

2009/2010 Curran Fellowship for Research on the Victorian Periodical Press
Awarded to: Clare Horrocks, Liverpool John Moores University, UK
Archive: *Punch* Collection, British Library, London

The *Punch* Archive was moved to the British Library in 2004 but the catalogue has only recently been fully integrated into the main library catalogue. As a result many scholars do not realise the full range of material that is actually available. Several gems of the collection include letters from writers like Douglas Jerrold and the Silver Diary (detailing the discussion at the *Punch* dinners from 1859), the subject of Patrick Leary's acclaimed book *The Punch Brotherhood: Table Talk and Print Culture in Mid-Victorian London* (2010). However, as with many great archives scholars are disadvantaged by access and distance as the collection is only available to view in the St Pancras Reading Rooms in London; none of the material being available online. With the renewed interest in *Punch* that has been generated in the academic community I wanted to work on building a digital collection of the *Punch* contributor ledgers 1843 – 1900 in order to demonstrate the academic value of the magazine beyond the traditionally studied main cuts.

Funding from the Curran Fellowship was required to facilitate the completion of a pilot project to demonstrate how a digital collection of the Ledgers would operate. The initial stage of the project involved weeks of work in the Archive in London, transcribing each page of the Contributor Ledger for 1843. The full table of contributions were then hosted at Liverpool John Moores as part of their Special Collections in a new archive that I have begun to build entitled "*Punch* and the Victorian Periodical Press Collection" (available at www.ljmu.ac.uk/lea/archives/114802.htm). I wanted to highlight the importance of further archival research for uncovering the social networks involved in the production and consumption of *Punch*. With the results of the pilot project I was then able to apply for a Research Fellowship from Liverpool John Moores University in order to develop the pilot project to include 1844 and 1845 along with online supporting resources. The aim is to use this more detailed pilot to go on and apply for external funding to complete the project, including making digital facsimiles of the actual ledgers themselves available, through to 1900. Alongside the digital initiatives that have been developed as a result of the Curran Fellowship, I have also secured a contract with Continuum Publishers for my monograph on *Punch* (due Spring 2014). Journal articles which include direct reference to the Contributor Ledgers include a co-authored piece for *Victorians* entitled "From Paris to *Punch*: William Makepeace Thackeray and a New Era in Social Satire" (120: Fall 2011).

Through the support of RSVP and the members that I have met at the annual conferences I completed my doctoral thesis on *Punch* and the periodical press in 2008, going on to develop this research alongside my growing interest in digital initiatives that are emerging in the field of Victorian studies. The Curran Fellowship assisted me in starting to bring together a project that had been over five years in the making and for this I am extremely grateful. The support and enthusiasm of my peers has convinced me that my passion for periodical research is not unfounded and to be awarded a Fellowship has enabled me to give something back to the research community that has so generously supported me thus far in my career.