtly he answers me. And when the lift stops and he gets off, I always smile pleasantly at him (although it's totally insidious); and as I watch him go I say under my breath 'bye sir, ye of the echo-reverberations'.

Wednesday Sept. 20th

Not very happy today. Suffered from constipation again. Bastard! Not very happy at all.

To make matters worse that idiot Jay has decided to get back on my case. Though I thought we'd evened things up in regard to my eavesdropping on his toilet crimes, and though he's been excessively smug and happy in recent weeks,

today he started working his ticket once more and aggravated himself into a right tizzy.

In the kitchen, which admittedly is in a shambolic mess, he started having a go at everybody for not cleaning up the crockery: there are dirty dinner plates, coffee cups and a whole load of filthy etcetera-etceteras littered about the benches; and if you wanted to make a meal or a drink, you first of all had to do some washing up.

Jay went absolutely ballistic and started snapping at everyone. But the worst of it was, was that he started blaming me, saying I was one of the worst culprits and never did any washing up.

Since that was a gross untruth, since I always do way in excess of my fair share of washing up and since I wasn't in a good mood to begin with, I started shouting at him back, and in the end we had quite an argument.

Well I'll tell you Jay, I was happy to call a truce last time, and made no bones of your overtly smug, jacket-restoration ceremony in the same style that you got all worked up about my overhearing your broken wind.

No, I decided to let you have your little revenge. I tried to be amiable. But if you're going to bad-mouth and level false accusations at me; if you're going to throw a tantrum with me, when I'm constipated, then I'll tell you what son, I'll give you a bloody war.

Just you watch out sunshine, just you watch out. Cos I'm not going to be so fucking forgiving in future. If you want a war I'll damned well give you one.

And don't expect me to show any mercy. I did that last time and it was a mistake. Not so in future. I'm taking no prisoners now.

Tuesday Sept. 26th

When you're sat at your desk at two o'clock, stuffed after lunch and ready for a nap.

When your eyes are closing on you, you're drowsily slipping away, the office seems stuffy beyond belief, and your very blood seems to be getting hotter and hotter and hotter.

When your brain feels completely numbed and the clock seems to have stopped ticking.

When all you could wish for is to be far, far away on an exotic island, sunbathing on the beach.

When you can't face your work and your nerves are so overwrought that it would seem electricity will dash out of your fingertips at any moment and you'll explode in a moment of rage – at times like this I always say fuck it, and head off to the toilets for a skive.

And others do too. Although it's an unsavoury place to hang out, it is cool in the wash basin area and the toilet is a legitimate destination to go to without too many questions being asked.

So to did I now find myself in a little meeting of the idlers. This small gathering on the edge of oblivion; a sort of depression come end of the world, what do we live for, I'm ready to die kind of atmosphere pervading the room.

Work in the morning seems fine, it's a good and natural thing. But at this point in the afternoon work seems dreadful, it really does, and it makes you wonder what the hell you want out of life.

I found myself in a hushed up, surreptitious little chat with my old friend Vishnu and a Chinese guy Wei – pronounced way, though we always insist on wee – who was here smoking a cigarette. Vishnu sat Buddha-like on a table and I leaned against the wall.

Wei is completing a two or three year internship here that he's set himself, in order to return to China an experienced hand.

He's good natured generally, doesn't grumble about his work but gets on with it, and loves to chat to me, being quite a cynical, ironical man. For example we may talk about the Chinese government and the fact that there are no elections in China.

He's very easy going and relaxed, has a good idea of how the world works, and his favourite phrase, when we have such conversations, for example if I say 'surely you can't be serious that the interior minister is taking kickbacks in exchange for doing XYZ' is 'oh come on Richard!' as in come on, get with it or don't be such a fool.

Anyway as we stood chatting, Jay appeared and walking through the wash basin area went into the toilets.

As he passed he eyed us warily – he doesn't particularly like any of us – and as the feeling's mutual we eyed him back in return. It was something like a stand off: handbags at twelve paces.

When he had gone Vishnu nudged me and told me to tell Wei about my little toilet war.

I told him how tensions had escalated between Jay and myself over the last few weeks, and how I was now involved in an all out toilet war with the fool.

And when I'd told him the ins and outs of it all and brought him up to speed on the story so far; and since he knows Jay's character well, and knows him to be an arse hole; and knows also that I'm one snowflake short of a white Christmas, he couldn't help but laugh and shake his head and say 'Oh come on Richard!'

I should mention by the way that I dreamt of Jay, or to be more accurate, had a nightmare involving Jay. In it he stalked me into the toilets and from the cubicle next door did something terrible, though I can't remember what. Was this a presentiment of something?

Anyway Jay was taking his time and I well thought he was probably having trouble with his constipation, and I smelt the sweet fragrance of fun floating in the air.

I should say, dear diary, I was very astutely able to deduce that Jay is a constipation sufferer from two, somewhat indirect, sources of evidence.

The first of these is that Jay keeps in the kitchen a big box of tablets with the words 'Constipation relief pills' marked on in bold letters.

The second is that he is often to be found in kitchen and office bemoaning the fact, in a loud voice, that he's always constipated to whomsoever it may be he's talking to.

And I have to hand it to the man: people always listen very intently to him when he speaks and despite suffering from an acute form of Annoying Personality

Disorder, he seems to have a way of attracting folk and getting them to hark on his every word.

He's popular – more than me anyway, and dear diary, you won't be surprised to learn, given his awful personality, his unprepossessing looks and his constant wining, moaning and irritableness, that women, especially the young, are attracted to him like metal to a magnet and can't hear enough of him hammering on about his constipation, and he's really quite the alpha-male. Anyway enough of my bickering bitchery.

Putting my finger to my lips to indicate to the other two to keep quiet, I set off for the toilet, bidding those two to follow.

Now though Vishnu immediately did, Wei would have none of it and sedately smoking his cigarette thought us two a bit weird for heading into the toilet together. Thus it was only Vishnu and myself on this mission.

As I entered the toilets, Vishnu in tow, I once more put lip to finger and bade Vishnu into the unoccupied toilet cubicle with me.

We could 'hear' Jay next door shrouded in a pregnant silence of unrelieved tension. Clearly it was a case of 'Houston we've got a problem'.

Putting my hand down inside my shirt and placing it so that it cupped my arm pit, I now quacked my arm like a chicken and thus mimicked the noise of wind being broken.

Ha! Ha! Ha! What a delightful sound! How it broke the tension! What a perfect trump of a noise – the sort that Jay could only dream of. What misery for Mr dick-head next door.

It was all we could do to stop ourselves from bursting into hordes of uncontrollable laughter and I had to stop looking Vishnu in the eye for fear that one of us would do so.

Recovering ourselves we continued, with Vishnu now chiming in as well. And going further I now added some expressions of relief, some gasping 'ahhs' – the sort of sound you make when you're thirsty and you drink back some tea.

And these 'ahhs' soon descended into more cynical jeering 'ahhs!' – the sort a football crowd might make when a player makes a fool of himself.

And thus did we proceed, with a resounding, continuous cacophony of perfect yet false wind breaking, did we thus volley and thunder and add in the 'ahhs' between times, till we were beside ourselves with laughter, whilst Jay said 'what's going on in there?' and Vishnu and I exited the cubicle laughing to the hilt.

A-ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! How much fun there is to be had at your expense Jay, you fool.

You brighten up my depressing days Mr dick-head, like the court jester once did the tedium of the palace.

Friday Oct. 6th

In recent weeks the toilets have returned to their woeful condition of earlier. They've plumbed new depths of disgracefulness and probably achieved an all time worst.

Anyway shit happens that's what I say, and I'm too lazy and indifferent to move downstairs these days. However I'm not the only one who's bothered.

Today as I shut the toilet door I found that on the back of it someone had put up a 'polite notice' as it were regarding the current state of affairs.

It had been printed off on the computer, had a fancy pattern bordering the text, and was for its better protection, bound in a glossy cover. It had been blue-tacked to the door and this is what it said:

'Please have some consideration for your fellow workers. The recent state of the toilets has been disgusting.

It is both unpleasant and unhygienic to leave them in this way. It is not the job of the cleaner to wipe up people's mess after them.

'Please take care to ensure you leave the toilet in precisely the way you would wish to find it. Always flush the chain after use, and if need be make use of the toilet brush provided.'

Now dear diary, as much as I totally 100% agreed with these sentiments, as much as I completely echoed their import, and as much as I fully sympathized with whomsoever had written this missive, still I would never have done this!

Never ever would I have put up a polite notice! How embarrassing! Good God how embarrassing and headmasteresque to have acted thus.

Obviously someone in our ranks was very uptight about toilet hygiene, and had been tormented by the current toilet plight.

What a sad bastard! Whoever it was they should get a life. Evidently they had 'toilet issues' and had set themselves up – neighbourhood watch style – to police us toilet users.

But the worst of it was, was that the author of this note, the would be Sunday school teacher and chief prig, had signed their name at the bottom of the statement, presumably so that people would then get into communication with him regarding the state of the toilets; and by voicing their concerns, and venting their anger, so create such a stir as to set the author's campaign into motion – the aim being to reclaim the toilets for the hygienic minded section of the community.

I had thought, half way through reading it, that the cleaner might be responsible. However it wasn't her, but somebody in the department.

Anyway by ascribing to it their name, they'd only doubled their embarrassment. The author?

It was none other than Jay Townsend.

Ha! You fool! You uptight obsessive-compulsive hygiene freak! What on earth have you been thinking?

We're in the middle of a war, and you've just handed me this little gold-mine of ammunition with which to fight you.

Accordingly, no sooner had I returned to the office than I told Vishnu and Wei about Jay's polite notice. We were soon having a right old laugh about it.

And the best thing of all was that Jay, who was sitting some twenty metres away in another part of the room was directly facing us, and kept looking up at us, to see what we were laughing at; and by looking back at him in a cocky and smug manner, and with eyes full of merriment; and by elbowing each other in the ribs and whispering to each other and laughing, we soon made it clear to him that *he* was the butt of the joke.

Ah! I do love it when the office once more degenerates into the classroom, I do so love it.

And you Jay, my pretty, my enemy, my nemesis. You who think you're so good: well watch out you son of a bitch! You wanted this war son and now I'm about to stick it down your neck.

Just you wait my pretty, just you bloody-well wait.

Monday Oct. 9th

A funny thing happened today.

At 11.30 am I left the office to go to the toilet. As I was walking down the long corridor, just nearing the toilet at one end, I heard someone else leave the office up at the other end and come down the corridor behind me.

I didn't turn around to see who it was, but simply kept on and entered the bathroom. No-one was in the outer room and I proceeded to the toilets proper, entering the second toilet, both being unoccupied.

I was just in the process of settling myself down, not having been in the toilet more than ten seconds or so, when person X entered and took up position in the first toilet.

Now I'm no detective inspector, but I immediately had an intuition that this so-and-so had followed me in. By accident of course. It was evidently the person who'd been behind me in the corridor.

On second thoughts maybe it wasn't an accident. I considered.

This person had me at a distinct advantage, because no doubt he or she knew who I was, having followed me in, whereas I hadn't turned around to see who it was that was following me.

In fact this was a very cunning thing to do, and I sat there rather taken aback at the naughtiness of my next door neighbour.

Any sound I now made, any little habit that might be picked up on – all of this would be stored away on my 'personal record' by the secret agent next to me.

He or she would have a private little database, a secret file on me. I could probably count on the discretion of the spy not to reveal what they had learned to others. I could count on that.

But nevertheless when I returned to the office there would be one amongst our number who knew my secret-self, one person who might look me in the eyes, and let me know that I had been revealed. I felt myself naked and vulnerable.

Of course it had crossed my mind that it could be Jay, and that he had deliberately followed me in, in order to wind me up as I had him. Was this my dream come true?

Yet though he had motive to do this, still it didn't seem like his style and in any event it seemed too early on a Monday morning for fun and games. Nevertheless, now that I thought about it, could it well be him looking for revenge?

I squatted there, not proceeding, a slight anger building in my chest. However as I listened, trying to discern if it was Jay, it seemed that the person next door was also a bit perturbed by the whole affair, and was not only unwilling to proceed

in my presence, but probably also felt themselves a bit of a sneak for thus catching me unawares. Was this just a put on by my enemy?

We sat there silently, tensely, neither of us daring to break wind. I could hear the other person, muttering through their teeth.

Then he piped up and all was revealed.

'Oh come on Richard!' he declared referring to the farce of the situation. I realised it was the ironic Wei and I burst out laughing and so did he.

Nice one Wei! He quitted the arena, doing the honourable thing and leaving me in peace to my toilet. Thanks man, that's really generous of you.

Tuesday Oct. 17th

Today, in my pre-dump rituals, before my morning crap, I entered the toilets proper and both toilets being empty went into toilet number two.

Now I think I've said it before, but I always preface my toilet by wiping down seat and rim with toilet paper to take away any unseemly stains.

However I should point out that this drill is in place not only to so procure a satisfactory toilet-rim state; but also, and very importantly too, it serves as a mechanism by which I might ascertain the amount of toilet paper on offer, and most crucially it is a device to determine whether or not *there is* toilet roll on offer.

Indeed this drill of mine had its origins in the aftermath of one too many disastrous debacles in which I'd found myself in mid-toilet without paper. The nightmare of the situations that ensued had left me with the firm resolve of implementing this drill. So has it been for years.

And today my drill proved itself of value, as it transpired that toilet number two was paper deficient. I transferred to toilet number one.

Now though I could have transported back into toilet number two some of the tissue paper to be found in toilet number one and so carried out my toilet in the more efficient and pleasant toilet number two, I decided to remain in toilet number one.

For I had a meeting with Dave in just a few minutes and didn't have much time to spare. Thus I commenced proceedings in toilet number one.

Yet some few minutes in, A. N. Other entered the toilet block and went into toilet number two. And though I would have fain warned them, I didn't, as with reckless disregard for the toilet paper provision and without following any of my time worn toilet-rituals they began to offload a number two toilet.

Well that was bad luck for them! For myself I just wanted to get out quickly, and I had to anyway for I had the meeting. I began to wipe up.

As I was doing so I heard the most agonizing of sounds next door, as the heretofore happy and carefree toileter, raised their hand to the toilet roll holder and, in what was agony to my ears, their hand flummoxed on the cardboard toilet roll inner tube, pushing it about inside the metal cage and groping around in the hopes of discovering a fresh roll on top of it. What agony! Whoever it was next door had realized their plight.

Some minutes elapsed, during which time I cleaned myself and at the end of which I was now ready to leave.

In those few minutes the hapless victim next door had evidently been contemplating their next move. You know I could easily pass them some loo roll in, it wouldn't be a problem.

However just then the victim spoke out and revealed himself.

It was none other than my arch nemesis Jay. So he was the unlucky victim then! Ah ha ha! Gotcha!

According to his style, he spoke without embarrassment and as if anyone might find themselves in his position:

'Please, could you let me have some toilet roll, there doesn't seem to be any in here.'

My emotions were running wild. I was so pleased to see my enemy up shit creek without a paddle. And as I'd sworn an oath to take no prisoners and fight an all out war, I wasn't going to submit to his request. I would just silently depart and let him wallow in his agony.

Yet actually, wouldn't it be better to sound out a smug little laugh, that would reveal who it was that had caught him in his moment of misery, and that would also bare testament to my smug and happy state induced by his misfortune?

However just as I was deliberating my next move he once more piped up, this time in a more demanding voice and with the shocking words

'*Richard* would you please pass me some toilet roll.'

So he knew it was me! He must have seen me going in or something. I was momentarily silent. What should I do?

I really felt obliged to pass him it now. How could I be so heartless to refuse his request, when he was asking me personally? We were adults for Heaven's sake.

Yet war was war and he shouldn't have made those false accusations against me, those of not cleaning up dishes. Why should I help him out now?

And then:

'*Richard*' he shouted, just like a school teacher, 'I don't know why you're being so babyish about this. Now would you please pass me some paper.'

His demanding way of asking, his tone of just expecting that I would deliver him some paper, his evident lack of embarrassment at the situation he found himself in – he obviously held the philosophy that it could happen to anyone – and above all the fact that he wasn't ready to crawl to me to have his way, the fact that there was no hint of begging or pleading in his voice, but that he just expected that I'd hand him the roll – all of this made up my mind, and I left with the words

'Sorry Jay I can't help you out, I've got to get off to a meeting, I'm in such a rush,' which was in fact the truth anyway.

'*Richard! Richard!*' I heard as I departed.

However it turned out that when I got to Dave's office he wasn't there. Apparently he'd got held up elsewhere and wouldn't be back for half an hour or so. Thus I had to return to my desk.

Sitting there and thinking things through, I was slightly overcome by remorse. And the worst of it was, was that I now had to sit here at my desk and wait for the re-emergence of Jay.

Good Lord how I wished I could have been in that meeting with Dave, could have hidden from Jay in the security of Dave's office. But it wasn't to be.

Any minute now Jay would be back in the office. I imagined him, storming in like a bull, and charging up to me and having a right good go at me.

What would my defence be? Good Lord I didn't have a leg to stand on. And I could well believe that Jay would accuse me of my crime at the top of his voice and in full view of our colleagues.

I could rely on no modesty and shame on his part to shush my victim and cover up my crime. No he was embarrassed of nothing Jay was.

The whole incident, and my guilty role in it, my evil collaboration with the hands of fate would come to light to all and sundry. I waited nervously his arrival.

Yet in the end when he did come – it was some twenty minutes later and I'd had to fret my way anxiously through each and every one of them – when he did come, he walked in very, very slowly and calmly and said not a word, but simply eyed me a bit.

Oh! This was scary. I'd expected a hot blooded monster, but he was very cool as he calmly stalked his way back to his desk. The reproachful glances that he threw in my direction were worse than a thousand angry words. Evidently he'd had time to cool down and brood on today's events.

Oh how I wished he'd given me a good haranguing. As things stood I didn't know what he might do, what cold and calculating plan he might be slowly drawing up behind his back.

And when I saw him at different times throughout the day, he said not a word to me, but just stared at me scarily.

Oh what have I done?

Wednesday Oct. 18th

Pride comes before a fall. A man of my age should know this only too well.

Yet why is it that arrogance and feelings of contempt for those around me can still steal upon me, almost unnoticed and suddenly transform me into a pig-headed fool? I say fool because my bout of arrogance is always ended by some humiliating experience.

I feel so crestfallen today, so sobered and humbled. I really do. And in truth I feel thankful for my embarrassing fall for it's ended my arrogant spell and left me penitent, just like a soaking summer shower may bring to a close a period of extreme summer heat.

Today I just don't know what demon possessed me, but as I walked along the corridor, and as I entered the toilet and got down to business, I was so absolutely absorbed in going over Jay's embarrassment of yesterday and laughing cynically to myself, that when I'd finally decided that I'd done all I could and that now was a good time to call it a day, I reached up from my squat position to the toilet roll holder, and, my hand going inside, found to my ultimate horror only a cardboard inner-tube of a spent toilet roll!

Oh what appalling revelation!

Anyone who's ever found themselves in this tragic position knows the anguish and sudden terror that instantly overshadows one's soul.

Everything is rolling along all tickety-boo and then, on reaching up inside the holder for the toilet roll, one suddenly has that realization of horror, as one's hand, instead of alighting on the soft plentiful cushion of toilet roll, proceeds unopposed upward.

And just as one is beginning to anticipate the worst, just as the alarm bells are ringing, one's hand continues its ascent, and then in a final agonizing grasp one touches the wooden and awful surface of the inner-tube, whose lightweight skeleton mass is easily knocked upward by the extending hand.

To repeat, the absence of the anticipated bounty of the cushioned roll, and the nothingness and cardboard skeleton in its stead is an abysmal nightmare.

It really enervates the terror in one's soul just as if one were to wake up one morning and reach over in bed for the reassuring body of one's partner, only to find in its place their skeleton.

So did the hand of the Heavens met out some retributive justice.

My terror soon gave way to feelings of annoyance.

Why had I been so stupid as not to check that there was toilet roll aplenty when I entered? My usual drill of wiping down the seat before commencing – a drill that had been brought in precisely to prevent the situation I was now caught up in – I had completely forgotten to carry out.

Pourquoi? Because, like the fool that I was, I'd been gullibly absorbed in Jay's own misadventures.

Pride had come yet again before a fall and I'd been too foolish and engrossed to see the swarm of plague-infested mosquitoes amassing on the horizon.

I kicked myself: so enthralled had I been in Jay's humiliation that I'd taken my eye off the ball and ended up re-enacting history with myself as he. I should have seen it coming yet I'd fallen for the sucker punch.

And to cap it all off, this was not another freak occurrence but precisely the same cardboard inner tube that had yesterday played Jay for a sucker, and that had as yet not been replaced!

But accepting my plight and feeling in fact relieved as if my soul was washed anew, I set about facing up to the music.

Anyone who's ever found themselves in my position, knows the joy and relief of finding a tissue in one's pocket, a reprieve for the man dancing his last dance before an execution.

In fact I'd found in my pocket three tissues: two of these were fresh while the third bore the contents of an earlier nose blow.

I had no desire to use this latter and felt that I could accomplish my goal with just the first two.

Nevertheless if needs must I had that third, albeit moist tissue in reserve, and should the two tissue ration that was my fate fall short of the demands laid upon it, then I would have recourse to this substitute.

The situation as regards toilet paper having been assessed, and the quantity and quality of the tools at my disposal having been analyzed, I now contemplated how best to proceed.

At times such as this it's always a pleasant surprise to realize just how much more softer and thicker is tissue paper compared to its toilet paper cousin.

Although I only had two tissues to play with, still each of these on reflection, might be thought to represent a good lashing of loo roll, and just as two British pounds are not the same as two Indian rupees, so that I might be mistaken for a prince on the subcontinent, I couldn't help conclude that I now found myself in the lucrative position of quite a wealthy man.

Taking up the first tissue I carefully separated it into its composite sheets, and tearing it up just as our Saviour Christ had once famously fed five thousand from three simple loaves of bread, I now derived a feast for the many, as one tissue was miraculously made into six.

Thus was my position now fairly promising: I had six (admittedly rather thin sheets) with which to work, after which I still had in store one whole clean tissue and if need be a rather bedraggled, disheveled little rag that had previously been employed as a nose wiper.

I laid down five of the sheets on top of the toilet and took up the first. With this I made an application.

This being the first application of the sitting, and my excrement, as I've previously remarked, being for the most part of the slip-slosh nature, this initial use of the tissue paper was principally an exercise in removing the coagulated mass that might, on another day, have dropped down into the bowl of its own accord, and involved no direct contact of paper with butt.

But in the second application, with my second piece of paper, I sought to get down to the nitty-gritty of things and this time begin wiping my backside proper.

Yet within seconds of attempting this latter task, I realized to my horror, that I'd completely overestimated the strength of the tissue paper sub-strips that I'd created.

Indeed, even if we forget the rule that the whole is always more than the sum of its parts, any layman would have been able to see that the six sub-strip tissue papers were far too lightweight and flimsy to serve any real purpose, and in my anxiousness to create a large supply I had foolishly overlooked this fact.

Given then the slightness of the sub-strip and the slip-slosh nature of its adversary, complete disaster struck; as with a hand too keen in its application, the sub-strip, lacking the bulk and inertia of its tougher progenitor, got bogged down in the mire as the hand moved upwards; and tearing in several pieces, some of which came up with the hand and others remaining caught in the quagmire, collapsed itself and served no real purpose except to enflame the situation.

Furthermore the hand, so feebly protected as it ran upwards across the derriere, had found itself also quagmired and its fingers, bearing witness to this fact, were now crowned and encrusted with crap.

In attempting to resolve my conflict I had merely heightened it.

Picking up a third strip, I first of all removed from my fingers, the excess excrement thereon, and thereby readied my hand for wiping once more, though for sure, I would be scrubbing my fingers later with a nailbrush.

Yet for the minute, I was too anxious of my current peril, and dare not conceive of a hereafter of light-hearted nail-scrubbing. For with a backside still disgustingly dirty, in which were now plastered myriad and unlocated fragments of tissue I had but three feeble shreds of tissue paper, one whole tissue, and a soiled little snot rag with which to wage war.

Deciding to repatriate the three shreds of tissue paper with one another, I united them into a fairly strong and effective half-tissue, with which I now intended to begin my new thought out operation.

Firstly I made an application of said half-tissue.

This time I was in luck, as, when the hand moved upwards, not only did the half-tissue maintain its integrity, but it also proved to be a good wipe, taking with it a fair quantity of excrement, as well as (I thought) some of the shredded tissue discards that were embedded in it, leaving my backside in fairly good condition.

After eking out a second wipe on the same side, I now made the bold step of jettisoning into the lavatory the soiled half tissue – technically it may have withstood a third wipe, this time on its reverse side – deciding that the condition of my backside being as it now was, I should be able to reach fourth bay with the remaining tissue at my disposal.

I should point out that it wasn't necessary, with this one piece of paper (and if needs be the former nose wipe) to achieve a perfect state of grace.

For provided I was say 70% of the way to being clean, I would be able to pull up my pants and move to the toilet next door, wherein – assuming there was paper there! – I could complete the finishing touches as it were.

Moreover I should make mention of the technique of simply pausing between wipes and letting the air caress one's derriere so that the backside is encouraged to dry of its own accord, as nature intended it to I guess.

But further wipes still being needed, after a few minutes I hazarded to play my final card and took up the remaining clean tissue.

This indeed was the last throw of the dice and if I wasn't in a position to leave the cubicle after this tissue was through, then my only chance of leaving after that would be to get into bed with the tissue that had seen nasal-combat earlier in the day; in short to put the contents of my nose up my arse.

For this final tissue I adopted a dynamically different approach to the six-part separation strategy that I had applied to its predecessor.

Folding the tissue into four, I conceived an extremely well cushioned and at the same time strong, square shaped piece of loo roll.

True, in terms of available surface area it fell way short of both the tissue from which it derived and also a twin piece of toilet paper that I would personally use as a standard wiper.

Nevertheless I was not at all worried about this, and after making an initial application, I found that the skid mark traced upon the surface traversed its path within the confines of the sheet and didn't run over the edge.

Refolding the tissue in a different order, I obtained a new clean face, and, taking pains not to let my fingers get into contact with the already dirtied side, I once more made a further application.

Thus I laboured repeating my actions again and again until all eight sides had been christened, at which stage I was more than ready to be able to move next door.

Having completed this last task I couldn't help unfolding the tissue and inspecting the eight marks I'd created, four on each side, symmetrically spaced out about the centre.

The whole process, the mysterious folding of the paper, and the application of the artistic slashes swathed thereon, plus the denouement of unfolding at the end – all of this reminded me of the type of thing they used to do on the kids TV programme ‘Art Attack’.

As an afterthought I should mention the fate of the substitute snot rag.

Not being of necessity in my operation, I was forced to discard him, his proximity to the soiled stink fingers, precluding his return to nose blowing duty.

Thursday Oct. 19th

As ever following a storm, a certain calm pervaded my soul, and I was largely quiet and at peace today.

Needless to say when I did go to the toilet, not only was I armed to the teeth with tissues – I had six in my pockets – but I also made a very elaborate exhibition of ensuring there was loo roll, going through the motions with a thorough and military precision, being exaggeratedly alarmist about the situation, and leaving no stone unturned.

Indeed I was on red alert after yesterday’s disaster, and the remembrance of it, and my terror lest it should happen again, was such that I was wide awake and alert to any danger.

Nevertheless everything was fine, there was enough paper, and I settled myself in calm and quietude to the proceedings.

I can’t help reflecting on just how our cave man ancestors ever got by without toilet paper.

The generally held conception, that when out in nature one should use a leaf to accomplish one’s task and that our prehistoric forefathers husbanded the leaves of the trees for precisely this purpose doesn’t really wash with me, though I don’t rule it out.

Another oft cited technique they might have employed was to skinny dip in a nearby lake, although the efficacy of this method will certainly be thrown into doubt by anybody who’s ever taken a shower after toileting, and, thinking that this was fair substitute for the process of bum-wiping, found to their horror that the towel with which they dried themselves needed to go straight into the wash-basket.

But in sooth, I believe it is instructive to look at the example of my cat, nature as ever gleaning us an insight into our own particular species.

Without fuss and without ceremony, Claudius completes his toilet and I can definitely say that his backside is none the dirtier for it.

How he does it beats me, but if the missing links that dwelt upon this earth in the pre-toilet roll era had enough of the animal within them, then probably, just like Claudius, they were masters of this particular art, and required neither leaf nor lake to assist them.

But, dear diary, I must end this entry on a somewhat less lighter note.

For all that I escaped yesterday’s dilemma essentially unscathed and was able to pull my pants up high and return to desk duty, still I was preoccupied for the greater part of the afternoon with harassing thoughts concerning the whereabouts

of the ill-fated tissue paper sub-strip that had quagmired and torn in the vicinity of my anus.

Notwithstanding that I'd wiped up, after all of yesterday's goings on, to a state that was more than satisfactory, I couldn't help but foolishly speculate that there lurked, in the neighbourhood of my backside, and enmeshed and entangled in my coarse hair, tissue paper fragments, that having originally fell foul of the quagmire, had now dried out to some extent, and, congealing with the quagmire solution, and alloying with it, formed dangerous and foul-smelling little pellets.

This haunting possibility played heavy on my mind, and, added to the post traumatic stress I was already suffering after the morning's escapades, made for a very difficult afternoon.

I had no evidence that such pellets existed in my coarse hair, and further, even if they had been there, I had no evidence that they would cause a stench.

However my imagination ran riot on the subject, and every time I had to talk to a colleague, I found myself in that awkward and enervating situation, wherein, whatever one is discussing on the surface of things, always one's true and real inner-self is secretly active; and peeping out at the eye-sockets, searches keenly for any signs of smell-recognition, any signs of disgust, any signs of triumphing in the same and secretive inner-self of one's colleague.

Thus I found myself, in particular with one female colleague, the surface conversation bubbling away with all the good manners of civilized people, but all the while there was a silent battle of our inner-selves.

Mine haunted and paranoid as it was, desperately searching for any signs in the sub-countenance of the female that would confirm its worst fears; and with hers half aware that I was searching hers and wondering whyfore?

You know in sooth, a good part of this inner-self wanted confirmation. It wanted that worst case scenario, that we humans sometimes crave after, rather perversely.

But ultimately I could reach no conclusion either way. Hard as I might stare inwardly to the eyes of the female I could not there detect any definite signs of disgust or wonder or one-upedness, though on the other hand I couldn't be completely certain that some such thoughts hadn't crossed her mind.

Of course all of this is very familiar to me, because on many occasions in the past, when I've held a conversation with a colleague, I've been privy to some bad odour of theirs, and whilst on the surface of things I've kept up a polite conversation as if nothing were amiss, all the while my true sub-current self has been orgying on the spectrum of emotions laid on for it.

Ranging from disgust at the smell, to surprise that such and such a person could produce such an odour, to wonder at exactly from whence it emanates, through to the smug, superior one-upedness that I just cannot help feeling, whenever I realize that someone else is in a very embarrassing situation which would be torture if I were in it myself.

However in my silent eye-ball battles today I could glean nothing about my fate, and probably all I did was half-alert my colleagues to the fact that all was not well with me.

Which makes of course their inner selves – those devils inside them – all the more curious.

But truly it was always a relief for me to get out of these conversations, and even more so was it a relief when I finally made it home.

This evening in the bath my worst fears were to some extent confirmed, as with an application of soap and water to my derriere, a much feared tissue-excrement compound, a by-product of the ill-fated mission of the second tissue paper sub-strip, dislodged itself, and, flushed out of hiding as it was, bobbed up to the surface. Taking it in my hand I examined it.

As I say it's often been a speculation of mine, that those bad odours that sometimes emanate from our colleagues derive from these tissue-excrement compounds that get enmeshed in our coarse hair.

Yet this is pure speculation on my part, and my examination of this particular specimen in front of me, water-soaked as it was after its journey to the surface, was thoroughly inconclusive on this score.

Thus whether I had been worried about nothing or worried about something, I could not tell.

In any event it was over now and I could get on with my life.

As an addendum I should say that, as far as I'm concerned, the toilet war I've been waging is now over.

I was foolish enough to start a war, childish to get all trumped up and play battleships with Jay but I've been taught a lesson and had my fill of the quagmire.

If there is a moral to this story it's that *war is wrong*.

Fortunately for me I didn't go over the top and can end it quickly and look forward to a nice Christmas.

And I intend to make it up to Jay one way or another for so humiliating him.

Friday Oct. 27th

Something just a touch strange occurred today, dear diary, something that implants in my mind a cause for caution.

I feel slightly worried, and though I'm not quite certain of what's happening I have a presentiment of bad things to come.

Returning from a lengthy, twenty minute toilet, I found at my desk those two incorrigible and skiving knaves Vishnu and Wei.

They were at my desk, reading something on my computer screen, which they were evidently engrossed in.

It transpired that in attempting to place some illegal pornography on my computer hard disk, and thereby implicate me in an embarrassing situation and create a hilarious, hilarious diversion in our boring office lives, it transpired that they had come across a file bearing the name 'diary'.

Being close friends of mine and intimately worthy of my trust they immediately proceeded to open up this file and have a read of it, or should I say you dear diary.

Yet up to their necks in mischief as they were and disposed to have a laugh at the slightest little thing as they are, when I returned and encountered them at my desk I found my friends extremely sobered and shocked at what they'd been reading.

Truly I've never seen them so utterly, utterly sobered, and they looked at me aghast and horrified and as if they didn't know me, as if they had indeed already found horrific, illegal pornography on my computer.

Wei was the first to leave my desk on my arrival and didn't even speak to me, but just gave me a strange look from askance as if I was a complete weirdo who he didn't know.

Vishnu remained and we had a conversation.

'Man, I'm really shocked by this. I thought you were good boy.'

'What?' I said 'It's just a joke. Just something to pass the time.'

'Oh? I can't believe it. I always thought you were man who had good thoughts. I'm really, really shocked.'

'It's just a joke' I persisted. 'I was just having a laugh.'

But I could see he was very perturbed by my memoirs.

You know it's often crossed my mind, dear diary, that someone might, like this, accidentally get a look at what I've written.

And I'd always imagined them laughing uncontrollably to themselves and patting me on the back and crying bravo, bravo.

Yet this reaction of Vishnu's was very scary. I mean it really made me feel as if I'd done something heinously wrong, some sort of taboo crime against the community, as if I was a pervert.

And make no mistake, Vishnu is something like my best friend, I've sort of taken care of him, ever since he arrived in England, and over this last year or so as we've gelled, he's really become very loyal to me, always supports me in an argument, is always up for a laugh and is always on my side.

He's like my right hand man, looks up to and admires me and would take a bullet in the chest for me.

So if this is his reaction to what I've written, then my God, what can I expect if others were to see it?

Of course the diary is solely for my own personal use and intended for my eyes only – all the same it would be nice to know I wasn't storing illicit files on my computer.

I had a fleeting glimpse today, of what seems to be an ominous dark cloud floating upon my sky. Yet I'm convinced that I've done nothing wrong.

Nevertheless I've got a slightly bad presentiment in my gut.

Monday Nov. 20th

Diarrhoea. Need I say more?

Had to take the day of work. Why is it that the secretary never seems to believe you when you say you've got diarrhoea?

Her tone suggested that I just wanted to have a day at home. Honestly it's quite annoying.

Anyway I settled down on the sofa for a marathon session of daytime TV.

In between times I found myself on the pot. Funny that a number two toilet should manifest itself as a number one – it was literally spraying out.

Lengthy sessions. Muddied Waters. Sore, sore backside. Painful to wipe it. Absolute agony.

What was it that Chekhov once said about introducing a gun in the first act of a play?

Monday Nov. 27th

Oh what have I done diary, what have I done.

There's a girl in our department, something of a pretty Polly, a charming girl in lots of ways, attractive, flirtatious, pleasant and smiley, yet at the same time quite a backbiter, backstabber and bitch to be honest.

I met her today in the wash basin area.

As always she couldn't have been more friendly and sociable when she saw me, smiling at me, calling me petal, and grabbing hold of my cheek and coddling it back and forth as one does to a baby.

As always I responded with humility going along with her pantomime, although frankly there are some days on which I could do without it.

You see if you get to know Robin well enough you'll realise that in the presence of X and Y she'll slag of Z; whilst in the presence of X and Z the bitch will badmouth Y, and so on, I'm sure you understand the formula diary.

Anyway when I saw her today, just before she started talking to me, she shot a deep, penetrable gaze into my eyes, as if to scrutinize and search me for something.

I wondered what this was about, having a slight presentiment of something bad, when she immediately dropped it and fell into usual conversation.

However toward the end, just as I made to leave and she was washing her hands, she called to me in a flippant tone 'have you completed your toilet Richard?'

I stopped dead in my tracks when I heard this, and my heart almost seemed to skip a beat.

Putting my head back around the door to look at Robin, who was soaping her hands, I said, with a soft smile on my face, 'what?'; to which she replied 'oh nothing' and smiled back.

As I walked back down the corridor I wondered at what all this meant.

Although I think I knew at heart precisely what her words portended, at this early part of the day I kidded myself and put it down to nothing.

But later in the day I had to accept that my worst nightmare was unfolding.

A young, handsome, smug employee, Miles, someone whom I've never really liked or trusted, but whom I've always tried to stay on the right side of or simply avoid, saw me later in the lift, and couldn't help but smugly ask if I'd 'toileted on the ground floor today and if I'd employed the squat technique?'

And so too later on, when even Alex, quite a mild mannered man usually, cockily asked me if I 'did it with the seat up'.

Everyone in the department seems to have read your diary. And it seems that I'm the butt of the joke, am being gossiped about and more worryingly am at the mercy of a lot of people, who frankly I don't really like and can't be bothered with.

I don't fancy going into work at all tomorrow. I think I'll pull a sicky for a few days.

Pretend I've got diarrhoea again. Which isn't exactly an untruth as it still hasn't disappeared totally.

Monday Dec. 4th

At the sports centre tonight. And it was here that I understood the implications of introducing Chekhov's gun.

Going for my usual pre-squash dump, I found that both toilets were paperless. In light of recent events it's well drilled into me to go through this pre-toilet, paper-scouting mission.

Now earlier on this year I'd found myself in precisely this position – I think I recorded it in the diary: the trip to reception; the request for the loo roll; the sports centre employee installing the paper; the non-identification of toilet-goers etiquette; the beast in the bowl; the deception of appearances.

Well anyway since that time I've always made it a rule to bring with me a good strand of my own roll from home, rather than have to repeat that awful episode, in which I felt like Oliver Twist asking for more.

Returning to my locker I picked said toilet paper from out of my bag, and, re-entering the cubicle, commenced my toilet in the paper-defunct lavatories. In loo of the sports centre's, I had my own paper, laid before me on the floor.

Now they say that lightning never strikes twice. But now it did, as some unknown character, entered with great haste, the cubicle next to me, and without regard to any pre-toilet rituals, and ignoring to check the paper provision, recklessly began his toilet, from the sounds of which, it was abundantly evident he would require paper.

By this time I should say, I was already on the final bend of wiping up.

Although I'd brought with me a fairly long strip of loo roll, the limitations of transport had restricted its length, and even though I'd rationed myself, the roll of paper was scantily nearing its end.

Now as things stood so many emotions raced through my mind.

I felt really sorry for that guy next door, especially in light of my own recent mishaps, and moreover, this appeared to be a Heaven sent opportunity to redeem myself for my inhumane treatment of Jay when he was similarly afflicted.

Yet, the truth was that I was in no position to give aid.

Any minute now that poor guy's hand would, in dreadful horror, alight on the corpse-like cardboard inner-tube. In my hand there remained one final two-piece bit of loo roll – a potential life-line for the guy next door.

All I had to do was to silently pass it under the cubicle wall, a bacon-saving bestowal from an anonymous donor, who would in his own heart be redeemed.

However I needed that piece for myself. Never would my butt be right without it.

With selfish disregard for my fellow man – oh, what animals we are when faced with necessity! – I applied the roll to my own derriere, and thereby saved my own backside at the expense of his.

Oh cold and heartless man! Thou wouldst save thyself at the cost of thy neighbour. How rotten is thy being, to look out only for number one, when thy fellow creature is tormented, as thou would wish not to be tormented.

But in truth, I really had no other option. And now that I'd wiped up I just wanted to get out and cast this whole thing from my mind.

Any second now that guy would realize his predicament and I didn't want to be here to bare witness to it. Though I would have saved him if I could, I'm afraid there was just nothing I could do for him.

There was simply no paper to hand and in addition to the fact that I was late to my squash training, I suddenly thought that that guy might ask me, nay beg me, his voice pleading with me as his only hope, to give him some paper and I envisaged myself, decent human being that I am, setting out once more for reception and having to ask for extra loo paper.

I didn't want to go through that rigmarole again, and so my mind was made up: get out as fast as possible.

Yet in the time it took me to complete the final touches of my toilet – an application of the brush and a repatriation with my clothes – the guy next door had not only discovered his predicament, but also flushed the chain.

As I left my cubicle, his door opened at precisely the same time.

I feared the worst.

Anticipating his horrified face, anticipating his entry into my now vacant cubicle in a desperate hunt for roll, anticipating his horror at not finding it and his desperate and beseeching eyes begging me to help him out, I decidedly had not wanted to find myself in this situation.

However to my complete amazement something else happened instead.

The guy exited revealing himself to be none other than the sports centre attendant who had brought me my requested roll on that prior occasion; and he then set off, casually away from the cubicle, without washing his hands, and most importantly with his pants fully up! Holy cow! I couldn't believe it.

Yet just as I was coming to terms with this shock of shocks, he now compounded it, as, stopping for a second in his tracks, his hands clasped his buttocks, and presumably clawing onto the underpants beneath his trousers, he moved these with speed and force upwards, so that he wedgied himself.

The action lasted no more than a second, and, having thus completed his toilet, the attendant made off.

Flabbergasted, I stood rooted to the spot, watching his figure disappear across the changing room floor in front of me.

The sports-centre attendant was certainly 'one of the lads'. And incredibly, unphased by any of this, I later saw him chatting casually to two girls.

Actually you know, he's a really good guy and I do like him. Yet as I was exercising close by to him, I couldn't help thinking ahead to writing this episode up in my diary and so penning down his little escapade in my log. It seemed a bit unfair somehow.

However in the midst of thus thinking, the hands of fate decided to even up the score, as he bore witness to my own embarrassing horror.

You know in writing this diary, I've come to realize that I'm playing with fire to some extent, and that, when I might one day in the smug comfort of my own well-

being set down the mishaps of myself and others with heartless objectivity, I might equally find myself on the morrow caught with my pants down in the most awkward of catastrophes.

I couldn't help feel that as I now suffered this blow in front of the attendant – and the girls it has to be said – God was punishing me for my arrogance.

To show you that I'm a good sport, that there's no hard feelings and as a sign of good faith, I'll set down what happened and thereby allow the, to some extent, voiceless gym attendant, to make me eat my own medicine.

In executing a simple exercise, designed to strengthen my back and gluteals – I was in the gym after my squash game had ended – I involuntarily broke wind and had a spate of that diarrhoea that I thought I'd gotten over.

This then was Chekhov's gun going off.

It was the one time out of a hundred when an emergency call is genuine.

This was not a hoax. My pants were curried. Hot sauce was dribbling down my left leg.

Although I'm keen not to underplay the horrific nastiness of the disaster that had just struck I should point out that it could have been worse but for some, in the event, *quasi-effectual evasive manoeuvres* on the part of my butt – I'm not a complete novice when it comes to wind defence mechanisms – that to some extent saved the day.

Though I guess I should also point out that, when a critical point has been reached, diarrhoea can only go one way.

Let's just say I'd stifled a calamity but it was still a disaster.

With immediate courage and conviction I headed off. It being late only the gym attendant and his girls were close enough to get wind of what had happened. However they made no bones about it, and politely affected to continue their conversation unabated.

I went downstairs, applying as I went a form of emergency triage, which was in fact exactly the same manoeuvre that the gym attendant had performed when completing his toilet earlier on.

It stemmed the flow to some extent, though stains and residues were upon my left leg and the dribbles of inspiration that had formed these marks were still on the move. I was not polka-dotted or dalmationed; rather my left leg had been *giraffed*.

I now had to traverse the bottom of the gym and then run the gauntlet to the changing rooms.

It brought back memories of my time here when I'd refused to bare the toilet roll burden back to the changing rooms and thus give away to the general public my upcoming deed.

Oh how I would have exchanged my current plight for that of a simple toilet roll transport man!

By this time, the most advanced diarrhoea dribbles had reached my socks.

Thus I traversed the corridors my anus wet, hot and sticky, my pants soiled and with the stain – on my light blue shorts – presumably visible, and with curry stains on my legs and socks.

Some people didn't notice. Others saw me and were horrified. I endured my way into the sanctity of the changing rooms.

Here a clean up operation needed to be carried out. I went to the cubicles.

But of course, there was no toilet paper.

With immediate decision I now took off, in the safety of the cubicle, my underpants and applied the areas less affected by the inundations to my posterior to try and dry it up.

When this was done I exited the cubicle and stripping naked, immediately threw myself into the arms of the shower.

It was a Faustian pact, though a necessary one, for I knew it could not deliver me totally from evil but I had no other choice. All of this had to be accomplished amongst the stares of semi-naked and fully naked men.

By applying a towel afterwards did I thus complete an emergency toilet, though to be sure the towel was soiled for life and would of necessity have to be disposed of.

I left the sports centre with my head down and going commando, so that my penis and other genitalia were free to swing back and forth at will. How they always make the most of any occasional period of liberation like this, like little children, completely heedless of the fact that it came in the wake of a tragedy.

A post-mortem, carried out at home, showed that the blue shorts had indeed been soiled to the point where the accident must have been visible. They went however in the wash, whilst the towel went into the bin.

Embarrassed as I was however I took it all with a che-sera, man of the world attitude.

At the end of the day we're only human and these things do happen.

Friday Dec. 15th

Today we had a brief departmental meeting, quite informal actually, just ten minutes this morning, yet a lot of people were there.

As we all stood around in the department chatting, gossiping about what was to be discussed, in walked Dave along with his senior, the serious faced moustache man – he of the echo-reverberations.

As they walked in, Dave in front, moustache man behind, Dave shouted for us all to quieten down and listen up, and the din of the office soon gave way to silence. Everyone was keen to hear what was to be said.

Dave stood at the front of the office, with the moustache man standing behind him in reserve. We were all at the other end of the room watching and listening to Dave.

The moustache man, who was saying not a word, stood with his arms folded, frowning and with serious expression, gazing away into the distance.

That was the relationship between these men. Dave, the inferior of the two, our superior yet also I guess our friend, addressing us, talking to us, leading this brief meeting and telling us this and that; moustache man behind him, grave and severe, cold and untouchable, our superior, Dave's superior, silent and seemingly dispensable for this meeting.

Yet all the while there, ever present, with serious frowning countenance; seeming to look elsewhere, at nobody, unheeding of Dave's words, yet all the while backing him up and being the real centre of attention.

When Dave had spent five minutes informing us of what the score was with various projects, he said that he just wanted to finish by handing over to Jay, who briefly wanted to say a few words concerning a very important matter. (He said this with a hint of irony.)

And now Jay stood up and went to the front, standing next to Dave and he of the echo-reverberations. Everybody was wondering what it was that Jay was going to say. And then we found out.

'Well I don't know about you, but I'm getting pretty damned sick and tired of the disgusting state of the toilets.

'How on earth some of you can carry on the way you do, with no respect for your fellow workers; defecating all over the toilet seat, urinating on the floor – really it's not on. I've had just about enough of it.

'Some of you people have no respect at all. We are meant to be a team. Now I'm advising anyone guilty of unhygienic toileting to give up their errant ways.

'A lot of us – and I've spoken to Dave and Mr Parson (the moustache man) about this...'

Here he nodded toward them and sought their acknowledgement and back up; Dave with his head down muttered an acknowledgement.

'A lot of us are sick and tired of finding messy, horrible toilets and that includes the cleaner, who is by the way just as irate about this.

'Now I've said it before and I'll say it again: when you've done using the toilet, make use of the toilet brush if need be – that's what it's there for.'

As soon as Jay broke out into his speech, Vishnu and Wei, whom I was standing next to, immediately burst out into soft laughter and muted merriment and started to nudge me and try and have a joke with me. Desperately I resolved to keep a straight face.

After all the mishaps of the war with Jay, and the lesson I'd been given – the cardboard skeleton of a toilet roll inner tube; the saviour of the two clean hankies and the former nose blower; the tearing up of the tissue paper into six; the ill-fated mission of the second phase tissue-paper sub-strip – all of this had left me with no further taste for war, left me remorseful and wanting peace with Jay.

And as such, I was keen to show, as he stood at the front speaking and looking to the audience, that I was on his side and that I was listening to him and respecting what he said.

I showed an amiable countenance to him; but those two devils about me, Vishnu and Wei couldn't control themselves and were desperate to bring me in on the hilarity, by nudging me and whispering under their breath.

Yet I resisted them.

Fixing in my mind the awful, sobering memory of that disastrous day of the ill-fated mission of the second phase tissue-paper sub-strip, I managed to remove all notion of hilarity from my visage and make serious and thoughtful my expression.

Despite this effort of mine, I think however I failed. For Jay noticed those two stupid fools horsing around beside me, and though I desperately fixed on him amicable and warm eyes, though I desperately sought to see the same

understanding and sympathetic look reflected in his own, I could see by his downcast and mistrusting gaze that he took us three and especially myself as unserious people, not willing to respect him or listen to his speech.

In fact I don't think many people took it seriously and thought Jay a bit of a bore.

Dave sensed this, and at the end of Jay's not well received speech, tried to save him from an ignominious ending by himself stating that it was indeed a very important issue, though it was clear that he himself still had his tongue to some extent in his cheek as he said this.

As the meeting ended and everybody trotted off, I tried, by nodding at him, to show that I understood what Jay was saying and respected it, but he ignored my nod and gave me only a huffy, irate kind of look. Well, what can I do?

Yet the worst thing of all was the rumour doing the rounds later on.

I think I've already mentioned that Jay has often blamed me in the past for not washing up coffee cups; and now according to Vishnu and Wei, he was saying that it was I who was responsible for this current bout of disgusting toilet uncleanliness.

He was saying I was the chief culprit, deliberately doing it to annoy him etcetera. This was evidently the way he was interpreting my sincere glances toward him today: he took them to be merely arch and hypocritical.

Well then that was something. How hard it is to quash rumours about oneself which are totally, totally unfounded!

I mean as if diary, as if. The laborious way in which I clean up after myself and now these slanderous lies?

Yet as I tried to explain myself to Vishnu and Wei, who didn't really seem to care anyway, I felt myself not listened to.

I got more and more worked up, couldn't get my words out, kept swallowing guiltily and became flabbergasted; just as if I was digging myself into a hole, as if I *was truly* the dark and dangerous toilet dirtier.

Jay I felt wanted revenge on me. Was this the start?

Saturday Dec. 16th

Oh dear diary! What disastrous and terrifying toilet misadventures have I to report today.

What abominable and horrific crisis did I tonight bring upon myself.

What earth shattering and violent devastation did I set into motion.

Sometimes the wheel turns full circle, and just when we think we've lain to rest old ghosts, and we begin to relax and enjoy ourselves so too do our sins of yesteryear come out in surprise at us and bite us unaware on the backside.

Doing my shopping at a supermarket tonight, I first prefaced my shop by a toilet of the second denomination.

And so relaxed and in the mood was I to meditate on this Saturday night, that I was a score of minutes upon the pot.

Captain Lemuel Gulliver once ridiculed the notion that some of the best thinking is done on the 'stool' but I think I'd have to disagree with him. Eventually, my toileting coming to an end, I began a wipe up.

Some five minutes later, not yet finished, but half way there, I flushed the chain and in a horrible moment saw the waters mount.

I kicked myself. I'd put too much toilet roll in again. Damn! I hadn't been concentrating and had used sheet after sheet after sheet of toilet roll without thinking to flush it away piecemeal.

You know I've got to confess I consume far too much toilet roll, waylaying an entire rain forest as I go, and am probably much to blame for global warming.

In fact, hearing that the national average is one roll a week, I made an observation of myself and found to my horror that I was a one roll a day man. Crikey, I've got to cut back.

You know it's not on to go around blocking up public toilets all the time: not only is it very much against my spirit of the community attitude; but also is it thoroughly inconvenient.

Because once the waters reach the rim – their point of nearest approach – and then begin their descent back to normality, more often than not they take an age to do so and one is left, pants around the ankles and stranded, waiting for an eternity to make a second flush of the next wave of dirty toilet paper.

And here we were again.

It was a complete nightmare. I simply stood there irate, watching the waters rise upwards.

Just prior to my chain flushing I heard someone outside in the urinal area open the door and leave, so that as I understood it no-one else was in the toilet except me.

But now someone else seemed to have entered and took up position in the cubicle next to me. I should explain something.

According to Wei and Vishnu, Jay was 'probably going to stalk me'.

Although I had passed off this remark as nonsense, I felt he had my card marked and didn't know what he might be doing to get his own back.

Moreover that dream – with Jay in the adjacent cubicle – had reoccurred to me. Stuck in mid-toilet as I now was, with pants around the ankles, I felt very vulnerable.

In retrospect, I was far too complacent at the time, and wasn't expecting that which eventually came.

And in that respect I was reminded of the complacent attitude of the San Domingo planters prior to Toussaint L'Overtures slave revolt; or the remarks of the eternally anti-dramatic Chekhov who stated that there would never be a revolution in Russia.

Yet in fact the most topical lesson to be learnt from my experience, the most obvious message to be observed in this tale of woe of mine, that is relevant to the world in which we live today concerns the environment.

How many of us, when consistently informed over the awful state of the climate we are bringing about, turn a cynical eye on it all and say 'it will never happen'. I'm beginning to think differently now.

In the most dramatic and chaotic sequence of events – the likes of which I've never before seen – I was given the shock of my life and set upon by an old foe.

I think I previously mentioned, that it's a well established rule of toilet lore that when a toilet's waters do rise, always and exactly they cease their dramatic upsurge when they attain the rim, though they will often threaten to burst out.

Not so today.

In an incredible and tumultuous outpouring, in the most anti-Chekhovian of plot lines, the waters burst their banks and thunderously flooded over.

Containment breached! Containment breached!

In a howling, screeching roar, the toilet could just not take it anymore and sicked up all its contents which now came tumbling out of the bowl all over the floor, all over my shoes and pants.

The waters, imprisoned forever and anon in the foul dirty well of the toilet, exposed over all these years to misery upon misery of human excrement now made an impassioned and desperate rush for freedom, aggressively attacking me – a major culprit and longstanding abuser – as they came.

It was absolute fucking pandemonium.

It was the storming of the Bastille all over again; the eruption of Vesuvius; the Whitman massacre; the OZ prison riot!!!!

Aaaaaaaargh! Lockdown! Lockdown! Aaaaaaaargh!

The noise was horrific, an awful roar, ten times worse than any aeroplane toilet flush. The waters rushed out, like freed slaves, desperate to escape the toilet, making a bid for freedom, and in their excited rush coming at my person.

Revenge! Revenge! They cried.

Taking quick stock of events my mind was made up.

Abandon ship! Abandon ship! All hands abandon ship!

Sirens were going off in my head. The water lashed out, all over the floor, silting it with excrement particles as it went.

And the affected floor space was not only in the cubicle but also abroad in the urinal floor space. The man next door had his feet flooded as well. It was time to beat a hasty retreat.

Pulling up my pants with backside still dirty and with such haste that I regrettably wedged myself, I abandoned ship.

My feet were soaked, the floor was puddled with silty toilet water, oh it was absolute fucking chaos man, it was like the end of the fucking world, I mean shit man, it was just terrible!

It was like the whole fucking sewage system just came screaming out the bowl and I just.....I can't.....I mean.....it just happened all so fast, and I'm like 'we've got to do something' and all the water just spreading everywhere and women and children screaming.....Holy Lord above!

With lightening pace I abandoned the toilets, and walking hastily towards the shop entrance – shopping was cancelled for tonight – exited the supermarket, trying to act normally as I passed the security guard, yet eyeing him guiltily as I did, only arousing suspicion.

With extreme pace I stole away from the shop, not daring to look back, and got as far off as possible from the epicentre of the eruption.

Once this primary task was accomplished to a satisfactory degree, I then altered my course homeward, and in a forced march arrived there some three hours to the bad, shattered, hungry and exhausted.

I was straight to bed save for a beef and tomato pot noodle-supper; which greasy morsel was the only such meal my cupboard could proffer.

Monday. Dec. 18th

Previously on the diary of a Toiletgoer:

The overheard wind breaking of Jay – the black hand and World War One – the jacket restoration ceremony – the calling of a truce – he of the echo-reverberations – it's war! – Jay's constipation and the hand up the sleeve trump sounds – the prigish polite notice of Jay – Jay caught up in a no toilet paper tragedy – diarist eats his own medicine in second no toilet paper calamity – the ill fated mission of the second phase tissue paper sub-strip – the desire to end the war – the discovery of the illicit diary – 'Have you completed your toilet?' – the diarrhoea disaster at the sports centre – the gauntlet run with curried legs – the horrified stares of onlookers – the cures-all-ills Faustian pact with a shower – Jay's toilet meeting – the insidious rumours about the diarist being the evil toilet-dirtier – the supermarket blockage – the revolt of the toiler waters – containment breached! – All hands abandon ship! Abandon ship!

Tonight on the Diary of a Toiletgoer:

When I entered the office today, and it went absolutely silent, I knew something was amiss.

As I stepped out of the lift and took a few paces forward, I saw everybody in the office stop working and fix their eyes accusingly on me. Good God I knew I was in trouble.

My heart was pounding. As I looked in utter bewilderment at my colleagues about me, Vishnu came up to me. He was on the verge of warning me of something, when Dave's office door opened up in front of me and he shouted out through the silence in the most terrifying and schoolmaster voice

'Richard! In here now!'

I looked ahead into the office. As Dave stood on the periphery bidding me to come to him – he wasn't to be messed with – I saw standing in his office, with his arms folded, looking very displeased, the moustache man, he of the echo-reverberations.

As I took all of this in, and looked around me at all the silent faces of my colleagues staring at me, Wei, Robin, Miles, Alex and then Jay, it suddenly struck me what this was all about: that fool Jay had reported me for bad toileting practice.

Well that was fine. I had nothing to fear then. If that idiot was going to invent lies about me, and stupidly report me to Dave and the moustache man, then so be it.

I would go in there and defiantly tell them what a total load of bull shit it was, that Jay was off his rocker and that I didn't have any time for this.

And if Dave was going to get so worked up about it, then I'd get worked up too, for it was all a load of nonsense, and I was going to go in there and set the record straight.

However when I entered the office and Dave shut the door and lowered the blinds, I felt very intimidated by him and the moustache man.

'Well what have you got to say for yourself?' said Dave.

'About what?' I said.

'About this' he replied angrily, 'this perverted file we've found on your computer.'

'What?' I said. I was slowly coming to realize that this was about the diary.

'Don't waste my time' said Dave testily, 'I'm talking about this diary of yours – what the hell do you think you've been playing at?'

'What the heck is this about?' I said. 'Is it any of your business to read my diary?'

'It is my bloody business when you leave a file on the company's computer!' shouted he.

'It is my bloody business when everyone in the office is emailing it to each other and gossiping about it' he added.

I couldn't believe what was happening. Not only had they read this diary of mine, but they were saying there was something wrong in it; they were suggesting I was some sort of criminal for having written it.

'Look' I said 'if I have written this diary and kept a file of it on the company computer, so what? There's no harm in it.'

'No harm in it!' shouted Dave. 'This is perverted, it's sick. There is no room for this sort of sordid pornography in this company. You son are sick in the head. You're a pervert. Christ almighty! I let you come to my house as well. You played with my children!'

'What!' I said in disbelief. 'Listen you fool, you're making me out to be some sort of paedophile. I played *Kerplunk* with your children. And separately and privately I've kept a toilet diary. It hasn't caused any harm to anyone has it?'

The whole situation of the office with everyone staring accusingly and mercilessly at me; this telling off from my superiors; the way I was being treated like a criminal and pervert – all of this completely shocked me.

To see my former friend Dave, a man whose trust I had gained, slam me thus, and act as if I was sick (I had thought that he would have been the sort of man who would have appreciated some of the irony of my diary).

To be locked in behind closed doors with two superiors who were not going to listen to my side of the story; who had made their minds up already, who had written me off and thought me a pervert.

This sudden accusation as a law-breaker when I could put my hand on my heart and swear that I had done nothing wrong, no harm to anyone, and in any case was it any business of theirs to read my personal diary.

The fact that I was defenceless in there, at the mercy of those two bosses – who were acting as though they were Gods – all of this now stirred me up, I became like a frantic, trapped little animal and I could see I was going to lose control.

'Well Richard, I'm afraid to say, I've got no other option but to sack you.'

'What?' I said in disbelief. 'What the fuck do you mean, you stupid fuck.'

I stood up and gestured aggressively as I said this.

‘Don’t you swear at me sunshine!’ said Dave getting worked up and standing up.

‘Get out of this office now! Get off the premises this instant! You’re fired!’

‘Fuck you, you mother fucking, cock-sucking son of a bitch’ I said losing control.

‘I’ll fucking kill you, you bastard fuck-shit, you cock-kissing scum bag, sacking me for this you fucking dick-head. Bastard-boy shit-head, I’ll fucking...’

‘Get out of this office’ interjected the moustache man, standing up and saying this commandingly.

I was momentarily sobered. Partly because I was so intimidated by the moustache man and this seemed to be the first time that I’d ever heard him speak; but also suddenly it had dawned on me that I had written fairly derogatory stuff about him.

Was that what this was all about? Was this why I was being sacked? For calling one of the big-cheeses he of the echo-reverberations?

As this thought fled across my mind, I gave a penetrating and subtle glance into the eyes of the moustache man; he responded by looking away.

What did that mean? Had he read my remarks concerning him? Or was that just one of his typical glances? I could not tell.

Somewhat pensive and gathering my thoughts, I turned to leave.

As I exited the door, and began to walk the office gauntlet, the short walk across the floor to my computer, with pregnant silence aplenty and everybody’s eyes fixed on me, I heard from Dave’s office behind me, the moustache man pipe up and shout

‘And don’t expect a reference either!’

In the silence that ensued, I looked at none of my colleagues, and affected an arrogant, haughty look as if I couldn’t give two shits for any of their criticism.

As I busied myself packing a few of my office possessions into my bag, I did however steal a few glances around me. And in particular I met the eyes of Jay.

He wasn’t being overtly smug about it, but still it was apparent that he was pleased.

Stupid son of a bitch! Was it he who’d told Dave about the diary? He clearly thought me a pervert. Ha! You stupid fuck!

You know I’ll bet you diary, I’ll fucking well bet you that that smug son of a bitch is keeping a toilet diary of his own. I’ll bet you, I’m so confident of it.

And it won’t be like mine either, it’ll have none of the elegance or philosophy of my musings.

No sir. It’ll be very graphic and sordid and common.

And probably he keeps it under lock and key, hidden under his bed, and late at night gets it out and writes a toilet report, and reads over his previous entries and masturbates. Sicko!

And the rest of them as well, all my smug former colleagues I bet they’ve all got a secret toilet diary of their own.

And what hypocrites they are. For they all read my diary, the stupid fucks. I know that. They’ve all read, engrossed and engaged their sordid little minds on it, and then they’ve got the cheek to say that I’m the pervert.

Well, as ever, it takes two hands to clap, and if they think it's me who's got the dirty mind, they should look into their own hearts and see their own sickness therein.

And I'll tell you if 'He' of the echo-reverberations did read about himself, then fuck me, he must have read a good way in to find himself depicted.

No, he and that shit-fucking cock sucker Dave probably went to bed reading it last night, gauging themselves on each and every word, and Dave probably read it to his children before they all went to bed together.

Bastards!

You don't fuck with me! I'll fucking kill the lot of you!

I left the office some five minutes later, doing an action as I went to indicate that everybody in the room was a wanker.

Monday Dec. 25th

Never been so depressed. Oh I feel so, so low. It's Christmas day.

For the last week or so I've been moping about in the house, trying to take in what's happened, stupefied and almost comatose.

I just lie on the settee in the clothes I've had on for the last few days, doing nothing but thinking solely on what has happened.

I feel so, so lonely, so isolated, so alone. I just vegetate on the couch. I have no job, nothing to do, no purpose. And I feel so depressed, so suicidal.

I don't know if that moustache man read about himself in my diary; and I don't know if that was why I was sacked and why Dave went so overboard.

It could well have been that the moustache man told Dave about his cameo appearance in my diary, showed him the specific entries, at which point Dave was under obligation to stand up for his superior, by denouncing what I'd written as sick and perverted.

On the other hand perhaps neither man saw the references to the moustache man and merely thought me a sicko for writing about going to the toilet, it being the moustache man's manner to act in the way he did.

In truth I will never know this. Yet it's not really the point.

If I was sacked for referring to the moustache man as he of the echo-reverberations, then I have to hold my hands up, now that I've had time to reflect, and admit my guilt, and understand my sacking and the reaction of my bosses.

Yet even supposing I was fired only for writing about toileting: now after a few days consideration I begin to see it from the point of view of Dave.

What sick, perverted rubbish I have been writing.

I mean forget about the fact that I've been chastised by Dave and the rest of the employees for my memoirs; that I've been outcast and disgraced for my taboo thoughts or that my community has condemned me.

I personally, now that I've read over my musings, am completely shocked, ashamed and stunned by what I've said.

Oh, dear Lord in Heaven will I ever again take a sound night's sleep without being haunted by nightmare thoughts?

Awful arrow-to-the-heart reminders of the words I've committed to my diary?

Will I ever be emancipated from the ball and chain, of my penmanship of the putrid profane?

Will I ever sleep per chance to dream? Oh! Good God what a fool I have been.

How ashamed and embarrassed I am at my entries. I have thrown myself naked to the wolves of humanity. Oh! Take me please! I am ready to go!

To read over what I have written. To die with embarrassment, to suffer one of those awful moments where I simply want to place my camel's head in the sand; to just curl up and die.

An agony of shame and humiliation does becloud me when I see to what forbidden shores I have sailed to, to describe that which humans speak not about, an isle of interdiction where man should fear to tread.

The only excuse I can tender for these deranged madman scribbles of mine is that of late I have been under such pressure, my life has been so hectic, so overworked, so chaotic, that my mind has of consequence descended to the Quixotic.

So to then do I now float adrift in the lonely seas of doom; shocked and disgraced, embarrassed and humiliated, outcast, cold and alone.

I sit on the couch watching the Christmas songs on the TV.

'So here it is Merry Christmas!'

Oh, I'm so, so low. I've been sleeping only intermittently at night. I just can't stop thinking of the disgrace I've brought on myself, it is my one all-consuming, megalomaniac thought. I have nothing to do. But in any case I couldn't do anything if I had to. I'm simply stupefied by events. I want relief. I want to escape this horror.

I have neither friend nor family to turn to (how could I tell them of what has happened?).

I am alone, depressed, suicidal. Yesterday morning and this morning, in order to try and escape the horror of my life I went and sat for a few hours in the bottom of my cupboard.

How lovely it was in there in the dark! How lovely to escape the world and be alone, alone, wrapped up in darkness and severed from it all.....

Dangerous, dangerous! Ha! Ha! Ha! When shall we three meet again! Argh! Argh! Ha! Ha! Ha! Fuck shit! Ha! Ha! Fuck shit! Ha! I'm screaming of a white Christmas, you mother fucking.....

Ha! Ha! Ha! Scream-fuck, scream-fuck. You don't fucking touch me! I'll fucking kill you, you fucking cock.

Ha! Ha! Wreck the house time you stupid fucker, wreck the fucking house time. Ha! Ha! Ha! That'll get it.

Just smash it all to fucking pieces. Threw a fucking glass through the TV set. Yeah! Waaaaah! The whole fucking bookcase was coming down. Down! Down! Down! Yeah! The fucking books fell the fuck off! Burn the mother fuckers you fucking Hitler pieces of shit!

The whole fucking pots and pans smashing against the God-damned mother fucking walls! Psycho baby! Psycho! Cock-sucker! I'll fucking smash the whole house up you piss head bastard fuck! Come on! Come on! You fucking bastard!

The whole fucking bed mattress I fucking picked it up and threw the mother fucking son of a bitch straight at the fucking desk and shelves and the fucker

went flying, there was fucking drinks spilt all over the fucking shop, glass fucking everywhere.

I ripped the cock-fucking cupboard doors off their mother-fucking hinges, smashed all the fucking doors straight off their cock-sucking hinges and then picked up the fucking door and threw it across the shit fucking kitchen and smashed all the shit-sucking crockery. Yeeeeaaaah! Vive la France you mother fucker!

Come on you fuck heads! I threw a bin at the wall and took a nasty mother fucking chunk of the wall out – yeah baby! – and smashed all the shitting toilet roll holders and kicked the shit out the fucking toilet and took up the toilet brush holder and threw the piss-juice all over the shit hole. Yeeeeaaaah!

You fuck, you stupid fuck. I just sitting in the aftermath of the shit-hocking violence.

I'm so exhausted. I just want to die. The end. I want the end. I should have my head chopped off for what I've written. I deserve it. Oh please Lord, let me have my head chopped off. Please!

Ha! Ha! Ha! I have a lovely knife in my hand. Hello friend! How are you my little chummy-pal?

Oh I want to love the knife. To kiss it, to stick him right down my throat. Oh lovely knife, lovely cold metallic surface, how relieving thou art, I want to stick thee down my throat.

No, come to my throat, lovely knife, come to daddy that's it. I love you knife, I love you more than anything else in this world. Love me knife, love me, let us die in death glory.

Oh, oh, oh, beautiful knife to kill me. How sharp is thy blade. I love it, I love it. I can't go on with life lovely knife, I love thee, I love thee, the darkness, the long sleep, the deliverance is coming.

Save me knife, save me, I love you with all my heart knife, I love you, oh, I love you knife, I love you, come nearer, touch me knife, touch me.....Oh.....please.....

Monday Dec. 31st

Night-time. On a still and peaceful evening I walk outside and am alone in the garden.

What a beautiful poetic night it is. I can hear next door's fountain pouring into their pond. Never was nightfall so serene, calm and beautiful.

Fireworks start going off and I begin to hear the voices of happy people all around singing Auld Lang Syne. But I ignore this somewhat, ignore the fireworks too and look peacefully upwards to the star-bedecked heavens shining magnificently above.

Well, I was never really going to commit suicide dear diary.

Now that a week has past and I've had time to reflect yet further, well okay, so I felt some shame at what I've written, but still, ultimately I'm not ashamed. Shame is for the confused.

As I look up to the Heavens, and behold the stars a million miles off, peaceful and supreme, silent and harmonious, it strikes me just what a noisy and foolish little planet earth is.

Ha! What a bit-part player it is in the grand scheme of events. The trumped up little globe of self-importance could be blown apart by an asteroid tomorrow; in any event one day it will be nothing more than a few dust particles orbiting the space it once occupied. And who or what will then be there to criticize my toilet diary?

Huh! As if I cared a damn for the opinions of the human race. Accidental monkey man! The freak outcome of a comet laden with creatures that even an amoeba would turn a haughty face to; and the foolish machinations of a pointless and banal process known as evolution, that so contrived, in its imbecility, to carve out a creature known as the ape, from which it then promoted its favourite and most impressive chimp to the role of human being.

Ha! The human race indeed! Evolution's final joke. As if I cared for the opinions of the monkey man.

One day my toilet diary will be looked on in its true light and appreciated for what it is. The truth will out eventually. Future generations will see its value.

Outcast and condemned for my writings: so what's new? The fourth century scientist Hypatia, seized and killed by an anti-intellectual mob for her work in the library of Alexandria; Galileo, denounced and threatened with excommunication by Rome for suggesting that the earth wasn't the centre of the universe; D H Lawrence, slated and accused of perversion for writing, in the Rainbow, the greatest piece of English Literature.

Ha! And so too is it now with me, Richard Minto, badmouthed and abused for writing a toilet diary. So too have I now joined that illustrious band, am I another philosopher ahead of their time.

Future generations will look upon me kindly. I envisage that one day in every toilet in every house there will sit a copy of my diary.

It will be a compulsory set text in schools, a work to be read by all serious students of the English language. My face will be on stamps and banknotes, and every man, woman and child will keep their own toilet diary.

Tourists will flock from Japan to have their photos taken sitting on the very same toilets that I defecated on. What revolution in human thinking will I bring about!

So clearly do I foresee our descendants living in a bright and bold future, a world where men may meet on the street and discuss openly and without embarrassment their toilet antics, where housewives will gather and discuss the pros and cons of the squat technique; where children in the playground will recite rhymes to themselves instructing their little minds in the practices of good, clean and safe toileting. Where people will toilet openly and in groups and not secretly and in the dark. Oh free and liberated world!

So then let us to the gallows. Let humanity hang me on a cross and crucify me for my words: I care not. I am to be a sacrifice for the toilet sins of all humanity.
