Seriously Funny: Humour in Journalism

Humour has been a vital ingredient of the print media since it emerged in the 17th century. Yet it has hardly featured in academic studies of media history. This new text is aiming to fill that gap with a collection of papers by international scholars. It will draw from an eclectic range of disciplines such as media history, international literary journalism, English/American studies, humour studies, media content analysis, cultural studies.

Richard Lance Keeble, one of the editors, is to contribute a chapter on George Orwell: The humorous hack. David Swick, the other editor, is to write on Comedy in Tragedy: The literary journalism of James Cameron.

Other chapters might focus on:

- The scurrilous, blasphemous, ribald humour of the radical press in Britain: 1790 to 1850
- Dickens’ humour – amongst his many journalistic voices
- The light touch in Oscar Wilde’s journalistic jottings
- Saki and the parliamentary sketch
- Dorothy Parker’s special wit
- Bud Johnson’s black humour
- Mixing humour and crime: the journalism of Edna Buchanan
- How Clive James’s clever, witty TV reviews revolutionised the genre
- Private Eye: court jester to the British Establishment?
- Le Canard Enchaine: mocking the French elite
- Canada’s Frank magazine: biting the ankle that kicks it
- The evolution of the road trip, from Nellie Bly to Hunter Thompson
- Pepe Escobar: Observing the ‘war on terror’ with an acute, satirical eye
- Humour in the social media and Twittersphere

These subjects are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. They merely indicate a possible range of topics that might appear in the text. There are clearly many other equally important routes to travel down. In particular, contributions from scholars in India, Australia, South America and Africa are invited. The text, above all, aims to be international (though comics and cartoons are outside its remit).

Abstracts of 200 words are invited – by 2 September 2014. Please send to Richard Lance Keeble rkeeble@lincoln.ac.uk and David Swick david.swick@ukings.ca

Final chapters of up to 7,000 words will be due by 2 January 2015. The publishers, Routledge, of Abingdon, Oxon, UK, are being approached – with publication planned for late 2015.

The editors
Richard Lance Keeble is Professor of Journalism at the University of Lincoln. He has written and edited 29 books on a range of subjects including literary journalism, practical newspaper reporting skills, media ethics, George Orwell, peace journalism, the coverage of US/UK militarism and the secret state, investigative journalism, the Hackgate controversy and digital journalism. He gained a National Teaching
Fellowship in 2011 – the highest award for teachers in higher education in the UK – and in June 2014 received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association for Journalism Education – the first time the AJE has ever given this award.

David Swick is an Assistant Professor of Journalism at the oldest chartered university in Canada, the University of King’s College. An award- and fellowship-winning newspaper columnist and radio documentarian, he joined the university full-time in 2010, where he teaches writing courses and oversees students in the creative non-fiction MFA program. He has written for magazines and television documentaries and is the author of one book. On view in his home office is the award he treasures most: students once named him ‘Prof I’d Most Like To Get High With’.