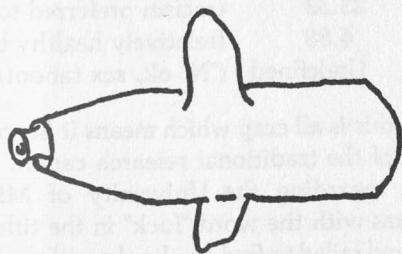


Mysterious Tales of the Reference Desk

Raleigh Clayton Muns

While working at an unnamed reference desk, I happened to encounter the following questions:

Q: What is this (see below)?



A: A rhinoceros penis. (Source: Donald Brown, et al, *Penis Inserts of Southeast Asia*, Berkeley, CA: Center for Southeast Asia Studies, c1988, p. 28)

Q: A "friend" of mine has this incredible ability to control his belches. We once timed a continuous burp for 43 seconds! Where can we get information on getting him a job?

A: Tough question. Best I can do is refer you to the biography of one Joseph Pujol (1857-1945) entitled *Le Petomane* (Jean Nohain and F. Caradec, Los Angeles: Sherbourne Press, c1968). For 22 years he performed at Paris' Moulin Rouge as the world's premier farter (fartist?) outdrawing even Sarah Bernhardt. Pujol would extinguish candles from a foot away, play musical instruments, even whistle tunes from his talented orifice. Reading *Le Petomane* may give your friend some career pointers.

Q: Was buggery on the high seas as prevalent as Monty Python would have had us think?

A: Probably. See B.R. Burg's definitive treatment, *Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition* (NY: NY University Press).