**PhD studentship**

**Perceptions of Rats in North-Western Europe c.1650-c.1850**

Supervisor: Professor Mark Jenner (History)

Second Supervisor: Dr David Orton (Archaeology)

Applications are invited for a fully funded 3-year PhD programme at the University of York on perceptions of and responses to rats in one or more North-Western European countries between c.1650 and c.1850. Our preferred geographical focus is England and the Netherlands. The project will be supervised Prof. Mark Jenner in the History Department with secondary supervision by Dr David Orton (Archaeology).

The studentship is part of *Rattus: Rats and the Archaeology of Trade, Urbanism, and Disease in Past European Societies*,a5-year project funded by the *UKRI* Frontier Research Guarantee scheme (formerly the European Research Council). This involves partners at  (Canada) the University of Leicester and the Departments of History and Biology at York *and examines the* links between European rat populations and human societies over the past c.2500 years**.** [See Ratttas Project site](https://sites.google.com/york.ac.uk/rattus/) .

It is generally accepted that between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the European rat population was transformed by the spread of the brown rat (Rattus Norvegicus) which supplanted the black rat (Rattus Rattus). However, we have little understanding of this process and know very little about how this change intersected with evolving attitudes to animals, pests and vermin and with shifting notions and practices of cleanliness and environmental hygiene. Nor it is clear how far reports of rodent behaviour were shaped by cultural languages around the “invasion” of new species. Drawing upon diverse textual sources, which may include natural histories, newspapers, advertising, the records of urban government, dock and warehouse authorities, agricultural advice literature, visual culture and the evidence of the built environment, the student will explore aspects of these themes. The project is designed to allow the student to follow their particular interests.

The student will be able to work with colleagues in the History Department, the Centre for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies and the Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies but also with archaeologists examining these questions over the longue duree.

The position will suit students with a background in history, history of science, animal studies, or any other appropriate subject within the social sciences and humanities. Applicants will possess an MA in a relevant field or equivalent experience.

Start Date: 1 October 2023 (though a start on 1 January 2024 is possible).

Funding Notes:

This studentship covers university fees for 3 years and pays a stipend at the standard UKRI rate) for 39 months. The position is open to all applicants regardless of nationality. **The studentship can cover  non-UK fees.**

How to apply:

[Through the University of York application portal.](https://www.york.ac.uk/history/study/postgraduate-research/phd-mphil-history/)

Deadline **14 June 2023** with interviews (either in person or online) being held in July with decisions being made by end of July 2023.

Informal contact:  Mark Jenner, mark.jenner@york.ac.uk