

# Reading/Visualising Crime Statistics Through British History

(from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century)

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CREC/CREW EA 4399, seminar roundtable, Friday  
16 October 2015, 10am-12pm  
Maison de la recherche de la Sorbonne Nouvelle,  
salle Claude Simon, 4 rue des Irlandais, 75005 Paris.

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This seminar will be a roundtable on the collating and analysing of crime statistics in Britain through the centuries. The study of crime data documents, both in their methods and their published layout, will be at the heart of this roundtable experience.

The starting point will be the main findings of the edited volume *Anti-social Behaviour in Britain: Victorian and Contemporary Perspectives*, Sarah Pickard (ed.), Palgrave, 2014. Indeed, there is a striking continuity in the way authorities attempt to control anti-social behaviour and the anxiety-ridden compilation of data on crimes.

In the seminar, we will be introduced to early modern crime measures by Dr **Craig Spence** who will consider how the *Bills of Mortality* were collected in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and how they compared to other sources. The statistical analysis produced and disseminated by those who engaged in 'political arithmetic' durably influenced the new and seemingly unbiased interpretations of crimes and deviances. Professor **Neil Davie** will explore the impact of the published figures for debates on crime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which conveyed the image that Britain was struck by an inexorable "crime wave" that had far reaching consequences for both debate and criminal justice policy. He will focus on the impact of the crime statistics on public and official perceptions of crime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

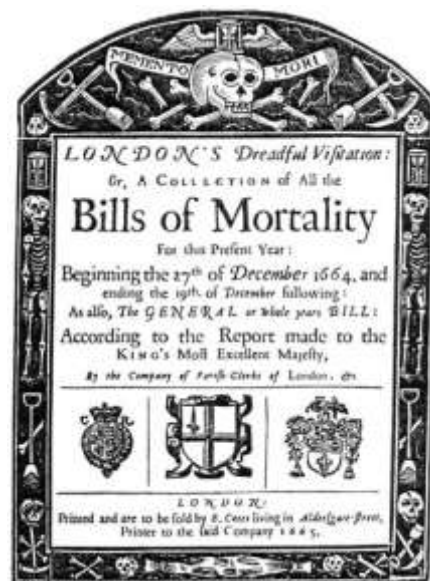
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Organisers:

**Bénédictte MIYAMOTO** and **Sarah PICKARD**  
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CREC/CREW EA 4399.

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We hope you can join us and participate in this roundtable. Through the centuries, these data collections and publications perpetuated the public fear of a crime wave. Was this directly imputable to the numbers only, or was this also linked to the new crime categories that emerged, the public interest for hidden narratives behind the bare facts, and the cross-references these publications made possible? Did these data collection influence legal procedures and the creation of prevention policies? How accurate have these collections been, and by what motives have they been driven?



## Neil DAVIE

Professor of British Cultural Studies, Université Lumière Lyon 2. Author of *Tracing the Criminal: The Rise of Scientific Criminology in Britain, 1860-1918* (Bardwell, 2005); *L'Evolution de la condition féminine en Grande-Bretagne à travers les textes juridiques fondamentaux de 1830 à 1975* (ENS Editions, 2011) and *The Penitentiary Ten: The Transformation of the English Prison, 1770-1850* (Bardwell, forthcoming).

## Craig SPENCE

Senior Lecturer in History, Archaeology & Heritage Studies at the Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln. Author of *London in the 1690s: A social atlas* (CMH, Institute of Historical Research, 2000); *Accidents and the city: Sudden violent death in early modern London 1650-1750* (Boydell & Brewer, forthcoming).