

Ode To The Commode

[or, "Everything you never wanted to know about toilets"]

Just when you thought I couldn't sink any lower... [perhaps that might have been phrased differently] ... But, wait! This is a legitimate topic! Don Fisher, WA, has 155 of these porcelain beauties! As usual, though, it's the behind-the-cover information that really makes the topic come alive (!). For example...

- **2500 BC:** In Mohenjo-daro, there existed highly developed drainage system where waste water from each house flowed into the main drain.
- **1000 BC:** In the Bahrein Island in the Persian Gulf, flush type toilet was discovered.
- **69 AD:** Vespasianus (Roman Empire) for the first time levied tax on toilets.
- **1214 AD:** Construction for the first time of public toilets manned by scavengers in Europe.
- **1596 AD:** JD Harrington invents W.C.
- **1668 AD:** Edict issued by Police Commissioner Paris, construction of toilets in all houses.
- **1728 AD:** Architect J.F. Brondel argues that attached toilet is ideal.
- **1739 AD:** First separate toilet for men and women appear at a ball in Paris.
- **1824 AD:** First public toilet in Paris.
- **1859 AD:** Toilet of Queen Victoria is decorated with gold.
- **1883 AD:** First ceramic toilet by Thomas Turiferd for Queen Victoria.
- **1889 AD:** Sewage Treatment for the first time in the world.
- **1959 AD:** All surface toilets abandoned (Paris).
- **1970 AD:** Sulabh International is established by Bindeshwar Pathak, as a non-profit NGO in Bihar.
- **1980 AD:** Installation of Auto-controlled public toilet.



The ancient cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, which are located in present day India and Pakistan had flush toilets attached to a sophisticated sewage system, and a form of flush toilet was used in the Indus Valley Civilization. Although a precursor to the modern flush toilet system was designed in 1596 by Sir John Harington, the toilet did not enter into widespread use until the late nineteenth century, when it was adopted in English upper class residences. By the early 1900s, water closet innovations were occurring on a nearly daily basis. The U.S. Patent Office received applications for 350 new water closet designs between 1900 and 1932, including a siphonic wash-down closet that would become the norm in this country in later years.



Above - There's actually a Museum of Toilets, New Delhi, India; Below-Roman public toilets

Public toilets have a long history in a number of countries, most of which were managed by municipalities. But there was a general disgust with their poor maintenance, vandalism and lack of basic facilities. The Mughal King Jehangir built a public toilet at Alwar, India, for use of 100 families at a time in 1556 AD.



Nearly 40 percent of the world's population lacks access to toilets. [<http://www.sulabhtoiletmuseum.org/pg02.htm>; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toilet>]

