

## PRESERVING A SENSE OF HUMOUR

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*ABSTRACT* - This "paper" describes discovery of rare sense-of-humour. The state of preservation, analysis, treatment, storage, display, usage, accessibility, environmental and mental concerns are studied. It was found in the sub-basement of a government building in Ottawa, a location where senses of humour are rarely encountered. It was in a wet, dirty, fragmentary condition with many losses. It was analyzed, analyzed again, studied, dried, fumigated, documented, deacidified, cleaned, consolidated, conserved, restored, in-painted, air abraded, gilded, documented and generally worked over. (B-72 came in there somewhere also.)

### INTRODUCTION

Little is known of senses of humour in Ottawa. In its location in the sub-basement of a large Government Office building somewhere between a pile of a pile of income tax returns dating from 1956, a pile of yellowing *CCI Notes* and an ancient sump-pump, this particular sense of humour was hardly recognisable. Dirty, wet and with no attribution, it was unable to raise the hint of a smile. Parts were missing. Large parts.

### ANALYSIS

Visual examination revealed nothing visual to be examined. The SOH test was carried out with a simple joke - "I say, I say, my dog has no nose. Really? How does it smell?"<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> Zero response.

### STUDY

Intensive study of the nothing visual to be examined revealed 50% of it missing. (*Keywords* (by the way): door, lock, Yale, ring, safe, West, ignition, chain, Chubb, stone, -note speaker, board, E b, F #, B t.)

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<sup>7</sup> Awful.

<sup>8</sup> Personal Communication, J.C. McCawley.

### *TREATMENT*

After the above thorough study, and with curatorial input, it was dried, freeze-dried, fumigated with nitrous oxide (to neutralize the sense of humour's scents of humus), cleaned, glass bristle brushed (oooh, it tickles!), its peevishness consolidated with PVshnA, conserved, deacidified with cherry-flavoured Pepto-bismol,<sup>9</sup> restored, in-painted, out-painted, air-abraded, and generally worked over with more curatorial input and then gilded. (B-72 came in there somewhere also.) Gaps were filled with a really funny consolidating mixture - AJK dough. Wide consultation elicited no funnier material.

### *DISPLAY CONSIDERATIONS*

Since usage could damage it, it won't be. You can't display a dirty sense of humour in Ottawa. It's just not on. Even though it is now fully dry and thoroughly clean to the point of political correctness, it still cannot be placed in full public view within 1000km of Ottawa. It will be returned to the basement form whence it came, and we will have the last laugh.

### *ETHICS*

There were none, so this heading in the standard technical paper writing format was easy to fill in.

### *FURTHER BASINGSTOKE*

1. *Boy's Own Bumper Joke Book*, Macmillan Bloedel, Harpic Press, 1937.
2. *Recent Setbacks in Conservation*, Vol. 1 *et seq.* (Well, it would have been but I couldn't find anything funny in it.)
3. *Blackburn Arms News*, Blackburn Arms, Blackburn Hamlet, 1980 *et seq.*

*Author's address* - none fixed.

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<sup>9</sup> Gilberg