

LJMU Special Collections & Archives



Fact Sheet

Punch and the
Victorian Periodical
Press Collection



Punch and the Victorian Periodical Press Collection

The cartoons and satire of *Punch* magazine, also known as *The London Charivari*, are iconographic symbols of the Victorian era, making *Punch* a particularly rich source for studying mid-Victorian life and urban change. Published weekly from 1841, the main cuts provide a striking visual representation of current news and affairs. The popularity of the magazine endured throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, finally ceasing publication in 2002. This particular collection examines its contribution to an understanding of Victorian social, cultural and political life from 1841 – 1901.

Despite *Punch* being a ubiquitous source of contemporary humour and social commentary though, the magazine has attracted little detailed research. This Special Collection and the Digital Project that accompanies it are part of a series of ongoing projects started by Dr Clare Horrocks (Lecturer in Media, Culture, Communication) and the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals in conjunction with the British Library where the *Punch* publishing archive is housed.

The collection consists of an almost complete run of *Punch* from 1841 until 1936, along with a few additional volumes – a list of the collection is available on our website at www.ljmu.ac.uk/lea/archives/114802.htm

The accompanying Digital Project is an interactive database of the contributors to *Punch* currently only recorded in the *Punch* Archive at the British Library. In December 1842 Bradbury and Evans became sole owners of the magazine, introducing the Contributor Ledgers in 1843 which started to detail who were regular contributors on the salaried staff, the title and length of their work for each week. Given the anonymous authorship characteristic of much of the periodical writing of the Victorian period, this project, in identifying these contributors, will provide crucial data for understanding not only the character of the magazine but also the social network of writers and illustrators who worked in the literary marketplace of the nineteenth century.

The pilot year of 1843 has been completed by Dr Horrocks with the assistance of a Curran Fellowship from the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals.

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To find out more about the LJMU Special Collections and Archives,
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