

Bring me my towel! Charles shuns air dryers in public loo

By **Rebecca English**
Royal Correspondent

HE is known to be one of the more fastidious members of the Royal Family.

But on a recent official visit Prince Charles surpassed himself by using his own hand towels so he would not have to use a community centre's hot-air hand dryers.

The surprising incident happened on a visit to Leicestershire last Wednesday when the heir to the throne visited the Mountsorrel and Rothley Community Heritage Centre.

Charles arrived by steam train at the project, where more than £100,000 was raised to restore an historic railway line and build a station and heritage centre.

It was the last visit on a busy day in the region and it was expected that the prince might want to take a 'comfort break' before he headed back down to London.

According to reports, aides asked for a section of the public toilets to be cordoned off for Charles, and told organisers that the royal didn't use hand dryers.

Instead they brought along some clean towels from his Clarence House home, which were placed in the facilities for him to wipe his hands on after finishing his royal ablutions.

'There was a real buzz about Prince Charles's visit and staff wanted it to be perfect,' a source was reported as saying. 'They were more than happy to

...but maybe he's right to worry

THE first hot air hand dryer was patented in 1921 by the Airdry Corporation of Groton in upstate New York, which called its product The Electric Towel.

The machines became widespread in the 1940s and were thought to be perfect for public lavatories because users did not have to share towels.

Studies, however, have shown hot air dryers are not as hygienic as initially thought. This is because they pick up bugs from around the room and blow them around. A 2014

study by the University of Leeds found airborne germ counts were 27 times higher around jet air dryers than in the air around paper towel dispensers.

Research published in the American Journal of Infection Control in 2013 found that even bacteria from toilet bowls were blown into the air.

And a paper in the Journal of Hospital Infection in Britain showed micro-organisms could stay suspended in the air for more than an hour after a dryer was used.

make one of the toilets for his exclusive use only and for his own hand towels to be used.'

There are those who would suggest Charles isn't as fussy as he might seem. Studies regularly show that air dryers harbour and disperse bacteria.

It is not unusual for the prince's aides to carry his creature comforts with them. Staff can frequently be seen carrying a cushion for him to sit on in order to relieve his niggling bad back.

During his travels and at official functions an aide will invariably be seen following him around with a glass of water - with no ice. He also prefers to take his own tea and organic honey

with him, particularly when abroad. He even takes his own olive oil to state banquets.

Indeed, wherever possible he will try to eat organic foods and during flights prefers to have his own food brought along with him.

Charles also dislikes the heat, and insists that the windows of his homes, cars and hotel are thrown open for him - or has the air conditioning turned down to the coldest possible setting.

Clarence House declined to comment, but a royal source insisted that neither the prince nor his team carried around a supply of hand towels with them.

