

*The Essential
Bathroom
Book*

No bathroom is complete without it



JOSEPH BAXTER

THE ESSENTIAL BATHROOM BOOK

1st edition published in 1998

This edition © Summersdale Publishers Ltd, 2004

No part of this book may be reproduced by any means, nor transmitted, nor translated into a machine language without the written permission of the publisher.

Summersdale Publishers Ltd

46 West Street

Chichester

West Sussex

PO19 1RP

UK

www.summersdale.com

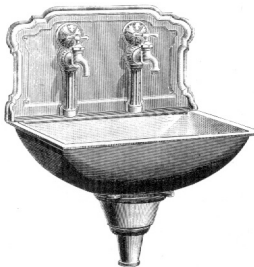
Printed and bound in Great Britain

ISBN 1 84024 412 7

Contents

Introduction.....	4
The History of the Bathroom.....	7
The History of the Toilet.....	23
Bathrooms Around the World.....	39
Bathroom Habits and Superstitions.....	69

Introduction



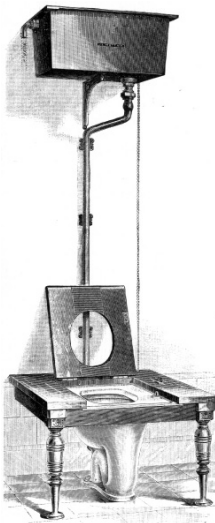


The bathroom is perhaps the most popular room in today's house. A haven of tranquillity and warmth, it is a place not only to get clean but also to relax without interruption.

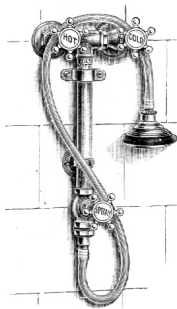
Over the years the humble bathroom has experienced many changes in accordance with fashion and technological innovation. In ancient Greece the bath was swift, cold and invigorating, whereas the Romans used the bath and bathroom as a place of relaxation and healing, and Turkish baths were built for similar purposes. On the other hand, the European bath was, especially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, used almost exclusively for medicinal purposes.



Therefore down the centuries the bathroom has been used for relaxation, healing, invigoration and enjoyment. Little has changed to this day – people use the bathroom in their own individual way, whether it is for that cold invigorating shower in the morning or that long relaxing bath in the evening; whether they bathe with company or alone; whether they regard the bathroom as purely functional or as a haven in which to relax and unwind.



The History of the Bathroom





Although bathrooms were rare in people's homes prior to the twentieth century, the Romans built and maintained elaborate warm public baths, supplying 300 gallons of water per person per day. In 1598, Queen Elizabeth I had a valve water closet fitted in her room. This W.C. was not simply used for decoration, moreover: she wrote in her diary that she used it whether she needed it or not. However, bathing was not available to ordinary families as an activity to take for granted until this century.

Before the advent of indoor plumbing, washing was something of a performance. Water had to be pumped manually and then carried back to the house. Carrying twenty or thirty gallons of water at



a time, transferring it to the stove to be heated and then to the tub was no small task and it was no wonder that washing was not to be taken lightly. The father of the family would wash first, followed by the children, going from cleanest to dirtiest. Each would be scrubbed down with harsh handmade soap and rinsed with an additional bucket of water. The mother would wash last. Finally the water had to be discarded, bucket by bucket, out of the back door. Keeping clean was hard work.

By the end of the nineteenth century, technological developments were moving the bathroom – the sink, the bathtub and the toilet – inside the house. Large cities were developing water supplies – albeit



unfiltered and unchlorinated – and sanitary disposal systems, which made this progress possible.

Fortunately, washing is not such a problem for us today. In fact, we take our bathrooms completely for granted. Some homes boast two or three bathrooms, in addition to one for guests. En-suites have become a part of life and modern bathrooms with hot tubs and whirlpool baths have made bathing as much of a social occasion as it was in the Roman era.