

BRANSTON C.E. (Controlled) SCHOOL

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When I attended Branston C.of E. Primary School in the early 1950's, the school had not been modernised, probably because of the general lack of money and materials prevalent everywhere post World War II.

We therefore at school had the benefit of outside lavatories. In those days a visit to the en suite meant a trip to Aggie's, Miss Applewhite's corner shop at the crossroads, where, clutching my ration book I spent ages choosing from the penny tray of sweets. Would it be a Gobstopper today, Aggie's were the biggest this side of the Atlantic, or how about some Liquorice Laces. I could sport a brown mouth and show off a disgusting brown tongue to my friends.

Liquorice used to feature quite a lot in my school days, probably because it was cheap and good fun, which brings me back to the outside lavatories.

During schooldtime there were two chances to visit these wonderful, practical little buildings.

One could, if bored or desperate to avoid some imminent mental arithmetic test, usually the latter, put up one's hand and ask to be excused. Then the bliss of crossing the empty, unnaturally quiet playground, all alone slowly, savouring the few minutes of freedom.

The low built stone buildings were made for practical use not beauty. Just open the wooden door and choose one to suit your size, low wooden rectangular box for the young ones or the deluxe high one with the step up for the older children with longer legs. Remove the round wooden lid and do not contemplate about the plumbing arrangements. Plenty of fresh air wafted through and newspaper took care of the hygienic side of things.

The other occasion for use was more sociable. This was at playtime which meant forward planning, something which children are not too good at, so there would always be a queue winding out into the playground at one end, with the head of the queue finishing cosily next to the person sitting down. This arrangement was really useful because it enabled all conversation to continue uninterrupted except for a call from the back to "hurry-up".

Of course a new lavatory extension was built eventually, we had pristine white everywhere, lovely washbasins and a drinking fountain. The novelty soon wore off, hygiene and Airwick had arrived, fun and character had left, flushed away.

