

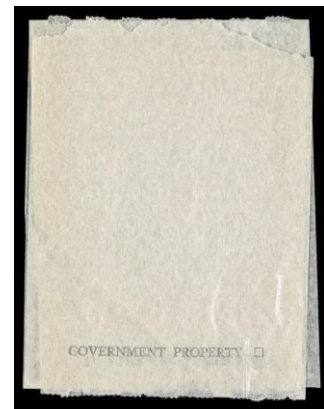
The Dykes

Toilets in Chailey were referred to as “dykes” as opposed to the more common usage “bogs”. Strangely dyke is a slang word for toilet in Australia but how it arrived at Chailey as such is a mystery. The toilets in St Georges were situated through a door at the far end of the bathrooms which were a short corridor from the dormitories. This would have required a lengthy trek on a dark and cold night and, in fact, I can never remember anyone making it. The toilets were where boot polish and brushes were found to be found, next to a handy bench. The toilets consisted of a stall-urinal (basically a tiled wall with a trough at the bottom) and three or four cubicles with stable doors, or more accurately half doors, more like gates. It was therefore impossible for anyone to stand or squat in privacy. Perhaps this they were designed this way was to discourage self-abuse.

I can't remember if the toilets were heated. They had no hand-washing facilities but of course they were next to the bathrooms. Not that this made any difference. Hygiene is low on a boy's priorities.

Toilet paper was a cross between tracing paper and grease-proof paper. It was neither absorbent nor comfortable to use. The possible intention was to minimise its consumption. Each sheet was printed “GOVERNMENT PROPERTY” by which it was known.

In school, toilet rolls were kept in the classrooms and sheets were only available by asking a teacher. Boys would therefore have to estimate the number of sheets they would need in advance because none was available in the toilet block itself. The penalty for underestimation was ... The toilet block was situated just past the Obermer building (Print Shop and Gym) on the left. It had a stall-urinal and cubicles with doors, but no heating, hand-washing facilities, or toilet paper.



There were other toilets but these were for staff and visitors, and were officially out of bounds. My favourite was the one at the Old Heritage, on the left under the arch leading from the entrance drive to the chapel. When no one was around I would sneak in and enjoy it's comparative luxury. There were sinks with hot water, soap and towels, and cubicles with proper doors. Apart from these creature comforts, what I enjoyed most was the absolute pleasure of being alone in total silence. A rare commodity indeed at Chailey. Made me feel human again, for a little while at least.

Finally, whilst on the subject, you can the imagine the hilarity caused when our beloved English teacher, Mrs Bunkle, announced one day that she had spent her holiday on The Dykes (of Holland).

Ian Sowerby (1957-1960)

