



PhD Studentship

Victorian Varia: *Punch's Pocket Book*, almanacs and miscellanies.

Caen Normandie University is delighted to invite applicants for a three-year PhD studentship commencing on October 1, 2026. Funded by CaeSAR (Caen, Strategy for Accelerating Research) as part of the ExcellencES initiative, France 2030, the studentship will concentrate on Victorian miscellanies, with a specific focus on *Punch's Pocket Book* (1843-1881) and the *Punch* brand.

In keeping with the research objectives of *Punch's Pocket Book Archive*, which explores the relation between thought, materiality and the digital, the doctoral candidate will investigate *Punch's Pocket Book* in its publishing and wider cultural context. We welcome projects that engage more generally with medleys and collections (annuals, almanacs, pocket books, scrapbooks and diaries), Victorian political and social history, and the study of graphic arts. The visual nature of the archive will require a sustained engagement with visual methodologies.

This PhD degree will be primarily carried out at Caen Normandie under the supervision of Françoise Baillet, Professor of British History and Culture and PI of the project, whose material and digital collection rests with the Maison de la Recherche en Sciences Humaines (MRSH). The student will be encouraged to visit Manchester Metropolitan University, where Dr Emma Liggins, Reader in English, will supervise his/her research on the local collections, and other libraries, archives and museums in the UK (*Punch* Archive at the British Library).

The doctoral student will be expected to complete his/her doctoral thesis (in English) within three years and to take part in the events convened by the team, including the *Punch* exhibition slated for June 2027 at the British Library (Treasures Gallery). He/she will be required to collaborate on the organisation of research events in relation to the project (workshops, seminars, conferences...), and to contribute to the digital annotation process of the volumes. A publication (journal article, blog post) will also be expected.

Applicants should have a Master's degree in Victorian culture, history and/or literature, preferably with Merit or Distinction/Mention. A specific focus on the periodical press will be appreciated.

Potential areas of focus include:

- Victorian miscellanies: annuals, almanacs, and pocket books.
- Readers and users of *Punch's Pocket Book* and other annuals and diaries



- Representation of Victorian political and social history in *Punch's Pocket Book* (national/international events, political figures, gender issues, the environment...)
- Bradbury & Evans's editorial strategies – the *Punch* brand.
- Miscellaneity as form and method, scrapbooking, commonplace books
- Fleeting print forms, short-lived supplements
- Manufacturing, marketing and circulating pocket books, almanacs and supplements
- Victorian graphic art, text-image interplay, marginal visual elements (ornaments, initial letters)
- Illustrators and engravers
- Invisibility and bias in the archive (decolonising, women, class bias, etc)
- Diaries: private writings, public (after)lives.

Please submit

- A detailed CV
- A cover letter stressing the ways in which the applicant could contribute to the *Punch's pocket Book Archive* project (3 pages max.)
- A proof of your MA defence, or a document certifying that your defence is scheduled to take place before June 15, 2026.
- Two reference letters
- A sample of written work, on a relevant topic (essay, extract from MA thesis).

Selection process:

The required documents should be sent as a single PDF file no later than **11 May 2026** to the project's PI francoise.baillet@unicaen.fr

Incomplete applications or submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Candidates will be informed by email of the outcome of their application by June 1, 2026.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to take part in interviews held in Caen or remotely between 15 and 30 June 2026.

Terms and conditions of employment:

- Starting date: 1 October 2026
- Location: Maison de la Recherche en Sciences Humaines (MRSH), Caen Normandie University. *Punch's Pocket Book Archive* being an international venture, a significant part of the doctoral student's work will be undertaken online. **Applicants may be based anywhere in the world.**
- Contract type: 3-year doctoral contract (full-time)
- Gross monthly salary: €2,300

For more information about the project: [Punch's Pocket Book Archive](#)