

# a convenient exchange:

discourses between physical, legal and linguistic frameworks impacting on the New Zealand public toilet.

Welby Ings<sup>1</sup>

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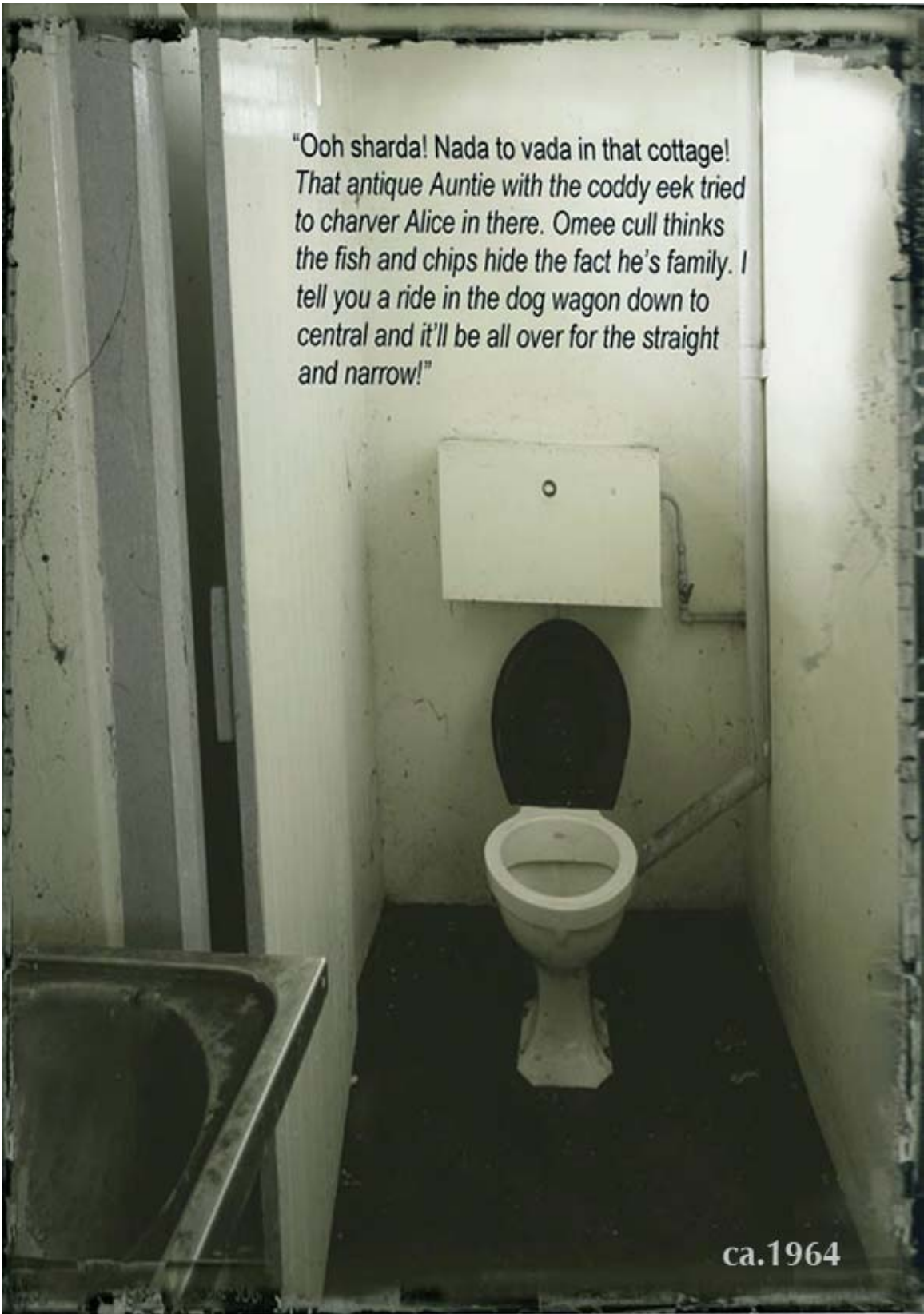
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You heard about batcher Bill?  
The old puffer got nabbed trolling  
the cottage in Myers' Park. Thought  
he was picking up a sweet bona  
omee and it turned out  
to be a demon.


The only uphill gardening that old  
sod will be doing will be in the back  
of Black Bess. It won't be a dream,  
I reckon he'll be up for a two stretch  
at least.

ca. 1895

*"Ooh sharda! Nada to vada in that cottage!  
That antique Auntie with the cobby eek tried  
to charver Alice in there. Omee cull thinks  
the fish and chips hide the fact he's family. I  
tell you a ride in the dog wagon down to  
central and it'll be all over for the straight  
and narrow!"*



ca.1964



No, you won't see that traagic troll in here for a while! The filth got it on a milkrun. The poor thing dropped in here for some cut lunch and there was a D on the other side of the gloryhole-dressed up as the trade of your dreams! Sprung it gutless! But what do you expect? That thing's so brazen, it thinks because it swans around with the mullet in tow that nobody knows its into trade. I tell you, a naff beard can only hide so much!  
She's fucked!

ca.1989

## abstract

These monologues tell the same story, in the same language form across a hundred years of development.

*This paper considers the phenomenon of men's public toilets in New Zealand, with specific reference to the culture of cruising for sex that operates within them. Based on interviews and oral history recordings of over 150 men whose use of New Zealand bogs<sup>2</sup> for same sex encounters has spanned 85 years, the paper discusses a network of relationships that have developed between changes in legislation, architecture and language.*

*Central to this research is a desire to offer an effective way of telling the stories of a marginalised population; stories that emanate not so much from 'empowered' sources like police records, health studies, news media and town planners, but from the community itself; a community that has until now often been [under] studied and [mis]represented by these authorities.*

*A Convenient Exchange suggests that men who use public toilets for same sex encounters exist as a dissipated, yet communicating body. The paper demonstrates, by tracing changes in language, how the experiences of these men have intersected with a range of cultures, including those of prostitutes, prisoners, and the online cruising community.*

*Through this intersection, bog cruisers have developed an extraordinarily process of criminalised ritual that has continued to operate and adapt just under the surface of the New Zealand urban landscape.*

## prologue

This paper interfaces periodisation of the history of bog cruising in New Zealand with oral history narratives. Its structure employs six chronological periods. Through these, three key threads consistently appear and reconnect changes in architecture, language and legislation.

In doing this, the paper seeks to offer a useful way of understanding changes in law and language through their relationship with lived experiences. Building on the work of geographers like Marie Cieri, a variety of visual, aural and textual

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<sup>2</sup> *Bog* is a New Zealand term for a public toilet. In E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Historical Slang*, abridged edition (1961), 94, Partridge traces the word's origin to Oxford University in the early 1800s where it was an abbreviation of bog-house = toilet. As a root noun it has given rise to terms like *bog queen* (a man who uses public toilets to locate same sex encounters), *bog cruising* (the act of traveling between toilets in search of sexual liaisons) and *bog bio* (an advertisement for contact written on a toilet wall). It is also the root noun of the word bogspeak. Bogspeak is a specific argot that developed to meet the communicative needs of men in New Zealand who frequent public toilets for same sex encounters. Bogspeak is a language form that (unlike a broader New Zealand gay lexicon) has developed in a world made up entirely of men (both gay identifying and non-gay identifying) whose common community is located in public toilets and their surrounding environs.

formats are used to trace these intersections.<sup>3</sup>

Through these relationships the paper documents key shifts in political and social attitudes to sexuality and examines how these have materialised in the New Zealand public toilet.

existing recorded knowledge

In the 1990s, the sudden academic and governmental interest in men who had same sex encounters in public toilets surfaced as health authorities in New Zealand confronted statistics from a range of international studies. These studies suggested that a large proportion of men who used public toilets for sex defined themselves as either heterosexual or bisexual.<sup>4</sup> Men who cruised the bogs were seen at the time as a significant transmission link of the HIV virus from out of the gay community into middle, heterosexual New Zealand.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of this concern, research into socio-demographic and behavioural characteristics of New Zealand men, according to the venues at which they made sexual contacts, was commissioned by Dr Jane Chetwynd. Her *Profiles of Gay and Bisexual Men- Report No 6: The Toilets* (1990)<sup>6</sup> was significant because it provided the first authoritative, profile of the community of men who had come to be known in sectors of New Zealand society as *bog queens*.<sup>7</sup>

In 1997 a second New Zealand research project also investigated men who used the bogs for same sex encounters. Aspin et al in *Male Call, Waea Mai, Tane Ma. Report 6: Regions*, (1998), found that '*whilst gay bars and gay saunas are frequented by large numbers of gay community attached men, this is often not the case for straight bars and bogs*'.<sup>8</sup> While both research projects nominated the significance of this community, their research paradigms were limited to investigating sexual behaviour and demographic profiles. Neither study concerned itself with cultural or historical investigations.

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<sup>3</sup> See Marie Cieri, 'Between Being and Looking: Queer Tourism Promotion and Lesbian Social Space in Greater Philadelphia', (2003) 2(2) *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* <<http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:IZ-2wWszHoJ:www.acme-journal.org/vol2/Cieri.pdf+Knopp+and+Binnie&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1>> at November 2006.

<sup>4</sup> F Desroches, 'Tearoom Trade: A Law Enforcement Problem', (1991) *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 33 (1): pp. 1-21; M Goddard, 'The Forgotten World', (1990) (July) *OUTRAGE* 24-28; Moore W, *Public Sex: Silent Spaces*, (1995).

<sup>5</sup> G Smith, 'Beat dynamics,' (1993) *National AIDS Bulletin*.

<sup>6</sup> J Chetwynd, *Profiles of Gay and Bisexual Men- Report No 6: The Toilets. A Report to the New Zealand AIDS Foundation*. Christchurch School of Medicine (1990).

<sup>7</sup> Significantly, Chetwynd's report in 1990 (above n 6) noted that 50% of men surveyed who used public toilets for sex with other men had engaged in vaginal intercourse in the previous 12 months (at 9), and that they generally had higher levels of sexually transmitted diseases (14-15).

<sup>8</sup> C Aspin, A Hughes, E Robinson, P Saxton and R Segedin, *Male Call, Waea Mai, Tane Ma. Report 6: Regions*, (1998), 7. These researchers found that the demographic and social milieu characteristics of 477 men who, in the previous year had engaged in casual sex with another man in a bog, (when compared to men who had sex with male partners outside of this environment), were characterised by higher proportions who were aged over 35 (51%:43%)  $p=0.006$ , identified as Maori (12.6%: 5.8%)  $p<0.001$ , and did not have any school qualification (15%: 9.7%).

Although the 1990s saw a number of significant international considerations of public toilets, few sought to exhume the history of ritual and language operating within them. Excusing this, William Leap's *Public Sex/ Gay Space* (1999) did much to focus writing on the issue that had moved beyond the traditional sociological model of 'deviance' characterised both Laud Humphrey's controversial PhD thesis *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* (1970), and Edward Delph's *The Silent Community: Public Homosexual Encounters* (1978).

In terms of historical narrative, especially considerations of the relationship between legislation and gay history in New Zealand, Parkinson's *Strangers in Paradise* (1988), still offers one of the most thorough documentations of the interface between law and gay society in this country. However, the work is dated and essentially ignores bog culture and its unique interface with both legislation or the design of public facilities. More recently Cooper et al have contributed an historical analysis of the New Zealand woman's public toilet between 1860 and 1940.<sup>9</sup> This article, while occasionally noting 'difficulties' with behaviour in men's public toilets, also offers some interesting commentary on the relationship between local body politics and the evolution of public lavatories in the New Zealand city of Dunedin.

Scholarly analysis of the language of bog cruising appears to be non-existent. However, significant research into gay men's language (specifically lexicons), date back to the middle decades of last century.<sup>10</sup> In the 1970s, Rogers (1972), Stanley (1970) and Farrell (1972)<sup>11</sup> all compiled updated collections of gay speech and more recently, two significant studies have been published. In 2002, Baker produced a scholarly consideration of Polari; and Cage, in 2003, in his book *Gayle, the Language of Kinks and Queens*, documented the origins and profiles of South African gay speech.<sup>12</sup> However, all of these researchers have subsumed into generic definitions of gay slang, words surfacing and specifically related to a culture of bog cruising.

## introduction

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<sup>9</sup> A Cooper, R Law, J Malthus and P Wood, 'Rooms of their Own: Public Toilets and Gendered Citizens in a New Zealand City, 1860-1940', (2000) 7 *Gender, Place and Culture* 417-433.

<sup>10</sup> G Legman, 'The Language of Homosexuality: An American Glossary', George W Henry, *Sex Variants*, (1941); Cory DW, 'The Language of the Homosexual.' (1965) *Sexology* 32 (3): pp 163-165; A F Niemoeller, 'A Glossary of Homosexual Slang', (1965) 2(1) *Fact* 25-27 and J Stearn, *The Guild Dictionary of Homosexual Terms*, (1965).

<sup>11</sup> B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon* (1972); JP Stanley, 'Homosexual Slang', (1970) *American Speech* 45(1/2) pp.45-59; R Farrell, 'The Argot of the Homosexual Subculture', (1972) *Anthropological Linguistics*, 14 (3): pp. 97-109.

<sup>12</sup> P Baker, *Fantabulosa. A Dictionary of Polari and Gay Slang* (2002); P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men* (2002); K Cage, *Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens. A Dictionary of Gay Language in South Africa* (2003).

The use of men's public toilets as meeting places for same sex encounters can be traced back at least to the mid-nineteenth century in New Zealand.<sup>13</sup> In general the discretely positioned buildings erected by local councils and larger public institutions have provided gender-specific sites where men have historically been able to make sexual contact with each other.

Reasons for the use of public toilets for same sex encounters are relatively complex and it is not the purpose of this paper to consider these to any significant degree. What is of interest, however, is the dynamic of change that has developed between legislators who have sought to discourage the use of public toilets for same sex encounters, and the nature of adaptation within the community of men who use them. This dynamic has resulted in public buildings and rituals that have developed distinctive historical specificities.

The first public toilets in New Zealand were designed in the mid-to-late nineteenth century to provide a public solution to what was essentially a private matter. Influenced by an industrial model of replicated individual 'stalls' popularised in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and later embedded in the British underground rail network, these designs developed a paradigm of the 'private communal'.

## 1863– 1900

In the early years of settlement in New Zealand, men outside of the home environment used either facilities provided by hotels or open space as toilets. However, by 1860 New Zealand, as with other nineteenth century cities considered public urination indecent and in response began to design public toilets for men in its civic centers. Although by 1863 major centers like Dunedin had constructed their first public urinals, in general, public toilets for women at this time remained non-existent.

### architecture

Among the most significant designs for men's conveniences in this period was a structure that came to be known in bog-speak as the *cottage*<sup>14</sup>. At this time, these small buildings were constructed with access in public view so men could generally be seen entering and leaving.

The word *cottage* was British in origin and generally referred to an architectural design that resembled miniature country cottages. These buildings normally

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<sup>13</sup> A Cooper, R Law, J Malthus and P Wood, 'Rooms of their Own: Public Toilets and Gendered Citizens in a New Zealand City, 1860-1940', (2000) *J Gender, Place and Culture* 417-433.

<sup>14</sup> Cottage first appeared in New Zealand as a term for toilet at the close of the nineteenth century, although Baker, (P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men* (2002), 170) and Partridge : E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Historical Slang*, abridged edition (1961), 214, place the date later than this in Britain. Although the word *cottage* in Britain appears to be a generic term for all toilets, in New Zealand the word referred only to small men's toilets that resembled these buildings. By 1900, the verb *to cottage* or *'to go cottaging'* meant to cruise these facilities.



contained one or two lockable cubicles and a separate urinal, screened from public view by an interior metal partition.

## insert fig 1 cottage

Figure 1: Cottage, Myers Park Auckland, circa 1898.

*'The thing was that cottages like Myer's Park were tucked respectably up in the bushes so chaps could be in there getting up to all sorts of mischief but people passing by couldn't see because there were always the big metal screens that kept you hidden from view. All sorts went on in there, sometimes five or six fellows at a time.'* Ewan

Although there is little documented material relating to sexual activity in these toilets the 'threat' of homosexual behaviour was clearly understood in New Zealand law at this time.

## legislation

In 1867 New Zealand passed an *Offences Against the Person Act* (31 Vict 5) that defined 'unnatural offences' more clearly than they had been following 1840 annexation of the country and the resulting implementation of English law. This statute provided (s 58):

Whosoever shall be convicted of the abominable crime of buggery committed either with mankind or any animal shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be kept in penal servitude for life or for any term not less than ten years.

The Act further provided, under s 59, for imprisonment for between three and ten years for attempted buggery. These sections largely copied sections 61 and 62 of the earlier English act, although the wording appears to exclude consensual acts that were treated as assaults. Between 1872 and 1880 only seventeen convictions for unnatural offences occurred in New Zealand and most of them were for male rape.

In 1893, the same year that New Zealand became the first country to grant women the vote, the *Criminal Code* (57 Vict No 56) *Part XIII Crimes Against Morality* (s 136) saw the first significant alteration to this law. It provided that

[e]very one is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for life, and, according to his age, to be flogged or whipped once, twice or thrice, who commits buggery either with a human being or with any other living creature.

Section 137 provided for up to ten years imprisonment, with flogging or whipping for attempted buggery, assault on a person with intent to commit buggery or for anyone '*who being a male indecently assaults any other male*', noting '*It shall be no defense to an indictment for an indecent assault on a male of any age that he consented to the act of indecency*'.

Eldred-Grigg states that at this time,

Policemen and judges appear to have taken the 1893 Act more seriously than its predecessor because convictions for 'unnatural' offences increased markedly. During the twenty years up to 1892 only thirty-nine men were convicted for buggery or bestiality. During the twenty-two years from 1893 onwards the number of convictions rose to eighty-seven, of which the majority were homosexual.<sup>15</sup>

This act was reconsolidated without changes to these sections as the *Crimes Acts of 1900 and 1908*.

## insert fig 2 cartoon

Figure 2. The lashing of gay 'offenders'.

*Eldred-Grigg argues that the prescription of whipping as a punishment for sexual offenders under the criminal code of 1893 (57 Vict No. 56) Part XIII Crimes against Morality (s 136) increased rapidly during late colonial times. However, whippings were never very numerous because magistrates and policemen were reluctant to make use of such punishments and the educated middle class was inclined to argue that whipping was 'barbarous'. Working class leaders he suggests claimed that corporal punishment was an injustice perpetrated on the working class by capitalists as suggested in this New Zealand Truth cartoon of 1911.*<sup>16</sup>

## Language

At this time the laws against homosexuality were a source of fear, punishment, social scandal and ruin for men who were convicted of sex in public toilets. Any form of sexual contact between them was now a criminal offence. Therefore it is perhaps understandable that there surfaced at this time in their interpersonal communication, words borrowed from criminal class lexicons. Significant among these were terms evident in thieves' cant.

Cant may be traced back to the eleventh century in Britain,<sup>17</sup> and was a secret language used by criminals in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Cant contributed words to bogspeak including *omee* [man] and *nantee* [not/nothing]. Words used in bog cruising like *pick up*, *troll*, *cruise*, *trade* and *fish* all have documented histories of over two hundred years, as thieves' cant, or parlyaree.<sup>18</sup> In New Zealand at the time there also appears to have been a relationship between bogspeak and certain words surfacing in prison and prostitutes' slang.

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<sup>15</sup> S Eldred-Grigg, *Pleasures of the Flesh: Sex and Drugs in Colonial New Zealand 1840-1915*, (1984), 170.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>17</sup> Wilde T, *Slang Dictionary*, (1889) at 306.

<sup>18</sup> Parlyaree was the underground language of traveling circus men and itinerant actors in Britain in the nineteenth century. Baker suggests that the language probably acted as a bridge between thieves' cant and Gay Polari, the twentieth century anti-language of gay men living and working in England's large cities; P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men* (2002).

An area surrounding or connecting bogs was known as a *beat*<sup>19</sup> and by 1910 the term *trolling*<sup>20</sup> *the beat* described the act of cruising a location looking for a sexual encounter. *Beat* as a homosexual term was particular to both New Zealand and Australia, and although in prostitutes' slang it could refer generally to any area patrolled by a whore, in bogspeak it was applied to the vicinity surrounding a specific bog, or a trail that connected a number of bogs.

If a man *trolling the beat* was arrested, he was generally charged under s137 and could expect imprisonment. A *drag* or *snooze* described three months incarceration. A *dream* or *half stretch* was a six-month sentence, and a *stretch* was one year. Multiples of a year were called a *two-stretch*, *three-stretch* etc.<sup>21</sup>

During this period the Victorian use of the euphemistic metaphor also profiled significantly in bogspeak, memorably in verbs like *gardening*.<sup>22</sup> Gardening referred to the act of sex and was used to describe the cruising of park-like areas surrounding a public toilet. Thus, an active homosexual was sometimes called an *uphill gardener* and by the middle of the twentieth century many [in]famous bogs used *gardening* as part of a double-entendre embedded in code names like *the Country Club*, *the Hanging Gardens*, *the Garden of Eden*, and *the Cottage Gardens*.

## 1900–1939

At the turn of the century most public toilets in New Zealand's municipal centers appear to have been controlled by local councils. There were few public toilets for women and considerable disquiet about the cleanliness and monitoring of facilities for men.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Partridge notes the use of the word *beat* in Britain as far back as 1788 where it described an established route taken by a prostitute or policeman; E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Historical Slang*, abridged edition (1961), 56.

<sup>20</sup> The verb to troll generally meant to visit or cruise regularly and it is probably derived from the 14th century verb meaning to move or saunter; E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English: Colloquialisms and Catch-phrases, Solecisms and Catachreses, Nicknames, Vulgarisms and such Americanisms as have been Naturalized*, (1961), 998. Baker notes that the Polari use of *troll* meant, 'to walk around seeking to charm a man in to the act of copulation'; P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men* (2002), 193.

In New Zealand the word went through several transitions in bogspeak, specifically in the 1980s, when it came to refer to an unattractive, generally sexually persistent man. By the turn of the century, with the arrival of on-line cruising environments, troll came to mean a man who deliberately posted misleading or inciting messages on a message board in an effort to create confusion or conflict.

<sup>21</sup> See Anon, *The Sydney Slang Dictionary*, (1882) (Mitchell Library, New South Wales, Australia, Microfilm, Record ID ML 042/P10), 104,106, 109,112.

<sup>22</sup> The word has an interesting history through its association both with prostitution and with names for male and female genitalia. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, Covent Garden was an area of London heavily frequented by whores. Thus the location gave rise to terms like *garden goddess*, *garden whore* (harlot), *garden gout* (syphilis), and *garden house* (brothel). By the 19<sup>th</sup> century *garden* had also come to refer to genitals, thus *garden hedge* (female pubic hair) and *gardener* (the penis): E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English: Colloquialisms and Catch-phrases, Solecisms and Catachreses, Nicknames, Vulgarisms and such Americanisms as have been Naturalized*, (1961), 362-363.

<sup>23</sup> By 1906 the city of Dunedin had ten public toilets, all for men, 'with a total accommodation for 27 persons, four of these ten being latrines': City of Dunedin, *Annual Report 1905/1906*, (1906), 23-24.

## architecture

The search for a design that might afford a level of discretion for women users and also provide a sense of modernity for civic centers was eventually realised in the imported concept of the underground toilet. Cooper et al suggest that the underground toilet was '*the facility of choice in discussions during the first two decades of the century.*'<sup>24</sup> They argue that it was seen as initiating '*a new era of civility and modernity... discretely 'there' but concealed from public view.*'<sup>25</sup>

In New Zealand during these decades, the charge of a penny was made for entry to cubicles, although there appears to have been no charge for men using urinals.<sup>26</sup> Toilets built in London's underground stations appear to have had considerable influence on thinking in New Zealand at the time. England had been dealing with the issue of large public conveniences since the Great Exhibition and by the turn of the century they profiled majestically in many of its larger cities. Thus, travelers returning to New Zealand had seen in operation a form of public facility that was ornamental, functional and clean. As towns around New Zealand sought to engage with ideals of modernity and civic respectability, these underground structures with their tiled walls, monolithic porcelain urinals and individual washing facilities appeared to be an enlightened solution.

These designs provided a logical public response to what was essentially a private matter. However, Lee suggests this form of building became problematic because it also became,

...conducive to the casual glance, the discrete eye contact, the wordless, covert, pick-up operation. The furtiveness and 'dirtiness' involved in sexual pickups in public lavatories reinforced and gave new meaning to the traditionally 'wicked' nature of homosexuality.<sup>27</sup>

Underground bogs, because of their heightened levels of privacy and positioning of urinals in full view of cubicle doors, meant that discrete contact could easily be made between men using them for initiating sexual encounters.

The doors on these stalls were lockable and in general there was ample space inside individual cubicles for men to have sex. However, the buildings were still public and if sex was to occur outside of a cubicle, systems of surveillance had to

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<sup>24</sup> A Cooper, R Law, J Malthus and P Wood, 'Rooms of their Own: Public Toilets and Gendered Citizens in a New Zealand City, 1860-1940', (2000) 7 *Gender, Place and Culture*.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid 423.

<sup>26</sup> Cooper et al note that 'the proverbial penny was the charge for a WC although men's urinals were free; higher charges were set for 'wash and brush-up' and dressing rooms'. They also note that in women's lavatories in Dunedin, the charge of 2d (two pence) was levied if use was made of the 'looking glass'; ibid 423. Payment for access to a cubicle was normally made by inserting a penny into a metal box affixed to the door. After entering, the user locked the door on the inside, after which the door could not be opened from the outside again.

<sup>27</sup> J Lee, 'Male Homosexuality and Subculture in Adelaide Before World War II' in R Aldrich & G Wotherspoon (eds), *Gay Perspectives: Essays in Australian Gay Culture*, (1992), 100.

be instituted. Accordingly, at this time a behaviour called 'pegging'<sup>28</sup> came to describe a 'lookout' or man who watched the stairway entrance leading down to a bog. A *pegger* was able to warn others engaging in sex at the urinals of the imminent approach of a stranger.

### insert fig 3 underground bog

Figure 3: Underground toilets Wellesley St. Auckland.

*'There was a lot of trade through the underground bogs because it was easy to know if someone was coming. Normally some guy would peg for you and they'd signal because they could hear shoes on the steps and the light above them would get blocked off. By the time the police got down there ... though in the end they learnt to rush down the steps... the chaps by the urinal were just buttoning up and ambling over to the basin to wash their hands.'* Patrick

Because cruising in public toilets for men was an established phenomenon during this period, many councils were forced to act on complaints from local citizens. A letter in 1919 from the Dunedin Town Clerk requesting police surveillance of the men-only underground toilet at Customhouse Square is indicative of correspondence surrounding the issue at the time.

Complaints have been made as to the conduct of a number of young fellows who are in the habit of using the Underground Convenience at Customhouse Square... I would be obliged if you would be good enough to arrange for one of your officers to pay periodical visits of inspection to the Convenience, more particularly in the evenings, with the object of checking any tendency in the direction complained of.<sup>29</sup>

What is interesting is that at this time most of these facilities had paid attendants. This raises the question as to how much activity can have escaped their notice. However, as Cooper et al note, there were also frequent '*complaints of drunkenness or disorder*' laid against attendants of men's toilets at the time.<sup>30</sup>

### language

As significant changes in the design of the public toilet occurred in the first thirty years of the new century, so too did the language form used by men frequenting these buildings for same sex contact. By this stage words used to define the argot spoken by bog cruisers in Britain included '*nelly*' or '*nonce words*'.<sup>31</sup> However, in New Zealand the term in popular use appears to have been '*code*'.

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<sup>28</sup> *Pegging* existed as a word in prison slang in New Zealand up until the 1950s. By the 1970s in bogspeak, it appears to have been replaced by the term *watch-queen*. This later word may have come into New Zealand via Laud Humphrey's publication *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Spaces*. In Australia a *pegger* was called a *cockatoo*.

<sup>29</sup> Town Clerk to Inspector of Police, 19 June 1919.

<sup>30</sup> A Cooper, R Law, J Malthus and P Wood, 'Rooms of their Own: Public Toilets and Gendered Citizens in a New Zealand City, 1860-1940', (2000) 7 *Gender, Place and Culture* 424.

<sup>31</sup> P Baker, *Fantabulosa. A Dictionary of Polari and Gay Slang*. (2002 a), 36.

Beyond the over-ground naming of public toilets by their location (*St Claire bogs*, *Custom St bogs*, *Civic Garden bogs*), *code* words became increasingly common as a way of naming specific toilets. The use of code meant that locations could be referred to in over-ground situations and not be understood by outsiders. Two of the most generic *code* names for underground bogs at this time were *catacombs* or *grottos*. Perhaps in New Zealand the most famous catacombs of the 1930s were the underground, porcelain-lined toilets at the front of the Auckland War Memorial Museum. These lavatories operated as a cruising venue from 1929 until 1996 when their refurbishing made sexual contact more difficult. They were used as a location specifically for daytime cruising because they closed at 4.30 pm.

Another of New Zealand's first underground 'grottos' still operates in Durham St West in Auckland. Faced with a bluestone wall and built in 1880, it sits underneath the oldest piece of road construction in the central city. This bog called in code *The Star of David* or *The Jewish Grotto* was named in reference to large cast iron screens that feature a Star of David motif at its entrance. These screens protected men using the toilets from public view and were designed at the time to '*satisfy standards of social and visual decency*.'<sup>32</sup>

### insert fig 4 grotto

Figure 4: Cast iron screens at the entrance to The Star of David, Durham St West. Auckland 1880.

Both the Auckland Museum and Durham St toilets had religious code names, and so too, at this time did a third, notorious, underground bog in the central business district. Situated under Howe St it was called *The Chapel*. Its name is interesting as it is an example of the use of ecclesiastical metaphors that can be traced back to the English Molly houses of the 1700s. In these houses the *chapel* was a private room set aside for men to engage in same-sex encounters.<sup>33</sup>

Because religious nomenclature appeared in the code names of particular toilets, it is not surprising that it also profiled in descriptions of objects and rituals enacted inside them. *Glory holes* were holes drilled through doors or partitions separating cubicles during this period.<sup>34</sup> Normally these holes allowed a note of paper to be passed back and forwards during initial contact. If the hole was large enough to allow men to fellatiate through the wall it became known as *Gloriana*. Where a man kneeled to do this he was described as *doing church* and what he made contact with was *Christ and the two apostles* (penis and testicles).

While some of these terms have faded from memory, it is significant that during this period one of the most ubiquitous New Zealand names for a homosexual

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<sup>32</sup> S Yoffes and T Mace, *Heritage Walks (Auckland)*, (2005), 52, <<http://www.hotcity.co.nz/heritage/auckland.pdf>> at 5 November 2006.

<sup>33</sup> G Simes, 'The Language of Homosexuality in Australia' in R Aldrich and G Wotherspoon (eds), *Gay Perspectives: Essays in Australian Gay Culture*, (1992), 42.

<sup>34</sup> If these holes were only large enough to look through they were sometimes called *peephholes* or *spy holes*.

man came in to common use. The word poof (pouf)<sup>35</sup> was a barbed insult for an effeminate male. Because of this, the term was generally used only by non-homosexual identifying men. If poufters (or *puffers*) were arrested in bogs in the early years of the century, the animosity they felt towards the police was evident in their adoption of the prison slang term, *demon*. A demon was a uniformed officer who loitered in, or near toilets in anticipation of making an arrest.<sup>36</sup>

## 1940–1954

Between 1940 and 1954 there were two significant changes to New Zealand law as it affected men charged with homosexual acts. In 1941 the requirements for flogging were removed from Section 137 of the 1867 Act and by 1954 the provision for hard labour had also been abolished.

During this period bog cruising was a part of most cities in New Zealand because in a highly heterosexist environment without alternative meeting places, the buildings and their environs provided the only way that the majority of men who had sex with other men could meet each other. Cruising communities it appears were often discretely networked and large numbers of the men using specific toilets knew each other (though often not by name).

## Language

During the Second World War between 1942 and mid-1944 more than 100,000 U.S. servicemen spent various periods in New Zealand. When they returned home they left behind a legacy of words including *dick*, *rim*, *blow-job*,<sup>37</sup> *tea rooms*,<sup>38</sup> *fruit*,<sup>39</sup> and *milk route*.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Poof* was originally lower-class slang (sometimes implying prostitution), first recorded in London in the 1830s. Along with the longer term *poofter*, it first appears in AG Stephens and SE O'Brien, *Dictionary of New Zealand and Australian Slang*, (1897) Mitchell Library [19--]. In New Zealand the word was known at the time of the First World War but was commonly pronounced *puffer*. Simes notes a similar spelling in the New South Wales Police Gazette just after World War 1, in a list of charged persons including a man called *Puffer Bill*: G Simes, 'The Language of Homosexuality in Australia' in R Aldrich and G Wotherspoon (eds), *Gay Perspectives: Essays in Australian Gay Culture*, (1992), 41.

<sup>36</sup> E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. 8th ed, (2002) p 299 notes the word was in use in both New Zealand and Australian slang at this time, but he notes that it rarely appeared in its singular form. The word he suggests can be traced in Britain back to the mid 1870s.

<sup>37</sup> *Blow-job* was a US term for oral sex that surfaced in New Zealand in the early 1940s. Although Partridge *ibid* p 99 records the term ca 1970, *blow-job* became common in both over-ground and underground communities in New Zealand well before this. In the 1940s *blow-job* replaced older British words in bogspeak, like *plate* and *jarry*.

<sup>38</sup> A *tearoom* is the American term for a public toilet where anonymous sex is available. Chauncey suggests that the word derived from '*t-room*' being an early twentieth century abbreviation of toilet rooms; G Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*, (1994), 197.

<sup>39</sup> *Fruit* is a term for a gay man. E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English: Colloquialisms and Catch-phrases, Solecisms and Catachreses, Nicknames, Vulgarisms and such Americanisms as have been Naturalized*, (1961), 1131, notes that the word is an anglicised, ex US term from 1937. In New Zealand *fruit* has continued to gather adjunct nouns since the Second World War. For example, by the late 1960s a *fruit punch* described a homosexual boxer, and a *fruit salad* described group male sex in a public toilet.

<sup>40</sup> The term *milk route* has a nebulous history. In the 1940s in New Zealand, US soldiers used it to describe the journey taken to a public toilet when seeking sex. After the service men left, in the 1950s the term referred to a journey between bus or train station toilets cruised late at night. By the late 1960s *milk route* in America had changed its

However, perhaps more significant were the terms these men left to describe a demarcation that was already deeply embedded in the psyche of New Zealand gay society. At this time, and continuing well into the 1960s, New Zealand men who had sex with other men were normally divided into active and passive roles. From one's delegation certain expectations and assumptions were made about proclivities and behaviours. The Americans defined this demarcation as *butch* and *bitch*.<sup>41</sup>

However, while the word *butch* came to describe the active partner in sex during this period, the rigid sex roles assigned to homosexual activity may be more evidenced in words infiltrating bogspeak from New Zealand and Australian prison slang. Because many New Zealand men who were arrested in public toilets during this period spent time in jail, and bog cruisers continued to remain easy targets of criminal activity,<sup>42</sup> it is not surprising that an increasing number of terms crossed over into the language form.

Thus from prison slang an *aspro* described a male prostitute who worked the bogs,<sup>43</sup> and *cat*, a piece of young, *rough trade*,<sup>44</sup> who might *ginger*<sup>45</sup> or steal from a man while having sex with him. A *hock* was a *straight* man who sometimes used the bogs for sex with other men.<sup>46</sup> On a more exploitative level a *poofter rorter* might rob and beat a homosexual after having sex with him,<sup>47</sup> or a *Purple Bob*, might move in with him and live off his earnings.<sup>48</sup>

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meaning yet again, describing now, the late night drive home with a *trick* in the car; B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon* (1972), 134.

<sup>41</sup> E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. 8th ed, (2002) p 164 notes that by the 1950s the term *butch* in US slang was almost ubiquitously adopted 'by English-speaking homosexuals everywhere'.

<sup>42</sup> Significant crimes enacted on men who attempted to keep their homosexuality secret at this time included blackmail, extortion, robbery and violent assault.

<sup>43</sup> Simes notes the use of *aspro* in Australian underworld slang during this period: G Simes, *A Dictionary of Australian Underworld Slang* (1993), 3. While he suggests that the term may be associated with the commonly available analgesic of the same name, many New Zealand men using the term in the 1950s pronounced it *ass-pro* emphasising the pun on arse (or in US, *ass*] + *pro* (stitute).

<sup>44</sup> The term *cat* appears to have disappeared from the bogs in the late 1950s, although before that it generally alluded to a 'straight acting' but often sexually passive youth. In 1950s New Zealand and Australian prison slang, *cats* were young prisoners who, though often heterosexual prior to incarceration became a passive partner for another inmate. Simes notes that in Australia, *cats* were normally contradistinguished from *queens* who were generally effeminate and openly homosexual in orientation: G Simes, *ibid* 39-40.

<sup>45</sup> The verb also appears in New Zealand and Australian prostitutes' slang dating back to the 1940s.

<sup>46</sup> It is likely that *hock* entered bogspeak through New Zealand and Australian prison slang where it described a man who sought active homosexual contact but was not classified as a *queen* or *cat*. Simes notes that in Australia in the 1940s guards or other prisoners did not see the role of the hock as implying homosexuality; G Simes, 'The Language of Homosexuality in Australia' in R Aldrich and G Wotherspoon (eds), *Gay Perspectives: Essays in Australian Gay Culture*, (1992), 105. Partridge, in 1938, records the term as describing 'a man who consorts with poufs': E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* 2nd ed, (1938), 1003. The Australian term *Rudolph Vaseline* was also in evidence in New Zealand at this time and was specifically (as in Australian prisons) applied to these men.

<sup>47</sup> The term in New Zealand was used to describe a man who met other men in or around a bog then took them to a lonely or secluded place and robbed or bashed them. Partridge (1938) defines the term as 1920s cant for 'robbing male harlots with violence'. Simes notes a similar use of the term in Australia during the 1950s: G Simes, *A Dictionary*



Also from prison slang, during these decades bogspeak inherited a range of pig Latin<sup>49</sup> words including *oofterpa* (poofter), *opsca* (police) and more abstrusely *orkanpa eanba* (queen).<sup>50</sup> Two other terms used in New Zealand prisons were also widely known. *Chubbing*,<sup>51</sup> described the penchant local councils developed for chaining and locking certain bogs at night. Where toilets weren't chained and men using them for sex were suddenly apprehended in a police raid, the arrest was called a *fall*.<sup>52</sup>

By the mid 1950s, the close relationship between prison slang and bogspeak appears to have unraveled. This may have been because substantial prison sentences for convictions were slowly beginning shorten. Within two decades, it appears that terms like *cat*, *poofter rorter* and *Purple Bob* had become anachronisms.

## 1954–1969

Although in Britain in 1954, the Wolfenden Committee had begun reconsidering treatment of homosexuals and prostitutes in law, in New Zealand there was also evidence of community mobilisation. As homosexuality became more visible in 1955, popular magazines like *New Zealand Pictorial* reported that

gangs of homosexuals... live together for the sake of perversion. You see these warped-brain men - and women too - wandering about the streets or sitting idly in night cafes.<sup>53</sup>

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*of Australian Underworld Slang* (1993), 44. He also provides an alternative definition not in evidence in New Zealand where a *poofter rorter* acted as a procurer for a homosexuals or male prostitutes.

<sup>48</sup> A Purple Bob was also called a *bludger*. Often these men were not an active part of the bog scene. In some cases they were recently released prisoners or men with whom contact had been made while in prison (through correspondence). Upon release they would sometimes 'put in' with a gay man or prostitute and generally lived off their earnings. Simes notes the term's concurrent use in Australia in the 1940s; Simes, 'The Language of Homosexuality in Australia' in R Aldrich and G Wotherspoon (eds), *Gay Perspectives: Essays in Australian Gay Culture*, (1992), 163.

<sup>49</sup> Pig Latin describes a language construction where words that begin with consonant sounds move the initial consonant or consonant cluster to the end of the word and add 'ay' or 'a'. For words that begin with vowel sounds (including silent consonants), normally the syllable 'ay' is added to the end of the word, eg arsay/ I say = arse. In New Zealand in the 1960s, pig Latin was also sometimes called gibberish.

<sup>50</sup> *Orkanpa eanba* as a term for a homosexual is one of the few examples in bogspeak of a blended language construction. *Orkanpa eanba* is the pig Latin version of prison rhyming slang (*pork and bean*) meaning *queen*. Words constructed out of rhyming slang or pig Latin generally indicated to other men at this time, that the user had spent time in jail.

<sup>51</sup> *Chubbing* probably comes from the brand of a popular British lock (Chubb). In prison slang 'to *chubb* a man' meant to lock him into a cell: E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. 8th ed, (2002) p 216. However, local councils began *chubbing* certain bogs at this time by wrapping chains around their metal gates. This was done to deter nighttime cruising.

<sup>52</sup> Partridge *ibid* p 1375 also notes the term *fall* in a collection of Australian prison words compiled by Neil James and published in the *Sydney Bulletin* of 26 April 1975.

<sup>53</sup> See generally Hugh Young, *A Chronicle of Homosexuality in New Zealand, Part 1: Before Stonewall and NZ Gay Liberation*, <<http://www.queerhistory.net.nz/Part1.html>>.

While some of these people were now using an increasing number of over-ground facilities including hotels and coffee bars as meeting places, for most homosexual men at this time, sexual contact still centered around the bogs.

### Language

It was during this period that a highly distinctive British gay argot called Polari<sup>54</sup> began to infiltrate bogspeak. Polari was a language form brought to New Zealand by Merchant Seamen and later popularised through the Julian and Sandy sketches on National Radio.<sup>55</sup>

Terms from Polari were used to describe both architectural features and rituals enacted in the bogs. A lockable door was known as a *brandy latch*, but the door itself was called a *trade curtain*.<sup>56</sup> A *homie ajax* was a man in a neighbouring cubicle. A *nanti bog* was one that was ineffective for cruising. *Nochy* and *sparkle bogs* described public toilets that were cruised at night or in the daylight respectively. A bog that had its lights broken to provide some security of darkness at night was called a *nochy bog*.

Polari arrived into a lexicon of bogspeak that already evidenced several definable strains of metaphor. The first, regency<sup>57</sup>, profiled in terms like *queen*. In New Zealand a *bog queen* was a man who frequently cruised public toilets for sex. He might also be called a *wall queen* if he was known to wait for long hours in a cubicle in answer to advertisements written on the wall. If he was in a cubicle for a lengthy period of time he was said to be *enthroned*. If he was in a cubicle with viewing access to the urinal he was said to be in the *royal circle*. If the police or queer bashers threatened him he might be forced to *abdicate*, or if he was arrested he was *dethroned*.

The feminisation of nouns during the middle of last century was another feature of bog language, although it was used more commonly by homosexual-identifying men than by others who frequented the bogs for sex. Feminisation was profiled strongly in terms used to describe the police. Paul Baker suggests that this was a method used by men at the time to remove some of the police's

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<sup>54</sup> Polari is a term used by writers like Cage and Baker to describe a secret language, mainly used by gay men. Cage suggests Polari entered the speech of gay men with the disappearance of large numbers of traveling performers in the twentieth century. For a fuller discussion of the language form see P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men* (2002), and K Cage, *Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens. A Dictionary of Gay Language in South Africa* (2003).

<sup>55</sup> Julian and Sandy (played by Kenneth Williams and Hugh Paddick) were a pair of Polari speaking queens who featured on the British comedy *Round The Horne*. The programme, scripted by Barry Took and Marty Feldman, was broadcast by Radio New Zealand on Saturday nights between 1968 and 1970. While never reaching the level of popularity it held in England, many New Zealand gay men listened to the comedy and words like *bona*, *eke*, *lally*, *nada*, *naff*, *riah* and *vada* became part of their wider lexicon.

<sup>56</sup> The word appears to have been in most common use in port cities and probably came into use via UK Merchant Navy slang. Sailors on these boats sometimes slept eight to a berth. In order to maintain privacy during sex with other men, they hung a *trade curtain* around their bunk: P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men*, (2002).

<sup>57</sup> In Ken Cage, *Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens. A Dictionary of Gay Language in South Africa* (2003), Cage notes that regency language at this time also became a dominant profile of the South African Gayle (the underground language of 'kinks and queens' in that country).

power.<sup>58</sup> In the early 1960s in New Zealand *Vivian Vice, Nelly-law, Dolly Handbag, Alice, Dora-D, Hilda-Handcuff, Lily-lunchbox, Jennifer-Justice, Hilda Box-rot, Petunia Pig, Tilly Tight-twat, Cherie Cunstable*, and *Our Lady of the Golden Brooch*, were all in use by men under threat of entrapment in public toilets.

law, culture and reform

By 1957 the Wolfenden Committee in Britain had recommended decriminalising homosexual acts between consenting adults in private and four years later in New Zealand amendments made to part 7 of the *Crimes Act 1961* reduced the penalty of imprisonment for 'indecent' between consenting males.<sup>59</sup>

However, at this stage public attitudes still framed men who did the bogs as social pariahs. Violent assaults were not uncommon and in 1964 much publicity was given to a queer bashing and murder that occurred near toilets in Hagley Park in Christchurch. The victim, a drapery store manager called Charles Aberhart had been doing the bogs, having only a few months earlier been released from prison after serving a three-month sentence for indecently assaulting another (consenting) male.

The trial of the six youths who beat Aberhart to death lasted five days. None of their defence counsels called any evidence, but the jury returning after seven hours of deliberation, found all of the accused, who had only been charged with manslaughter, not guilty. It was accepted and understood that the youths had struck the blows that killed Aberhart. No one else was ever charged.

The *New Zealand Listener* at the time commented,

the assumption [at the centre of the case was] that the dead man was a homosexual... The six youths who went in search of 'queers' were not moved by moral indignation; they were looking for excitement and believed their victim to be fair game...The Hagley verdict... leaves a suspicion that, at subconscious levels, an alleged homosexuality has been felt to be an offence which mitigates a crime.<sup>60</sup>

In New Zealand, by April 1967, a small group of members of the legal subcommittee of the Dorian Club in Wellington had mobilised to form the Wolfenden Association (later the Homosexual Law Reform Society). An invitation made to the former Governor General Lord Cobham was frostily declined- in his response he likened homosexuality to smallpox.

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<sup>58</sup> See generally P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men* (2002).

<sup>59</sup> See generally, Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution *Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution* (Chairman, Sir John Wolfenden), (The Wolfenden Report) (1957). It should be noted however, that despite the apparent liberalisation, consent was no defense. Indecency between males (consensual) and indecent assault on a male by another male (non-consensual) were considered equally severe (ss 140 and 141) and carried penalties of five to seven year's imprisonment.

<sup>60</sup> M Holcroft, 'Hagley Park Murder', (Editorial, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1964), 5 (1288) *The New Zealand Listener* 5, 8.

Although discrete parties, coffee lounges and the first tentative gay clubs in larger cities at this time provided a few men with alternative ways of meeting others, for the majority of homosexual New Zealanders, especially men in small towns and young men under the legal drinking age, the bogs remained the only available way of making sexual contact. This situation was further exacerbated by the fact that during this period reoccurring police raids on toilets meant that for many men, any attempt at contact with others was fraught with the possibility of arrest and exposure. Although in Christchurch in 1962, Magistrate Lee had discharged two men, Cock and Smith, without conviction for indecent acts in a St Albans' public toilet, his argument that the law '*is soon to change*',<sup>61</sup> was overturned when police prosecutors appealed his decision.

Despite rumours of law changes, police continued the practice of using agent provocateurs to entice men cruising public toilets into 'committing indecent acts' on them.

#### architecture

If, in 1967, Governor General Lord Cobham had been not prepared to support men's desire to engage in same sex activity, then the design of a popular form of public toilet updated in that year was. With the change to decimal coinage, penny operated locks were removed from the doors of many large civic lavatories. In structures like Hamilton's *Garden Place bogs*, adjacent cubicles situated in long rows had up until this time been known as '*reach unders*'.<sup>62</sup> This was because men locked in single cubicles were generally forced to make contact by either reaching under stalls, or if the architecture of the facility allowed, they reached behind dividing partitions that did not butt flush against the back wall.

However, lying on concrete floors in an effort to secure contact with a man in the next cubicle often put users at risk. This was because police at this time would often enter these toilets and suddenly crouch onto their hands and knees to catch men positioned between stalls.

### insert fig 5 reach-under

#### Insert movie 1

Figure 5: Reach-under bogs in Auckland circa 1968.

*In this excerpt Wedding*<sup>63</sup> discusses the coding of bogs and the use of the term *Station* in Auckland in the 1960s.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> See Hugh Young, *Death in Hagley Park*, <<http://www.queerhistory.net.nz/Aberhart.html>>

<sup>62</sup> *Reach-unders* could be either street-level or underground toilets. However, by the 1960s the generic terms for underground bogs like *grotto* and *catacomb* had been replaced by the word *station*. By placing *station* at the end of a bog's location (*Victoria St Station*, *Howe St Station*, *Potter's Park Station*) men were able to discuss the toilet in public as if it was a significant transport terminus.

<sup>63</sup> Vanessa Wedding was the first man to undergo a sex change in New Zealand. During this period she was cruising bogs as a young man.

<sup>64</sup> V Wedding and W Ings, *Vanessa Wedding: Oral History Interview*, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, MS-Papers-0648-01 (2004).

## the 1970s

In the 1970s New Zealand was still a country where many men who cruised the bogs for same sex encounters knew of people in their communities who were in prison or who had received sentences and exposure to a highly censoring public.<sup>65</sup>

Although in 1972 the first gay activist groups were established in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch, these groups were only small. In some of the country's main cities newly emerging clubs<sup>66</sup> began to provide some men with alternative ways of meeting each other. However, for most New Zealand men, trolling the bogs remained the only available method of establishing same sex contact. This difficult situation was exacerbated by the fact that during this period reoccurring police raids on both the new clubs and the bogs meant that for many, any attempt at contact with another man for sex was fraught with the possibility of arrest or exposure.

In this decade, two Bills went before Parliament seeking to address legislation surrounding homosexuality. In July 1974 Venn Young, unsuccessfully introduced a *Crimes Amendment Bill*, proposing an age of consent of 21. However, because the Bill did not recommend equity between homosexual and heterosexual relationships, Gay Liberation groups in the country demonstrated vociferously against it.<sup>67</sup> The same issue of inequality plagued Warren Freer's *Crimes Amendment Bill* in 1979. Lacking support, in June that year it was also abandoned.

## architecture

If early signs of reform occurred in New Zealand politics in this decade, innovation did not roll over into the design of men's public toilets. In general, in the 1970s generic patterns of adjacent cubicles accompanied by a urinal were *de rigueur*. 'Stalls' were normally separated by walls made of concrete, steel or wood. Each stall contained a single, lockable door.

This approach to demarcation afforded men using the cubicles a degree of privacy in what was essentially a public space. However, as efforts to eliminate

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<sup>65</sup> Underhill's analysis of prosecution statistics for sodomy and indecency between men in New Zealand in 1974 indicates that 386 charges covering sodomy or indecency between males were laid; 56 of these were charges of sodomy of which 30 were proven. Of the 27 males sentenced in the Supreme Court for this crime, 6 were imprisoned for terms ranging from one to seven years. Of the 116 charges of indecency between males, 89 resulted in convictions and 16 people received prison sentences; G Underhill, 'Gays and the Law: How big the problem?' (1978) 17 *OUT Magazine* 10, 10.

<sup>66</sup> These included the Dorian Society (Wellington), The Taurus Society (Hamilton), Aequus (Christchurch) and The Laetus Social Club (Auckland).

<sup>67</sup> On the Bill's second reading, on the fourth of July 1975, caution kept some twenty-three MPs from the debating chamber and the bill was lost by five votes, 34 to 29.

cruising from public toilets became more pronounced in this decade, a determined battle began to rage between bog cruisers and local councils.

At this time an increasing number of councils began replacing wooden and concrete partitions with more 'vandal proof' steel and aluminum. They also began surfacing the walls of public toilets with a mixture of paint and sand. This veneer made graffiti difficult. Accordingly, men frequenting these buildings began to avail themselves of a range of emerging technologies that enabled them to adjust.

Among these were permanent felt tipped markers that were able to write on aluminum, polished steel and tiled surfaces. The new enamel spray paints could be used to *black-out* lights that had been secured in place inside metal cages, and the use of portable, battery-driven power tools meant that men were able to successfully drill through aluminum or concrete walls, despite the absence of a power outlet. By the end of the 1970s, the drilling of glory holes with these tools was termed *bosching*, and the linking of cubicles in a public toilet with *gloryholes* was called '*putting them on the phone*'.

insert fig 6 gloryhole

\*Insert movie 2

Figure 6: Glory holes in the door of the Herne Bay Beach Reserve bogs, Auckland.

*In this oral history interview Paul discusses the connecting of the East Tamaki bogs with a gloryhole and specific methods used by councils to thwart his efforts.*<sup>68</sup>

protest and legislation

It was during this time that police harassment of certain public toilets gave rise to a series of significant reactions from within the gay community. The Auckland National Gay Rights Conference in 1979 ran spontaneous workshops for men teaching them how to conduct themselves in the event of arrest or police harassment.<sup>69</sup>

Significantly at this time there also emerged the first organised and politicized gay intervention into the world of men who used bogs for same sex encounters. In Wellington and Auckland, a loosely connected network of radical men established a process of intervention during arrests.<sup>70</sup> The initiative was small and was called '*the bog-watch*'. During arrests at central city toilets in Auckland, these men ran between officers instructing detained cruisers not to provide any information other than their name and address until they were formally arrested. They also told arrested men not to plead guilty or sign any form of statement.

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<sup>68</sup> Paul De Rungs and Welby Ings, MS-Papers-0648-02, Alexander Turnbull Library Wellington.

<sup>69</sup> These workshops were heavily attended and included techniques for dealing with interrogation. Workshops also facilitated role-plays so men could practice responses to police if they were detained. The workshops resulted in many men becoming informed about both the law and current police harassment strategies.

<sup>70</sup> In Auckland a group of three men from Gay Liberation House in Ponsonby formed one of these teams. The group consisted of Ian Booth, Welby Ings and Glen Turner.

As a result of police use of entrapment during this period, AGRA<sup>71</sup> established a legal defense fund to help pay court costs for contesting any police actions of harassment or entrapment of gay people.<sup>72</sup>

The 1970s also saw the first international scholarly studies regarding the demographic profile of men who used the bogs for same sex encounters. Laud Humphrey's highly controversial *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* (1970) challenged conventionally held myths of bog cruising being a gay phenomena when his research suggested that 54% of men using 'tearooms' for sex were married and living with their wives.<sup>73</sup>

### language

Although terms for the police like *pig* were in generic use as part of the counter culture movements of the late 1960s, at this time words in bogspeak used to describe the police were just as distinctive and equally hostile. Traffic officers and taxi drivers who sometimes monitored bogs were often called *snakes*<sup>74</sup> and the terms *D*, *cleaner* or *shaker* referred to police who operated as agent provocateurs. *Shaker*<sup>75</sup> referenced a technique where the officer stood at a urinal shaking his penis suggestively after urination in an effort to entice another man to make an 'indecent assault' on him. In the 1960s these men were normally identified by their overly clean-cut appearance, absence of the smell of alcohol, and overt sexual propositioning.

At this time a *urinal-sniffer* described a *D* who dropped down on his hands and knees to look under the doors of a toilet. If a man was arrested his interrogation was often called a *verbal*. This term applied to the police practice of frightening, then verbally bargaining with men so they signed a statement soon after their arrest. In general, the police offered a discrete prosecution for an admission of guilt. By doing this, men were falsely promised they could avoid public disclosure of their behaviour.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> AGRA was an acronym for Auckland Gay Rights Activists.

<sup>72</sup> H Gaw, 'March Sauna Screwed' (1979) 10(1) *Pink Triangle* 3.

<sup>73</sup> L Humphreys, *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*, (1970).

<sup>74</sup> The word's origin predates both traffic officers and taxi drivers by over fifty years. The phrase in the 1880's, *to give* (a person) *the snake* meant to vex or annoy; E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Historical Slang*, abridged edition (1961) 867. In the 1960s, taxi drivers were sometimes called *snakes in the grass* because they were suspected of currying favour with the police by informing them of 'suspicious' activity. When cruising, many men at this time treated a parked and occupied taxi with suspicion.

<sup>75</sup> The term was documented as part of American gay language in the early 1970s: B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon* (1972), 207. Partridge in E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Historical Slang*, abridged edition (1961), 820, notes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that the word in Australian slang also meant to coit or masturbate.

<sup>76</sup> E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8th ed, (2002) p 1376 lists *verbal* as an Australian underworld term for a police interrogation. While the word was recorded there ca. 1950, it was also in common use in New Zealand at the time, and continued to be used by some men well into the 1980s.

## the1980s

As the new decade opened, fear of entrapment meant that being unable to ascertain the nature of another cruiser before initiating an approach became a significant issue. Although glory holes between partitions had been part of cruising rituals since the turn of the century, they offered very limited opportunity for assessing potential danger. As a result, certain bogs in the 1980s and 1990s that afforded greater levels of identification came into more popular use.

## architecture

Toilets with highly polished floors that gave men in one cubicle a clearer view of someone in the next became a comparatively safer alternative. Indicative of this form of design was the *Hall of Mirrors* or the *High St bogs* in Auckland.<sup>77</sup> The code name *Hall of Mirrors* derived from the polished metal domes at the bottom of each pillar separating the cubicles. The reflective nature of this dome allowed an occupier of one stall to see the reflection of a man in an adjacent toilet. By using this dome he could also see the men at the urinal in front of the stalls.

The penchant for glossy tiling on floors of many new and upgraded men's toilets in the last three decades of the twentieth century produced what were known as *Floor Mirrors*. These surfaces, while easily washed and offering reduced potential for vandalism, when wet also became highly reflective. This propensity for reflecting details of a man in an adjacent cubicle contributed significantly to the popularity of many of the newly installed mall toilets of the time.

## insert fig 7 floor mirror

### \*Insert movie 3

Figure 7: Floor mirrors.

*In the 1980s and 1990s the installing of security cameras in some theatre and mall complexes meant that contact in these spaces became problematic. However, the use of floor mirrors enabled men to ascertain a considerable amount of information about other users of the facilities. In this oral history excerpt Paul discusses the current design and negotiation of Auckland's Planet Hollywood centre.*<sup>78</sup>

## legislation and harassment

Following the failure of both Crimes Amendment Bills in the 1970s, an Equality Bill was developed between 1980 and 1983. However, this again failed to garner the necessary support from the gay and lesbian communities, partly because it failed to give equity in the age of consent and protection against discrimination. However, on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1985 Fran Wilde, introduced a Bill that gave equal age of consent (16) and provided for the Human Rights Commission to deal with discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. Significantly however, in the process of its passage through the house, the human rights provisions were dropped. On the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1986 when the Governor General signed the Bill into

<sup>77</sup> These bogs were built before the 1980s but were cruised heavily during this decade.

<sup>78</sup> Paul De Rungs and Welby Ings, *Paul De Rungs: Oral History Interview*, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, MS-Papers-0648-02 (2004).



law as the *Homosexual Law Reform Act 1986* (NZ), it ensured that the same provisions applied to sex in private between people, irrespective of gender.<sup>79</sup>

However, the jubilation that occurred for many gay men at the passing of this Bill was not paralleled in the world of the bogs. Seen as a reaction against this piece of liberalisation was an amendment to the *Summary Offences Act 1981* (NZ). This amendment gave the police new powers in terms of the severity of prosecutions handed out to men who cruised public toilets. The new s 28 (1) created the offence of '*being found in a public place preparing to commit a crime*'. The new offence was designed to replace the offence of '*frequenting a public place with felonious intent*' under the *Police Offences Act 1927*. This change in legislation led to a police campaign of establishing precedents by laying prosecutions under the new offence. In response to the police campaign, men in Wellington established the Legal Aid Defence Fund (similar to the AGRA initiative in 1979). This fund was set up to pay for the court costs of men who were charged with offences under this Act.<sup>80</sup>

At this time police also began to release to local newspapers the names and personal details of men who had been arrested in raids on public toilets. Not surprisingly this initiative saw a parallel escalation in the numbers of queer-bashings around the country.

Because victims of such assaults were not in a position to approach the police for protection, publications serving the gay community like the *New Zealand Pink Triangle* ran warnings for its readers. In a feature titled *Bashers About*, they reported that:

[w]e have been advised that two young men, one European, 5'2", solid build, sandy, short hair, clean shaven, home done tattoos on hands, about 16 years: the other a Maori, 7'7", longish black hair, slim build, tattoos [sic] on hand and upper left arm, aged about 17, have been terrorizing people on the beats in Auckland. They operate together on Saturday nights at Sandringham and are in to theft and blackmail.<sup>81</sup>

The describing of attackers in detail grew out of the traditional bog practice of writing descriptions and behaviours of queer bashers on the walls of individual

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<sup>79</sup> Support for the bill was widespread and public opinion polls indicated that about 61% of the population supported reform, while about 37% opposed it. Human rights issues relating to equal protection on the grounds of sexual orientations became part of New Zealand law seven years later when on July 28<sup>th</sup> 1993, the Human Rights Bill s.21(1)(m), was passed in Parliament with a majority of 64 to 4.

<sup>80</sup> The provision was however that these men had to refuse to plead guilty. Although it was not part of the current deliberation by the courts at this time, the two national gay periodicals, *New Zealand Pink Triangle* and *OUT* both ran articles warning readers of the additional barb in ss 3 that provides... 'that if you have been previously convicted of the crime the Police think you are preparing to commit, then details of your earlier convictions will be brought up as additional evidence against you'. The gay press noted that that this was one of the few times in New Zealand law when previous convictions were to become admissible as evidence. (Legal Aid Defence Fund 1983, p 24).

<sup>81</sup> Anon, 'Bashers About', (1980) 13(3) *Pink Triangle* 1.

cubicles.<sup>82</sup> An extension of these written warnings appeared in the same year in relation to harassment by the police. *New Zealand Pink Triangle* ran articles giving specific advice relating to detainment and questioning.<sup>83</sup> The New Zealand Gay rights Coalition also produced small, free cards called *Your Rights and the Police* that fitted easily into wallets. These cards outlined rights and procedures for protecting oneself if arrested and included space for a lawyer's name and phone number.

In November 1984 a significant decision by Judge Hobbs, in sentencing a man appearing in the Wellington District Court on a charge of indecently assaulting a plain-clothes policeman, received widespread coverage in the gay press. The judge called for the suppression of the defendant's name and identity (even though there had been no application by the man's counsel for this). He also instructed the man to come up for sentence in six months only if called upon. The decision of the judge was a noted reaction against the escalating numbers of police entrapment cases that were coming before the courts at the time. He noted,

it was clear that this was an undercover action concocted by the police. If an innocent party had been involved or a member of the public or a person of immature years, the Court might take a very serious view.<sup>84</sup>

This recognition by the courts of problems involved in the arrest of men seeking discrete, consensual acts, where the act was actively encouraged by the police (to secure a prosecution), illustrated a fundamental problem with the application of the law at this time.

## insert fig 8 arrest

### \*Insert quick time movie 4

Figure 8: Arrests in the later part of the twentieth century were generally either orchestrated and sudden, or designed as a form of seduction where men were enticed into making 'criminalised' contact with an undercover officer.

*In this excerpt from an oral history interview Wedding discusses a form of arrest prevalent between the 1960s and 1980s. Also described is a common method of entrapment called in bogspeak 'shaking'.<sup>85</sup>*

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<sup>82</sup> A Kade and H Gaw, 'Editorial,' (1980) 12(2) *Pink Triangle* 3.

<sup>83</sup> The article titled *Gays and the Police* gave the following advice:

- 1 Do not answer any questions except for your name and address.
- 2 Do not give the name and address of your employer.
- 3 Do not go to the police station unless arrested.
- 4 Do not make, or sign any statement.
- 5 Make sure you know a good lawyer.

<sup>84</sup> B Shepherd, 'Judge shows what he thinks of police,' (1984) 58 *OUT Magazine* 8.

<sup>85</sup> V Wedding and W Ings, *Vanessa Wedding: Oral History Interview*. MS-Papers-0648-01. Wellington, Alexander Turnbull Library (2004).

## language

By the 1980s, as in over-ground gay slang, there had been a decline in the use of Polari. Words relating to activities and spaces within the cruising environment in New Zealand were gradually replaced by localised language. Indicative of this were terms like *Waitomo*. In Hamilton, *Waitomo* was a term for a uniformed officer. The word drew a droll connection between the huge local caves visited by tourists and the cut of police trousers that [unwittingly] emphasised the large size of their anus.

On a national level the term *Commodore* referred to police activity but more specifically to their cars being parked in the vicinity. The New Zealand Police bought the first of these vehicles in 1980-81 and often the cars were naively parked near bogs, inadvertently alerting cruising men to potential entrapment. In many small towns, regulars knew the number plates of these vehicles.<sup>86</sup>

## 1990-2007

In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century discouraging loitering and vandalism in and around public toilets was continuing to pose an ongoing challenge to local councils. Attempts in the mid 1980s to graffiti-guard™ walls with sacrificial coatings had proved relatively ineffective and increasing costs of repair and surveillance, coupled with escalating pressure from local communities meant that a paradigm shift away from restoration towards a design approach that actively disrupted the rituals of cruising became a preferred option.

## architecture

Older *cottages* and underground bogs were increasingly replaced by more publicly exposed, unisex facilities.<sup>87</sup> These new buildings removed both the ability to make contact at a urinal and to communicate between cubicles.

Indicative of this new form of public convenience was the Automatic Public Toilet (APT) designed and marketed by the New Zealand firm Exeloo.<sup>88</sup> These structures are automated, 'self-managing', unisex, facilities designed as stand-alone units. The buildings incorporate exposed cubicle doors, impenetrable floor to ceiling walls, and automated wash cycles.

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<sup>86</sup> While the term *Commodore* appeared to be national rather than international, an observant eye for specific vehicles is something that is generally imperative when cruising. Peter Burton in his book, *Amongst the Aliens: Some Aspects of Gay Life* (1985), 6 in discussing men who cruise bogs in unfamiliar English towns says, 'those who utilise them for sexual purposes know where to find them and most usually seem to know exactly... which is under police observation. There are those who can spot a plain-clothes policeman or unmarked police car with as much facility as any stamp collector could a Penny black in a box of all-sorts.'

<sup>87</sup> In this decade two of Auckland's most famous stations were closed. The Howe St bogs (the Chapel) were demolished and the Beresford St bogs were sealed, then later reopened as a gentrified cafe/restaurant.

<sup>88</sup> Exeloo was established in 1992 and currently has its designs in 143 New Zealand and 193 Australian locations.

## insert fig 9 APT

Figure 9: Exeloo unit installed in Henderson 2007.

*'They've replaced a lot of the active bogs with these new things built right out on the footpath. Inside they're like an evangelist's bathroom, all polished steel and scrubbed within an inch of their lives. Nobody uses them because there's no way to make contact. The most you can do if it's a traditional beat, is cruise the park area behind them.'* Don

Concomitant with the popularity of the APT is a design solution currently tailored to preserve the exterior character of architecturally valued buildings. In these toilets the metal plate screens introduced in the cottages of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been removed. So too have the urinals. In a reversal of the Victorian and Edwardian notions of discretion and privacy what has been installed are individual, self-contained cubicles that face out to expose men moving between them to public attention.

## insert fig 10 CBD

Figure 10: Albert Park toilets in Auckland's central business district.

These toilets have maintained their separate sections for men and women. However, the interior space in front of the cubicles has been designed so that all doors are exposed to public view.

## paradigm shifts

In the last twenty years, two significant changes have impacted heavily on the bogs and cruising rituals associated with them.

The first is the proliferation of same sex cruise clubs. In the 1990s, in an increasing number of urban centers, male only, sex-on-site cruise bars began to open.<sup>89</sup> These clubs generally provided a safer environment for men seeking same sex encounters with other men. The earliest of these were venues like Lateshift (Auckland), and Buddies (Wellington).<sup>90</sup> However clubs like these are not free and despite their discrete facades, they are generally located in built-up areas where men can be seen entering and leaving. If the idea of paying for a place to meet other men for sex proved problematic in the 1990s, then the development of on-line cruising websites at the opening of the new century enabled men to hook up and pre-arrange meetings in a nominated toilet, park or alternative location.

In October 2006 the *Sydney Morning Herald* carried a news item that attracted considerable international attention. The article, *Gay sex forces closure of*

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<sup>89</sup> These venues were preceded by a small number of male-only saunas that opened in New Zealand in the late sixties and 1970s. These enabled men to secure same sex under the guise of fitness and relaxation. Among the first of these were the Gladiator Health Club in Queen St, Auckland and the Sun Sauna in Wakefield St, Wellington. These saunas were followed later by venues like the Victoria Spa in Auckland and the Wakefield Sauna in Wellington.

<sup>90</sup> Although historically New Zealand has had many beaches, parks, reserves, hot pools, saunas, and public toilets operating as environments for same sex encounters, the arrival of cruise bars, video outlets and bookstores in the last twenty years has meant that a growing proportion of men are able to cruise relatively secure environments that leave them less vulnerable to queer bashing or police prosecution.

*Sydney store's toilets*, concerned a decision by management at Myers' Sydney city store to close its level one toilet to the public because the facility was being used by large numbers of men as a cruising location.<sup>91</sup> While some bogs in large retail outlets have a history of use for cruising, what had become evident in the Myers' store was the sudden amplification of activity following the location's increasingly positive reviews on a website.

The website in question was www.Squirt.org. It is a site that currently lists more than 1,500 public and commercial locations around Australia and New Zealand where men can meet for sex. Among the services it offers is a number count showing the popularity of the location, and a review of its features.<sup>92</sup> Bog profiles are often accompanied by photographs and posted arrangements by cruisers enabling them to synchronise visits. Men who cruise a location can update this information and the site often features maps and directions. One can access information at any time from a computer, a cell phone or mobile device.

## Language

In New Zealand, research released in 1997<sup>93</sup> suggested that men who visited bogs for sex presented a unique profile. Demographically they were shown to include a significant proportion of older men who were not gay-community attached.

To many of these men, terms used historically in their community are often unknown. Currently, a few older words in bogspeak are still evident in the language of some of those who live away from New Zealand's cities. Their slightly dated lexicon appears to sit in concord with observations made by volunteers working in the BEATS<sup>94</sup> projects of the 1990s. Goddard, in his essay *The Forgotten World*, says of the rural bogs,

It seems sometimes as if the last twenty years has not happened and we are looking at a carbon copy of a homosexual society which existed in the forties or fifties but which many of us, preoccupied with our post-Stonewall lives, assume has vanished.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Mark West, speaking for Myers in the article confirmed he that he 'had heard that the retailer had been mentioned on a hardcore gay porn website called squirt.org, which men used to arrange meetings at the toilet, and one month ago the store's management decided to make it a staff-only facility', p 2.

<sup>92</sup> The concept of reviewing bogs in New Zealand is not new. Traditionally messages naming 'active' bogs were written on toilet walls. In 1992, Paul De Rung's underground publication *Bog-Spy* produced as an A5 'zine', rated specific Auckland bogs and parodied police activities around them. Copies of this publication are held in the LAGANZ archives in Wellington.

<sup>93</sup> C Aspin, A Hughes, A Reid, E Robinson, P Saxton, R Segedin and H Worth, *Male Call, Waea Mai, Tane Ma. Report 4, Casual sex between men*, (1997), 15.

<sup>94</sup> BEATS was an educative outreach and support initiative. Developed by the New Zealand AIDS Foundation, it used volunteers in peer-based information dissemination programmes that focused on AIDS awareness and safe sex practices. Under the initiative these men operated in and around the bogs between 1990 and 1997, talking with cruisers and distributing safe sex information packs.

<sup>95</sup> M Goddard, 'The Forgotten World', 1990 (July) *OUTRAGE* 25.

Although some traditional words and phrases associated with bogspeak continue to be used, what is significant currently is the rapidly growing influence of abbreviations and acronyms updating the language form. This phenomenon is occurring as internationally, bog cruisers' discussions move into online environments. Websites like Squirt.org and the use of cell phones to text communications, have contributed to a recent plethora of new, internationally communicated contractions. Indicative of these are descriptions like, *n2 str8 act blks* [attracted to heterosexual acting men], *ct/hung 2bg 4da gloryhle* [circumcised with a large penis], *< 40* [seeking men younger than 40], or more cryptically, *1/1 +++* [one-on-one sex strongly preferred], and *- 420* [not interested in marijuana smokers].

This new truncated form of bogspeak sits alongside newly emerging acronyms including *SPU* [Sperm Production Unit/ man], *HRU* [Human Reproduction Unit/woman], *BAM* [Bisexual Asian Man], *VGL* [Very Good Looking], *DDF* [Drug and Disease Free], *MM* [Married Man] and *KFC* [underage youth].

Conversant with these acronyms are terms specifically related to the online environment. Thus acronyms like *GPS* refer to the Global Positioning System,<sup>96</sup> and *troll* has adapted its earlier meaning as a noun denoting somebody persistent and unattractive, to now describe '*a guy who deliberately posts a controversial or inciting message on a message board for the purpose of creating conflict.*'<sup>97</sup>

In March 2007, Squirt.org posted a glossary of over 480 words, acronyms and truncations necessary to understand the language used internationally on its site. What is interesting about this development is that bogspeak is now appearing for the first time, significantly in written form. Up until the late 1990s the language was essentially spoken and attempts to record it in oral history manuscripts generally proved problematic. This was because pronunciations varied considerably between users.

the law as it stands

Currently men arrested for cruising in public toilets in New Zealand are normally charged with one of three offences. The most common is disorderly behaviour. This crime relates to ss 3 and 4 of the *Summary Offences Act 1981* (NZ). The charge, normally involves an arrest for a sexual act performed in, or within view of any public place, or where a person behaves in an offensive or disorderly manner. It is generally used when there has been a complaint made to the police

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<sup>96</sup> The GPS is a recent technology that uses longitude and latitude coordinates to find a specific geographic location. It is often used to locate specific bogs or cruising areas.

<sup>97</sup> See

[www.squirt.org.<http://www.squirt.org/Shared/static\\_content.asp?SC\\_ID=1156&SC\\_SHOW\\_LAYOUT=True&USER\\_ID=01B15FAB6EF24ACDB72B9C0F6A358959>](http://www.squirt.org/Shared/static_content.asp?SC_ID=1156&SC_SHOW_LAYOUT=True&USER_ID=01B15FAB6EF24ACDB72B9C0F6A358959). This website is secure and if one wishes to access it one is required to register as a member.

about cruising and the offender is considered to have 'breached the Queen's peace'. Although the maximum fine for this offence is \$1000.00, in practice the amount is generally much less, and often the police are known to recommend diversion.<sup>98</sup>

A more serious charge is committing an indecent act in a public place. This is an offence against the *Crimes Act 1961* s 125(1) and (2) and carries a maximum sentence of up to two years imprisonment. The statutory defence puts the onus on the defendant to prove there were reasonable grounds for holding the belief they would not be seen. It is in dealing with this charge, that recent challenges to the definitions of public and private space have been made.

A third, less common but more serious charge, is that of indecent assault under s 141 of the *Crimes Act 1961* (NZ). If convicted, a man is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years. This charge normally relates to an indecent assault on another man over the age of sixteen. An arrest for this offence has no potential for diversion and the charge is normally brought where there is 'false or fraudulent representation used in relation to the nature and quality of the act'.

#### conclusion

While these laws are currently used to control aspects of bog cruising in New Zealand, they need to be understood as part of a wider environment of social censure. Bog cruising has been, and continues to be, looked down upon by members of the gay and heterosexual community, although men from both worlds are active within it.

Vance argues that

...the system of sexual hierarchy functions smoothly only if sexual non-conformity is kept invisible... For dominant sexual groups the appearance of the sexual lower orders produces anxiety, discomfort, the threat of pollution, and a challenge to their hegemony.<sup>99</sup>

The bog cruiser's challenge to hegemonic constructions of male sexuality continues partly because of his propensity for survival. His metamorphoses of ritual negotiated through changes in language, space and legislation have undergone an extraordinary journey. This journey has forced a reconceptualising of male sexuality, decency and public/private space.

In the idyllic cottages and underground stations of the turn of the twentieth century, with their emphases on discretion and privacy, this community of men developed a complex system of codes and rituals. Across a hundred years that

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<sup>98</sup> Diversion is a police recommendation introduced in 1993 that is sometimes used where the arrest is for a first offence and the person accepts the allegation against them. Its significance lies in the fact that no criminal record is produced (outside of an entry on police files). The facility technically allows the police to withdraw a prosecution for a minor offence in return for an admission of guilt and a donation to, or work for, a nominated community organisation.

<sup>99</sup> C Vance (ed), *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, (1984), 19.

has seen changes in legislation and police attention, shifts in role identification, and the impact of other language forms, the almost inaudible voice of these men has moved through euphemism, self-denigrating parody, overt hostility, to embrace an online language made up of generic acronyms and truncations. It is an exceptional and complex journey.

If it is the aim, at either government or local body level, to influence the behaviour of such a culture, it is necessary to understand it. Understanding its unique language and history provides one of several ways of framing this.

Reactively changing the architecture of a public toilet does not.

## lexicon

Each word is presented in the following order: The **word** (alternative spellings); *grammatical category*; meaning(s); etymology; other notes; examples of use; and related words. Related bogpeak words or words documented from other, international bog cruising communities appear in *bold italics* and related heterosexual words appear in standard *italics*.

**bagging** *verb*: a method of concealing a sexual partner in a toilet cubicle during sex, to avoid police detection (*current*). One man sits on the toilet while the other stands facing him with a plastic bag or coat pulled around his feet. If a policeman looks under the gap at the bottom of the door, only one pair of feet will be seen and the direction they are pointing will be obscured.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men* (2002), 76.



**beat** *noun*: 1 public toilets and the surrounding environment where sex between men occurs. The phrase *doing the beat* is another term for cruising. Beat is used both in New Zealand and Australia, *cottaging* is the parallel term in England and *tearoom trading* is the American equivalent.<sup>101</sup> 2 to the space between toilets or sexual encounters.

**Black Forest** *noun*: bogs in Victoria Park in Auckland, given the name because of the higher numbers of Maori and Pacific Islanders who used them. (*Kwn* Auckland, 1950-60s).<sup>102</sup>

**blackout** *verb*: to remove lights installed in or around bogs to increase safety. Councils traditionally installed metal encasements for bulbs to stop their removal. These devices are generally cut through with bolt cutters or a hacksaw. Where bulbs are not accessible, sometimes they are sprayed with black or red paint.

**bog** *noun*: public toilet. *Doing the bogs* is a common New Zealand term for cruising. Also *carsey* (Polari and heterosexual slang, *kwn* Wellington, Christchurch 1940s & 50s). Cf. *gents restroom*, *shithouse*, *WC*; heterosexual slang.<sup>103</sup>

**bog bio** *noun*: a personal profile in a wall advertisement, often erroneously indicating age, size and race, (*kwn* 1970s-80s).

**bona, bonar, boner, bono** *adjective*: 1 good. In use between the 1950s and 1970s, but traceable back to thieves' cant of the nineteenth century. The word *bona nochy* as a vocative meant good night, and *bona vardering* as an adjective meant good looking, *bona lallies* meant nice legs. Syn. *bonaroo*, wonderful, excellent (US prison slang).<sup>104</sup>

**bosch** *verb*: to drill a glory hole, blow hole or peep hole between two toilet cubicles. In New Zealand this is either done with a pocketknife and cigarettes or a battery powered drill and a masonry bit. The term may have come from a brand name of a popular power tool (*kwn* 1980s-90s).

**box seat** *noun*: cubicle with direct view of the urinal (*kwn* 1960s)<sup>105</sup>.

**brandy latch** *noun*: lockable toilet cubicle, (*kwn* in New Zealand port cities 1950s). The term also appears in British Polari.

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<sup>101</sup> P Keogh, P Weatherburn, and F Hickson, 'Anonymous sex among homosexually active men: implications for HIV protection', (2000) 13 (4) *Venerology* 144.

<sup>102</sup> V Wedding and W Ings, *Vanessa Wedding: Oral History Interview*, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, MS-Papers-0648-01 (2004).

<sup>103</sup> M Cryer, (2002) p129.

<sup>104</sup> B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon* (1972), 35.

<sup>105</sup> V Wedding and W Ings, *Vanessa Wedding: Oral History Interview*, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, MS-Papers-0648-01 (2004).

**Bridge over Troubled Water** *noun*: a public toilet in the car park below Three Kings School on Mount Albert road in Auckland. It was named after a small ornamental bridge, spanning a nearby artificial pool (*kwn* 1970s).

**Catacombs** *noun*: 1 underground toilets in the Auckland War Memorial Museum. They operated as a cruising venue from 1929 until 1996 when their refurbishing made sexual contact more difficult. These facilities were renowned as a location specifically for daytime cruising because they closed at 4.30 pm.

2 generic name for bogs built under street level, also stations.

3 a gay drop in centre off Cuba St in the 1960s.

**Chapel** *noun*: the underground toilets in Howe St Auckland (*kwn* 1960-70s). The name may have referenced an adjacent small chapel-like building or have had its origins in a much older use of the word. Simes<sup>106</sup> traces *Chapel* back to the English Molly houses of the 1700s where it described a private room set aside for men to engage in same-sex encounters.

**closet** *noun*: 1 a cubicle in a public toilet (*kwn* 1930s), from *Water Closet*. The term later extended to describe men whose sole expression of their gay sexuality occurred in public toilets.

2 *adjective* a description of a man with hidden homosexual tendencies. It is generally used to describe a man who is, or is suspected of being, sexually attracted to other men, but who has not acknowledged it publicly. Also *closet case*, *closet queen*. The description of a lifestyle based on this non-disclosure is being *in the closet*. In the last two years the term *Narnia* has been used to describe a man so far in the closet that he doesn't recognise the fact that he is gay.

**cottage** *noun*: public toilet. Cottage first appeared as a term for toilet at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>107</sup> The term was British in origin and generally referred to toilets that were built in parks to resemble miniature country cottages. *To go cottaging* meant to cruise the bogs.

**Country Club** *noun*: public toilets in the Auckland Domain. When police raided these toilets, occupants would flee to the nearby lake and pretend to be feeding the ducks or admiring the substantial gardens surrounding the facility. At night the same toilets were also known as *Glowworm Grotto*, in reference to cruising activities in the unlit, surrounding park. The name relates to the numerous glowing cigarette ends, moving in the darkness (*both terms kwn* 1950s-1960s).

**cream run** *noun*: a cruising route taken between a series of active bogs (*kwn* 1940s).

**date, time, size ad.** *noun*: formulaic advertisement written on a toilet wall. It normally proposes an appointment indicating time, age and preference (*kwn* 1970s-90s).

**dethroned** *verb*: forced to leave a public toilet (*kwn* 1940s-1960s).

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<sup>106</sup> G Simes, 'The Language of Homosexuality in Australia' in R Aldrich and G Wotherspoon (eds), *Gay Perspectives: Essays in Australian Gay Culture*, (1992), 42.

<sup>107</sup> P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men*, (2002) 170.

**enthroned** *verb*: to be in a public toilet and looking for sex (*kwn* 1940s-1960s).

**fish** *noun*: a woman (derogatory). In prison slang it can also refer to a newly sentenced male prisoner.<sup>108</sup>

**floor mirror** *noun*: a puddle of water on the floor that allows an occupant in one cubicle to discern more about the appearance of a man adjacent to him. Floor mirrors can also refer to highly polished tiles as in the IMAC centre in Queen St Auckland (*kwn* 1980s-1990s).

**forced door** *noun*: a door on a cubicle that has its lock broken off. This form of vandalism is rarely perpetrated by bog queens, but is often a sign that queer bashers have been in the toilet. Forced doors became more common in public toilets after the demise of the penny-activated locks in use up until the late 1960s.

**full house** *noun*: 1 when all of the cubicles in a public toilet are occupied, cf. *open house*, U.S. slang 1970s.<sup>109</sup>

2 having more than one sexually transmitted disease at the same time.<sup>110</sup>

**gardening** *verb*: cruising in open places near a public toilet, U.K. Some one who does this may also be called a *bush queen*.

**glory hole** *noun*: a hole between two toilet cubicles, normally large enough to poke things through. Larger holes are called *blow holes*. Smaller holes only large enough to look through are generally termed *peep holes* or *spy holes*. These may also appear in a toilet door. The word may have its origins in navy slang. A glory hole referred to compartments on a ship or was used as a word for stewards' sleeping quarters. In British Army slang a glory hole was an expression for a small billet.<sup>111</sup>

**goolie bog** 1 *noun*: a 'blacked out' public toilet. (From Polari for black or darkened, *kwn* 1950s-1960s), also *munge bog*.

**Grotto** *noun*: Durham Lane bogs in Auckland. Also *Star of David*. This name relates to the embossed six-pointed star on the metal screen blocking the urinal from street view (*kwn* 1930s-current).

**Hall of Mirrors** *noun*: High St bogs in Auckland. The name is derived from the polished metal domes at the bottom of each pillar separating the cubicles. The reflective nature of this dome

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<sup>108</sup> B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon*, (1972), 81.

<sup>109</sup> B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon* (1972), 144.

<sup>110</sup> P Baker, *Fantabulosa. A Dictionary of Polari and Gay Slang*. (2002), 126.

<sup>111</sup> P Baker, *Fantabulosa. A Dictionary of Polari and Gay Slang*, (2002), 176.

allowed an occupier of one stall to see the reflection of a man in an adjacent toilet. By using this dome one could also see the men at the urinal in front of the stalls (*kwn* 1950s-1980s).

**Hanging Gardens** *noun*: Active bogs in the 1960s and 1970s in Mt Albert Road Auckland.

**homie ajax** *noun*: man in a neighbouring cubicle. (From Polari *ajax* meaning adjacent or neighbour, *kwn* Wellington 1950s).

**lace-up** *noun*: suspicious man. Alluding to the fact that in the 1970s and 1980s many plain-clothes policemen, known for poor style, still wore their uniform [lace-up] shoes when going in to public toilets to entrap men. A glance under the partition at the feet of the person making overtures in the adjoining cubicle, often identified them. The term was in common use in towns like Hamilton where the main cruising toilet [Garden Place bogs] had partitions that didn't touch the floor (*kwn* 1970s-1980s).

**mail** *noun*: advertisement on a toilet wall. '*Is there any mail in there?*'

**Meatworks** *noun*: Onehunga bogs. The term was applied in the 1980s to these toilets in a dual reference to their frequent use as a meeting place for sex between men and also in reference to their proximity to the Southdown meat works in Church St. Rogers defines a meat rack as an outdoor setting... '*where homosexuals gather to parade their wares and meet new friends*'.<sup>112</sup>

**menu** *noun*: 1 toilet wall lined with bog bios and date, time, size ads (1960s) cf. *newspaper* U.S. late 1960s.<sup>113</sup>

2 a possible sex partner. '*That thing's on the menu*'.<sup>114</sup>

**milk run** *verb*: to go to a public toilet for sex. The term in New Zealand has traditionally referred to bus or train station toilets cruised late at night (*kwn* 1940s-1970s). The origin may be American, a *milk route* was U.S. gay slang for the late night drive home with a trick in the car.<sup>115</sup>

**nanti** not, nothing, useless, no. Although the term nanti was evident among British seamen and bog queens in the 1950s, its origins are in thieves' cant. It has recently revived in New Zealand where it is currently used by some gay barmen. The term appears in sentences like '*nantee homie d'fafo*'. [*D'fafo* is an acronym for '*drink fast and fuck off*'. It is also the name of a popular Wellington café, staffed by gay men catering to urbane (naive) heterosexuals].

**nanti bog** *noun*: a bog built in such a way that it is not conducive to cruising for sex. The term nanti was evident among British seamen and bog queens in the 1950s, and was used to mean, *no*,

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<sup>112</sup> B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon*, (1972), 132.

<sup>113</sup> B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon* (1972), 141.

<sup>114</sup> V Wedding and W Ings, *Vanessa Wedding: Oral History Interview*, (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, MS-Papers-0648-01) (2004).

<sup>115</sup> B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon*, (1972), 134.

*not, don't or nothing*. Nanti bogs often featured specific architectural treatments like doors cut very high from the ground [New Market toilets in Auckland 1990s], bright lighting, stainless steel walls or regularly cleaned, tiled surfaces. The nanti bog reached its apotheosis in the design of the steel, unisex, APT toilets introduced by many New Zealand councils in the 1990s.

**nochy bog** *noun*: Nochy is polari for night. In the 1960s nochy bogs were facilities that were generally only active after dark (*kwn* Wellington and Christchurch 1950s).

**omee/ homee** *noun*: man (*kwn* 1950s and 60s). These are alternative spellings of the same word. It is generally considered to be Polari but has a longer history. Originally in Britain, omee was a word used by actors to refer to each other and is first recorded in Hotton's (1864) *Slang Dictionary*, as meaning landlord or master. By the end of the nineteenth century it was used more generically to mean man. The word probably arrived in New Zealand from two related sources. In the 1950s and 1960s there is evidence of it being used by Merchant Navy seamen in drinking establishments like the *Great Northern Hotel* in Queen St (*The Lily Pond*) and the Wellington coffee houses. The term was also familiar among bog queens in major ports. Another probable source is the British radio programme *Round The Horne* that was broadcast by Radio New Zealand on Saturday nights between 1968 and 1970. This programme featured two screamingly camp, Polari speaking Queens called Julian and Sandy. While never reaching the level of popularity it held in England, many New Zealand gay men listened to the programme and words like *bona, eke, lally, nada, naff, riah* and *vada* became part of their wider lexicon.

**omee palone/ homee palone/ omi paloni** *noun*: a gay man. Polari in use in the 1950s and 60s. The word is a combination of omee (man) and palone (woman), meaning man-woman.

**opsca** *noun*: police (prison cant or pig Latin, *kwn* 1940s).

**pegger** *noun*: a lookout or man who watches the entrance to a bog and warns sexually active men inside of the approach of others (*kwn* 1930s). The term appears to be thieves' cant. Its equivalent in Australian prison slang is *cockatoo*. Its replacement in the 1990s was *watch queen*.

**pick up** *noun*: some one who is acquired for sexual purposes. The term has survived from Molly slang [c. 1700]. 'What did you pick up in the bogs?'

2 the past tense *picked up* can also be used in relation to an arrest. '*She was picked up by the Ds*'.

**poofter rorter** *noun*: queer basher (*kwn* 1950s). The term in New Zealand was used to describe a man who met other men in or around a bog then took them to a lonely or secluded place and robbed or bashed them. Partridge defines the term as 1920s cant for '*robbing male harlots with violence*'.<sup>116</sup> Simes<sup>117</sup> notes a similar use of the term in Australia during the 1950s.

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<sup>116</sup> E Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, (1937).

<sup>117</sup> G Simes, 'The Language of Homosexuality in Australia' in R Aldrich and G Wotherspoon (eds), *Gay Perspectives: Essays in Australian Gay Culture*, (1992), 44 and G Simes, *A Dictionary of Australian Underworld Slang* (1993), 158.

**putting on the phone** *verb*: a term used by Paul de Rungs<sup>118</sup> to describe a system of gloryholes drilled through toilet walls that allow for contact to be made between men using them.

**reach under /reach around** *adjective*: to masturbate someone in an adjacent cubicle of a public toilet by reaching under or around a partition. Certain toilets like the Garden Place bogs in Hamilton were renowned for this kind of sex, (*kwn* Hamilton and Auckland 1930s-70s).  
2 receiving sex from the back while being masturbated by the same man (current).

**rough cast** *adjective*: rough surfacing on toilet walls and doors applied using a mixture of sand and paint to disable the writing of graffiti, bog bios, date, time, size ads and stories. Other systems used to stop writing on walls were the use of a product called graffiti guard™, and the lining of walls with ceramic tiles.

**royal circle** *noun*: the two cubicles with the clearest view of the urinal, (*kwn* 1960s).<sup>119</sup>

**shaker** *noun*: a police officer known to engage in entrapment. The word references a technique where the officer stands at a urinal shaking his penis suggestively in an effort to entice another man to make an 'indecent assault' upon him. Sometimes two officers might do this together to lessen the sense of danger for a third party about to be entrapped. The term was documented as part of American gay language in the early 1970s.<sup>120</sup> In New Zealand however, *shaker* appears much earlier in phrases like *Miss dolly shaker*, (a term in the 1950s for an agent provocateur).

**sparkle bog** *noun*: a bog cruised heavily during daylight hours. Often these bogs were locked at night by local councils. From sparkle (Polari) meaning light, white, or shiny. Antonym: *goolie* or *munge bog*, *kwn* Wellington and Christchurch 1950s).

**tea room** *noun*: public toilet where anonymous sex is available. The term is U.S. in origin. Chauncey suggests that the word derived from 't-room' being an early twentieth century abbreviation of toilet rooms.<sup>121</sup>

**trade** *noun*: 1 male sex. Trade is broadly a term for a casual sexual partner that dates back to the Molly words of the eighteenth century. In the seventeenth century 'the trade' referred to prostitution. By the twentieth century the term was used in the navy to refer to the submarine service.<sup>122</sup>

2 a heterosexual man who is available for casual sex, normally only allowing himself to be fellated or taking an active role in anal intercourse.

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<sup>118</sup> Paul De Rungs and Welby Ings, *Paul De Rungs: Oral History Interview*, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, MS-Papers-0648-02 (2004).

<sup>119</sup> V Wedding and W Ings, *Vanessa Wedding: Oral History Interview*, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, MS-Papers-0648-01 (2004).

<sup>120</sup> B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon* (1972), 207.

<sup>121</sup> G Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*, (1994), 197.

<sup>122</sup> P Baker, *Fantabulosa. A Dictionary of Polari and Gay Slang*, (2002), 193.

**trade curtain** *noun*: a door on a toilet cubicle (especially in port cities). The use is relatively rare but may have come into bogspeak via U.K. Merchant Navy slang; because sailors sometimes slept eight to a berth, in order to maintain privacy during sex with other men, they hung a curtain around their bunk.<sup>123</sup>

**troll** *verb*: to visit or cruise regularly. The word has several meanings and is probably derived from a definition from the 14th century meaning to move or saunter. The Polari use of troll meant 'to walk around seeking to charm a man in to the act of copulation'.<sup>124</sup> In New Zealand it also meant to visit or 'work' several bogs in one town. 'He was out trolling the bogs'. Also *doing the beats, thrashing the bogs*.

2 A man who deliberately posts a controversial or inciting messages on an online cruising message board for the purpose of creating conflict (current).

**underground station** *noun*: underground toilet, (*kwn* Auckland 1950-60s). *Victoria Station, Howe St Station*.

**urinal sniffer** *noun*: agent provocateur in a public toilet. Also *cleaner, D, Demon, lace-up, shaker, snake*, c.f. American 1970's gay slang, *ghost*.<sup>125</sup> Urinal sniffers got their name from the habit of kneeling down on the hands and knees at a urinal to check the numbers of feet in adjacent cubicles. A urinal sniffer can normally be identified by their overly clean-cut appearance, poor taste in shoes and pants, tan lines on their finger where their wedding ring has been removed, absence of the smell of alcohol, or their overt sexual propositioning.

**wall queen** *noun*: one who waits in a cubicle in answer to date, time and place advertisements.

**watch queen** *noun*: a lookout or man who watches the entrance to a bog and warns sexually active men inside of the approach of others. The term may have come into New Zealand in the 1970s via Laud Humphrey's publication *Tearoom trade: Impersonal sex in Public Spaces*, it does not appear to be known in the country before that date, cf. *pegging* (New Zealand prison slang).

**Westend** *noun*: Western Park toilets in Auckland, (*kwn* Auckland 1940-60s).

**working bogs** *noun*: toilets where sex can be found. In two-bog-towns, often one toilet is called a working bog (identified generally by advertising on walls and holes in the walls); the other toilet is often referred to as *dead, gay proof* or *a grave*. A working bog may also be described as *active, going-off* or *jumping*.

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<sup>123</sup> P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men* (2002), 193.

<sup>124</sup> P Baker, *Polari- The Lost Language of Gay Men*, (2002), 193.

<sup>125</sup> B Rogers, *The Queens' Vernacular: A Gay Lexicon* (1972), 207.

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