Inside this issue:
In the following pages you will find out about the latest news from the Department, our current research and what our students and staff have been up to. We hope you find Criminology in Focus informative and interesting. Do please let us know what you think.

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Welcome to our first edition…

I am delighted to introduce the new newsletter from the University of Leicester’s Department of Criminology – Criminology in Focus. We intend to produce Criminology in Focus a couple of times a year to keep friends of the Department up to date with what’s happening here. We would also really like to catch up with ex-students, and we are sure other alumni would too, so do please email or write to us to let us know about what you have been doing since you studied with us. Read about the re-launch of our Alumni Association on page 11.

This year the University is celebrating its first 50 years. The Department is a little younger: we are celebrating our 20th anniversary. There have been many developments over those 20 years. The most obvious one is that our name has changed from the Centre for the Study of Public Order to the Scarman Centre to our current incarnation as the Department of Criminology. But the name changes only reflect the more fundamental shift in our focus. Over that period we have developed and expanded our teaching and our research agenda so that while we still maintain our interest in the fields of security and policing, we now also work on issues as diverse as racism in rural areas, cybercrime, policing in the Ukraine, dealing effectively with women offenders, ASBOs and the value of mentoring offenders. We have introduced new courses, including a BA in Security and Risk Management via distance learning, and recruited many new staff – some of whom are profiled in the following pages. However, we have also managed to hold on to some key figures who have been with us from our earliest days such as Jon Garland, now a Senior Lecturer, and Mita Chauhan, who supports the campus-based Masters courses. Most recently, we have persuaded Yvonne Jewkes - a former student – to return to us as Professor of Criminology. Catch up with Yvonne on page 3.

Professor Carol Hedderman,
Head of Department

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION RELAUNCH
Find out how to join the Association on page 11 and catch up with Leicester Criminology graduates around the world.
www.le.ac.uk/cp/Alumni

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Professor Carol Hedderman,
Head of Department
Return of the Scarman Lecture Series

Spring 2008 has seen two new public lectures take place as part of the Department of Criminology’s Scarman Lecture Series. The series aims to provide the community in and around Leicestershire with the opportunity to hear influential and thought-provoking commentators discuss a range of issues relating to crime and criminal justice.

The first lecture was given by Bruce George MP. Mr George, the MP for Walsall South since 1974, is well known as a specialist on defence, international security and terrorism and was chosen to serve on the House of Commons Defence Committee when it was set up in 1979. He has also been a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly since 1982 and was recently elected as Vice President of the Assembly. Furthermore, he was the driving force behind the Private Security Industry Act 2001, under which the Security Industry Authority was instituted and statutory licensing and regulation regimes established. He has given lectures at over sixty British and international universities on a range of issues relating to defence, international relations and private security.

Public Lecture by Martin Narey, Chief Executive of Barnardo’s

On 7 May 2008 Martin Narey, Chief Executive of childrens charity Barnardo’s and former Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service, gave a lecture entitled ‘Imprisonment, Crime and Child Poverty’ as part of the Scarman Lecture Series.

Martin Narey was appointed as Chief Executive of Barnardo’s in 2005. He was previously Director General of the Prison Service and then the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service and a Permanent Secretary at the Home Office. When running prisons he was widely recognised for his commitment to transforming and motivating prison staff, and for his clarity of vision and determination to drive through improvements in the way in which prisoners were treated. He established the Decency Agenda in prisons, which led to significant improvements in prison conditions.

He has a deep and passionate concern for disadvantaged young people. It is this thread (in addition to a growing frustration with the political process) that brought him to Barnardo’s, which works with 111,000 disadvantaged children and young people with a staff of six and a half thousand and eleven thousand volunteers.

The two different sides to his professional life, and how Martin Narey has managed to move smoothly from the prison service to the charity field, was evident in the lecture which provided the audience with interesting insights into the use of custody in the UK, especially for children and the effect this has on child poverty.

Mr Narey argued that custody can be a caring and positive experience in the right circumstances and that more investment is needed in rehabilitation and education programmes within prisons in order to reduce the number of re-offenders.

The lecture was attended by staff and students from the University of Leicester and professionals from the Prison Service, the Probation Service and the local magistrates’ court.

Professor Carol Hedderman, Head of the Department of Criminology, commented:

“I am particularly delighted that Martin Narey has agreed to speak in our Scarman Lecture Series. As Chief Executive of Barnardo’s he has become an influential commentator on supporting socially excluded young people and developing their potential.”
Being appointed Professor of Criminology is a huge honour for me and a particular thrill as it was in this Department that I started my academic career. I studied for my Masters degree in Mass Communications Research at the University of Leicester in 1989. I hadn’t thought about becoming an academic but I saw a research post advertised at the Centre for the Study of Public Order so I went for it and it was here that my interest in criminology developed.

It was rather a baptism of fire for a recent graduate – my first experience of teaching was on the MA programmes in Policing and Public Order and most of our students were from the criminal justice professions, including many fairly senior police officers. I was also the designated ‘media’ specialist within the department which entailed everything from teaching about media constructions of public disorder, to producing a satellite TV programme about policing as part of a pan-European distance learning initiative.

At this time I was also invited to teach on the new Media Studies degree at Leicester Polytechnic (now DMU), which eventually led to me getting my first full-time lectureship there. I taught Media Studies for about 7 years, during the period of rapid expansion in Higher Education when the subject became an easy target for politicians (a particular low point was when the Education Secretary called university-taught media degrees a ‘cultural Disneyland for the weaker-minded’!). In 1997 I decided that I needed to take a break from full-time teaching to do a doctorate, so I started applying – initially to Media Studies departments. Someone suggested I apply to the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge which, given the subject area (the use of media in prisons), didn’t seem too preposterous. I emerged three years later with a PhD and a reinvigorated interest in crime and justice. Now I find myself back at the Department of Criminology at Leicester and pursuing a research, teaching and writing agenda that combines both my original interests – media and crime – as well as a more recently discovered fascination for prisons.

It is now fairly well established that media are integral to how we make sense of the world, and that misrepresentations concerning the extent of certain types of crime and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system can create a skewed picture of crime and punishment. In Media and Crime (2004, Sage) I’ve attempted to bring together the literatures and key theoretical approaches from the two fields, and hopefully the book succeeds in reflecting the symbiotic relationship between media and crime which, after all, are two of the most pervasive features of contemporary life. My combined research interests also led to me founding a new academic journal with Chris Greer and Jeff Ferrell. Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal (http://cmc.sagepub.com) is intended for those researchers who work at the intersections of criminological and cultural inquiry. I was delighted that in 2006 CMC received the prestigious Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers/ Charlesworth Award for Best New Journal.

My PhD thesis – written up as Captive Audience (2002, Willan) – concerned the relationship between media consumption and power relations in prison. The research was conducted over a period when in-cell television was being debated, piloted, rejected, and then, eventually, introduced as an earned privilege across most of the prison estate. Although many would regard television as a medium of transparency and openness, and the prison as an archetypal example of closure and secrecy, I found the relationship between the two to be much more subtle and complex than this – certainly the popular press’s view that in-cell TV has turned prisons into holiday camps is pretty wide of the mark. I’m now developing and broadening this area of interest to the study of new communication technologies (e.g. Internet access) in prisons.

The theme that brings all my research interests together is an interest in identity: how masculinity is ‘performed’ in men’s prisons; how lifers manage their identity through a disrupted lifecourse; the possibilities that prisoners could nurture their identities as parents, partners, skilled workers, students, etc, if they were permitted access to the Internet; the extent to which prison design influences the lives of prisoners, prison staff, and those in the community in which the prison is located... I have a sociological imagination which underpins and informs all my academic output.

Professor Yvonne Jewkes
Staff Publications and Achievements

In each issue of Criminology in Focus we will include details of staff research, publications, awards and invitations from the previous six months. As this is our first issue, we have included all our accolades and achievements over the last twelve months.

Research grants applied for

Bilby, C., Jolliffe, D., Hatcher, R. and Social Software Ltd, Juvenile Cohort Study – application for £1.5 million to Home Office

Bilby, C., Burton and Hatcher, R. Evaluation of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors – application for £98,610 to Home Office

Research grants awarded

Beck, A. Commissioned by SaferWorld to develop research instruments for project on developing community policing in Moldova and requested to critically review final report (£4,000)

Bilby, C., Jolliffe, D., Hatcher, R. and Hodgkinson, S. Development of an Offender Management Feedback questionnaire awarded by Ministry of Justice (£116,000)

Publications

BOOKS


BOOK CHAPTERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS


JOURNAL ARTICLES


REPORTS


Beck, A. (2007) Effective Retail Loss Prevention: 10 Ways to Keep Shrinkage Low, Leicester: University of Leicester


CONFERENCE PAPERS PRESENTED

Beck, A. presented paper at the Big Lots Annual Conference on Loss Prevention: ‘Steps to Success: the Low Shrink Habits of Top US Retailers and Staff Dishonesty in the Retail Sector: Understanding the Opportunities’, Columbus, USA (June 2008)


Beck, A. ran all day seminar on ‘Best Practice in Loss Prevention and Using the ECR Europe Road Map’, ECR Finland, Helsinki, Finland (May 2008)

Beck, A. presented plenary papers on ‘10 Steps to Success: the Low Shrink Habits of Top US Retailers and Staff Dishonesty in the Retail Sector: Understanding the Opportunities’, Columbus, USA (June 2008)

Beck, A. presented paper at the Adam Smith conference on Retailing on ‘New Opportunities’, Columbus, USA (June 2008)

Beck, A. presented paper on ‘10 Steps to Success: the Low Shrink Habits of Top US Retailers’ at the ECR Russia Seminar on Retailing, Moscow, Russia (April 2008)

Beck, A. presented paper at the Adam Smith conference on Retailing on ‘New Loss Prevention’, Moscow, Russia (April 2008)

Beck, A. presented paper at the EPC Global Seminar on EAS on ‘RFID and the future of EAS technologies’, Dusseldorf, Germany (March 2008)

Beck, A. chaired two day conference on
Internal Theft in Retailing and presented paper on ‘Staff Dishonesty in the Retail Sector: Understanding the Opportunities’, London (Feb 2008)


Beck, A. presented paper at the ECR Finland Seminar on ‘Effective Loss Prevention in Retailing’ Helsinki, Finland (Nov 2007)

Beck, A. presented paper at the ECR Latvia Seminar on ‘Effective Loss Prevention in Retailing’, Riga, Latvia (Nov 2007)

Beck, A. presented paper at the Icelandic Retail Federation seminar on ‘Retail Loss Prevention in Europe’, Reykjavik, Iceland (Nov 2007)

Beck, A. chaired two day conference on Retail Loss Prevention, London (Oct 2007)

Beck, A. presented paper at the ECR Europe Shrinkage Road Map, Polo Ralph Lauren annual conference on ‘Loss Prevention’, London (July 2007)


Jewkes, Y. presented at the Justice, Media and Public: Comparative and Historical Perspectives conference: ‘“Cavemen in an era of speed-of-light technology”: historical and contemporary perspectives on communication within prisons’ – Keele University (Feb 2008)


Spence, K. presented at the Defence Against Suicide Terrorism conference – ‘Demographic and Psychological Aspects of Suicide Terrorism’ Ankara, Turkey (Nov 2007)

Conferences attended


Matt Follett attended the European Society of Criminology 2007 annual conference at the University of Bologna, Italy (Sept 2007)

Yvonne Jewkes attended the British Society of Criminology 2007 annual conference at the LSE (Sept 2007)

Media work

Neil Chakraborti

• Was used as part of the One Leicester advertising campaign at Leicester train station – http://www2.le.ac.uk/ebulletin/news/2000-2009/2008/05/nparticle.2008-05-08.4924200708

• Wrote article for the Independent education supplement discussing the merits of studying criminology – http://www.independentezines.co.uk/examresults2007/

• Appeared on the BBC 5Live Breakfast Show to discuss issues of bureaucracy, accountability and transparency within the police service following the publication of the Flanagan review of policing (07.02.08)
Adrian Beck
• Took part in debates on BBC Radio Leicester and BBC Radio Leeds on national identity cards

Invitations, awards, accolades

Charlotte Bilby is taking part in the update of the Cochrane Review of psychological interventions with sexual offenders, which she was initially involved with during 2003

Charlotte Bilby has been invited to evaluate the work of Fine Cell Work, a charitable organisation which teaches prisoners to embroider and quilt (see ‘Research Focus’)

Neil Chakraborti was invited as a guest speaker to the University of Central Lancashire in April 2008 to give a paper to staff and students entitled ‘England’s Green and Pleasant Land? Examining Issues of Racism, Identity and Victimisation in Rural England’

Matt Follett was elected to Leicester City Council on 2007. As such he is a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, and has taken part in discussion regarding the Police Authority response to police funding and local authority scrutiny on illegal substance misuse

Jon Garland has been awarded promotion to Senior Lecturer

Carol Hedderman has been invited to submit evidence to the Justice Select Committee ‘Justice Reinvestment’ Inquiry March 2008

Carol Hedderman has been appointed External Examiner for Criminology at the University of Cambridge and at the University of Hertfordshire

Yvonne Jewkes has been appointed to the editorial board of the British Journal of Criminology

Yvonne Jewkes has been invited to be Visiting Professor at the University of Gloucestershire (her alma mater!)

Yvonne Jewkes has been appointed External Examiner for Criminology at the University of Essex and has had her contract as External Examiner for Criminology at DMU/University of Bedfordshire extended by a further two years

Yvonne Jewkes examined a PhD thesis at the University of Sheffield (June 2008)

PhD News

Neil Chakraborti was awarded his PhD in December 2007

Shariffah Dawood was awarded her PhD in January 2008

Bob Vodde was awarded his PhD in May 2008

Honorary Visiting Fellows

The Department of Criminology has invited three individuals to become Honorary Visiting Fellows:

Jamie Bennett is Governor at HMP Morton Hall and was previously Deputy Governor at HMP Whitemoor. He’s Editor of Prison Service Journal, is widely published on areas as diverse as new public management and prison films, and is currently studying for a PhD at the University of Edinburgh.

Joel Harvey is a Clinical Psychologist at the Centre for Forensic Mental Health, East London Foundation NHS Trust. He was previously Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology at London Metropolitan University and Clinical Psychologist with the Cambridgeshire Youth Offending Service.

Marinella Marmo visits us from the School of Law at Flinders University in Australia where she is Lecturer in Criminal Justice and Criminology. Her research interests include European criminal justice and criminology; criminal law aspects of human rights and the EU; and the judiciary as policy-shapers and policy-makers in criminal justice. She is in the UK to research the virginity test on female legal migrants.
Pedagogic Research into the Provision of Feedback for Distance Learners

As well as forging the way in criminological research, the academics within the Department are also undertaking pedagogic research. The University is a large provider of distance learning education and within the Department we offer distance learning courses at Foundation, BA and MSc level.

Learning at a distance provides the student with an excellent opportunity to gain an educational qualification and enhance their career options whilst working. It's a very popular option amongst mature students. Our most popular distance learning courses are the suite of Security and Risk Management courses.

The course convenors of the security and risk management programmes, Tracey Dodman and Hillary Jones, have been awarded funding from the University’s TEF (Teaching Enhancement Forum) to conduct research into effective feedback for distance learning students. The research not only covers the Department, but also Archaeology and Ancient History, Law and the School of Management.

There are both pedagogic and practical issues concerned with the provision of feedback, such as the quality of feedback in terms of relevance, comprehension and comprehensiveness, the quantity of feedback provided as well as practical issues.

Given the substantial number of distance learning students at the University, this research is vital in attempting to identify what amounts to effective feedback; to examine current processes of providing feedback to distance learning students; and to develop principles of best practice in relation to the provision of effective feedback to these students. Whilst being of obvious importance to the various Departments, Schools and Faculties that take part, this research also takes on much wider importance in addressing the need for pedagogic research in a distance learning context. Later editions of the newsletter will highlight the findings and recommendations from the research.

Tracey Dodman, Teaching Fellow

Work and Leisure?

I have a secret hobby – one which is thought to be so embarrassing that friends consistently advise me not to tell dates what I do in my spare time. But it was after an evening in the company of others who enjoy talking about fat quarters and log cabins that I came up with a research idea which is finally beginning to take shape.

About 18 months ago I went to an evening about the history of quilting in North America. The speaker talked of alternative histories of sewing and their relationships to anti-consumerism and recycling, and supporting vulnerable people. As a criminological researcher these stories started the usual round of questions in my head that I usually manage to keep to myself in a forum dedicated to patching and stitching. I wondered if quilting went on in American prisons (it does), whether anyone was doing research on the effects of this creativity on offending behaviour (not as far as I can tell), what does this say about the relationship between traditional notions of masculinity and craft (I’m not certain) and if this was something that I could start to work on in the UK (I hope so).

For the last seven years I’ve been involved in research projects which look at the effectiveness of psychological interventions on changing offenders’ behaviour. All of this research has been done for government departments and agencies and I feel steeped in evaluation literature and practice. I’ve begun to think about whether my independent research skills have been shoved in the bottom drawer of my filing cabinet with old lecture notes and Home Office reports. So what better way of wakening it up than by doing something that not only interests me intellectually but creatively too?

After a little searching I found Fine Cell Work, a charitable organisation which works with prisoners, via a band of volunteers, to teach them how to embroider, sew and quilt. Their aim is not only to produce exquisite pieces, but to work on offenders’ skills, from design to organisational and planning, which will prove helpful on the outside. Prisoners get paid for their work and many use these funds to support themselves early after release.

I’ve offered to go and work with a group at a local prison, and when I spoke to their volunteer co-ordinator I told her what I did for a living. It seems telling stitchers that you’re a Criminologist is more socially acceptable than vice versa… A few weeks ago FCW’s Chief Executive called me and asked if I could help them carry out an evaluation of their work (as if having cushions bought in their dozens by the most chi-chi boutique hotels isn’t enough). I’m thrilled to have been asked and can immediately see how we can investigate, measure and question what they do and what they hope to achieve.

We’re working towards bidding for funding to help us do this research and my excitement about a new project is growing – I hope the collaborative working is fruitful for me, Fine Cell Work and their stitchers.

When I first got into Criminology I was fascinated by shoplifters and retail security. Given my income and my desire to go shopping, studying this sort of thing was, according to my mother, the only legitimate way to stand around in department stores all day. She perhaps had a point, because whilst maturity has brought about a change in my interests, I’m still trying to find an angle that will help me combine business and leisure.

Charlotte Bilby, Lecturer in Criminology
Dr Nikki Shelton, PhD Student Tutor

References


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PhD Student Research

We would also like to take the opportunity in the newsletter to showcase the research our PhD students are currently undertaking. In this issue Nikki Shelton, Tammy Ayres and Mark Connor introduce their PhD research topics.

What Do People Really Think About Community Penalties?

Has your home ever been burgled? What does it feel like to know that your house had been ‘staked out’ by thieves prior to the burglary? How would you feel, as you tidy your shattered rooms, to know that vile stranger’s hands have been rifling through your personal belongings? What would your reaction be if a gang of thieves broke into your house in the middle of the night, while you and your children were asleep upstairs? What kind of punishment would you like to mete out to people who have stolen or damaged your treasured mementoes, destroyed your feelings of safety in your own home and taken away your peace of mind? Would it comfort you to know that the culprits had received a community-based penalty for doing this to you? Hmmm? Do you think community penalties are a ‘good enough’ punishment for this kind of crime?

It is these kinds of questions that sparked my initial interest in the perceived efficacy of community penalties as a judicial response to supposedly less serious offences. It is a largely indisputable fact that community-based penalties get ‘bad press.’ Rightly or wrongly, they have acquired a reputation among the general public as being ‘soft’ – that offenders who are given community-based penalties are somehow ‘getting away with it’ (Stead, MacFadyen and Hastings, 2002: 2). This also implies that the prospect of receiving such a sentence does not serve as an effective deterrent to potential or repeat offenders to engage in future criminal behaviour. These concerns are fuelled by perceptions that community-based sentences do not appear to constitute an adequate punishment, along with scepticism regarding the consistent and long-term enforcement of community penalties (Roberts, 2002: 48-50).

To what extent do these impressions reflect what people actually believe? I am interested in finding out what people, including offenders themselves, really think of community penalties. My MSc dissertation explored offenders’ ideas and experiences of community penalties in relation to the sentencing aims of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. For my PhD, I am hoping to develop this further and also compare offenders’ views of community penalties with the perspectives of other key stakeholders (for example, sentencers, probation staff, the general public and, perhaps, the police). I am particularly interested in considering my findings in relation to the desistance and rehabilitation/resettlement literature, but will also draw on the large body of work relating to theories of crime and punishment. I am intending to continue with the grounded theory approach to data analysis that I adopted for my MSc. I was only able to interview a relatively limited number of participants for the MSc and I feel that I did not have sufficient time to establish, apply and merge the stages of analysis to any significant degree. I am therefore looking forward to working through a longer timeframe that will enable me to more fully embrace the principles of the grounded theory approach. I am also interested in developing an in-depth discussion of how and why grounded theory may be a particularly useful and appropriate approach for researching this field of study.

Nikki Shelton, PhD Student and University Tutor

Homophobic Crime: Victimisation and Fear

In recent years few would argue that life for gay men in the UK has changed immeasurably. With the equalisation of the age of consent for sexual activity in 2001 and the removal of the crimes of buggery and gross indecency (in relation to sexual activity between consenting males) from the Sexual Offences Act 2004, the sexual practises of homosexual men over the age of consent are no longer the subject of direct regulatory control or punitive sanction. In addition to this process of decriminalisation the last twenty years have seen the establishment of a legal framework for the civil rights of homosexuals. This movement towards legal equality can be seen as a two fold process; firstly ‘discriminatory’ legislation has been removed from the statute book, for example Section 28 of the Local Government Bill (repealed in 2003). Secondly new legislation has been introduced such as the Equality Act 2007 or the Civil Partnerships Act of 2004 to reinforce the right to equal treatment under the law regardless of sexuality.

Occurring in conjunction with the stated processes of decriminalisation and ‘legal legitimisation’ has been a slow but recognisable shift in the way gay men are perceived by society in general. The increasing visibility of homosexuality (or more accurately specific aspects of homosexuality) in the media combined with a growing sense of queer identity within the gay community suggests that a process of normalisation is underway.

At odds with this perceived process of homosexual normalisation is a small but growing body of evidence presented in the academic literature that homosexual men continue to present far higher rates of victimisation than heterosexual men of similar socio-economic statuses. It is also evident that an alarming number of homosexual men continue to be victims of homophobic crime and that the fear of crime, particularly homophobic crime is commonplace within the gay community.

My research has two broad aims, firstly to provide information on the extent
Drugs Cause Crime; or Do They?

Drugs and crime have been historically connected and this association persists into the twenty-first century. The drugs-crime nexus dominates political discourse, the media, and contemporary popular culture. Drugs are considered to be one of the most fundamental scourges of modern civilization. Consequently, the United Kingdom’s policy is to be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, including drugs and their users. In conjunction with the USA, the UK has waged a concurrent war on drugs and crime. However, despite vast amounts of time, money, research and resources being devoted to tackling these problems, the UK and USA seem to be losing the war on both. In the UK, current government drug policy is premised on the relationship that has been constructed between drugs and crime. The rationale being that drugs cause crime. Therefore, policy advocates that if drug use is reduced then a reduction in crime will automatically follow. Although, research in this area continues to identify a link between drugs and crime the nature and direction of this link remains elusive.

There is definitely a lack of drug specific theories with which to underpin current government policy. Instead research has established methods of identifying high-risk individuals prone to drug use, criminality, violence, mental illness, self-harm, suicide and other dysfunctional and maladaptive behaviours. While drug use is often included as a derivative of these behaviours, drug specific research in non-offender populations is limited. This is a serious limitation, especially as research has suggested that the majority of drug users do not commit crime and for the majority of drug using offenders’ criminality precedes drug use. Therefore, is it plausible to suggest that drugs cause crime? Surely there is a need for more research in this area, focusing specifically on drugs and the factual relationship that exists between drugs and crime. At present current drug policy seems to be more about crime reduction than addressing issues specific to drugs and drug users.

Mark Connor,
PhD student and University Tutor

CRIMINOLOGY SOCIETY

Introducing the Criminology Society

Since its formation in mid-2006, the Criminology Society has grown both in numbers and in strength. The society was originally created as an alternative to societies of related disciplines, such as law or sociology, and was designed to offer Criminology students a society to match their discipline. Among the original opportunities offered by the society was the sale of hooded jumpers to students, as well as a number of social events such as bar crawls.

This year, as well as continuing to offer these social opportunities, we want to build a wider range of events for students involved in the society. The society will continue to offer its members the opportunity to buy customised hooded jumpers as well as offering a range of regular social events, for example the end of year ball, and educational events such as society trips.

However, the Criminology Society is more than just a social group. The society gives students the chance to share their opinions and give feedback on the Department of Criminology, the University of Leicester, and the city of Leicester, through the society’s welfare service, as well as offering essay support from other students to society members.

The Criminology Society also provides its members the chance to communicate and mix with other students. These students are not only those studying criminology, but also individuals from other disciplines who share an interest in criminology. The society therefore provides an excellent chance for its members to socialise with fellow students, as well as members the opportunity to seek the thoughts and advice of other students who have had similar experiences.

This year we aim to improve the Criminology Society by building on the success that the society has already found. Key to providing a thriving, successful society is having large numbers of student members. Your membership gives us the opportunity to improve your society, and without it these improvements would be harder to make.

Membership of the Criminology Society is open to all students at the University of Leicester. You can join or renew your membership at the Criminology Society stand during Freshers’ week or by emailing dcm11@le.ac.uk.

Daniel McCulloch, President of the Criminology Society
Re-launch of the Department of Criminology Alumni Association

In the past twenty years we have had many students pass through our doors and successfully graduate from a range of courses. Our graduates join a global network of Department of Criminology alumni who represent significant players in the fields of criminology, criminal justice and policing and security and risk management. As a Department, we recognise the importance of our relationship with our alumni and the significant contribution you continue to make to our work around the world.

For most of you, your experience studying within the Department will have been an enjoyable one and a time that you reflect favourably upon. However, due to our highly successful distance learning courses we are aware that a large number of our graduates are spread out all over the world and we have lost touch with many of you. With this in mind, we have decided to re-launch our Alumni Association which will act as an important tool for keeping in touch with you and allowing you to keep in touch with us. We also hope that it will enable our graduates to learn more about the achievements of the Department, its staff, students and alumni and also to let you know about new developments in the Department and at the University of Leicester as a whole.

If you are a graduate of the Department of Criminology, whether you studied a full-time course on campus or part time via distance learning we would like you to get in touch with us. We will be sending copies of our newsletter via email to as many of our alumni as we possibly can. So that we can do this, we would like to ensure that we have your up-to-date contact details.

We would be grateful if you could take the time to visit our website: www.le.ac.uk/criminology

If you have not done so recently, you can fill out the short alumni questionnaire form so that you will be added to our contact list. In addition, if you know anybody who is an alumnus of the Department of Criminology please forward this newsletter on to them and ask them to visit our alumni pages on the website.

We hope to include an article about one of our alumni in each newsletter. We begin this issue with Chris Giffard, who graduated with an MSc in Criminal Justice Studies in 1997. If you are one of our alumni and you would like us to feature an article about what you’re doing now then we would love to hear from you.

Study with us at the Department of Criminology

CAMPUS BASED UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES:
• BA Criminology

CAMPUS BASED POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES (available part-time and full-time):
• MSc Criminology
• MSc Applied Criminology
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DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMMES:
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• BA Security and Risk Management
• MSc Security and Risk Management
• MSc Community Safety
• MSc Criminology and Criminal Justice
• MSc Police Leadership and Management
• PgCert Maritime and Supply Chain Security (beginning in March 2009)

“The course has been both a challenging and rewarding experience. A supervised placement at Leicester City Council Community Safety Team, allowed me to apply an array of criminological knowledge and discover an ideal career path to maximise the skills I have learned. In September, I begin the role of Community Safety Project Officer at South Bucks District Council.”

Nicholas Martin, MSc Applied Criminology

For more information please visit our website: www.le.ac.uk/criminology, or contact the department:
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The Search for Justice in South Africa

Chris Giffard studied for an MSc in Criminal Justice Studies by distance learning, graduating in 1997.

‘During the lead-up to South Africa’s first democratic elections in 1994, I was working as a History lecturer at the University of Cape Town’s Centre for African Studies. But history began to take a back seat as I tried to decide how I could contribute to the changes that were beginning to stir in the country. I had been a political prisoner between 1987 and 1989, a potentially much longer experience cut short by the release of Nelson Mandela and other prisoners and the unbanning of political organisations from 1989 onwards. With my personal experience of the inner workings of a repressive prison system, I decided that my reconstruction energies would go into helping to develop a progressive new prison system.

But South Africa had no history of progressive thought in the arena of prisons and punishment. And I was a labour historian. I felt the need for some training in the field of criminal justice, but I had no wish to study at undergraduate level. After all, I had just completed my History Masters, nine years after I began it. On the nascent world wide web, I learned about the (then) Centre for the Study of Public Order at Leicester University, and the new distance learning courses they were planning. During a family holiday in mid-1994, I visited the Centre in Upper New Walk, and was warmly welcomed by the academic staff who were hard at work developing the first prototype lecture notes. I was hooked, and became part of the first intake for the part-time MSc in Criminal Justice Studies’.

During his time of study, Chris was employed as a researcher at South Africa’s first democratic parliament. He then joined the Secretariat of the ‘famously unsuccessful’ (his words!) Transformation Forum on Correctional Services (the Department of Corrections was still run by the apartheid administration and was resistant to change). In fact, it was this Transformation Forum that was the subject of Chris’s Leicester dissertation.

In later years, (after a couple of years as owner/manager of a wholesale bedding plant nursery, where he briefly lived out a need to get ‘close to the soil’), Chris worked at the Centre for Conflict Resolution, managing a project that ran conflict resolution, mediation and restorative justice programmes for both prisoners and prison staff.

For the past year, Chris has been employed as a Consultant/Advisor in the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) of the National Treasury, specialising in the criminal justice cluster of departments. The unit provides non-financial support to any government department that requests it, essentially assisting government to achieve better results with limited budgets. He works mostly with the Department of Correctional Services, assisting them with the development of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting System and exploring a new approach to the management of Awaiting Trial (remand) detainees. He comments, ‘sometimes I feel like a poacher turned gamekeeper’.

Chris outlines the enormous challenges currently facing Correctional Services in South Africa: ‘165,000 prisoners (45,000 of whom are unsentenced) live in 241 prisons with approved accommodation for just 115,000. In total there are 40,000 staff. More and more prisoners are serving longer sentences; in 1995 there were 512 prisoners serving life sentences, but in 2008 it is closer to 9,000. And yet, South African prisoners experience better conditions than probably any other country in Africa’.

Chris lives just outside Cape Town, in the small fishing village of Kalk (Chalk or Lime) Bay, and travels regularly to Pretoria, city of government. Reflecting on his association with the Department he says:

“My Leicester Masters degree has been invaluable. It provided me with a strong academic and intellectual framework within which I was able to understand the criminal justice system, and the role of punishment and prisons within it. Without this background, I believe that I would not have developed a critical appreciation of the nature of the changes taking place in South Africa’s criminal justice system”.