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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

We are delighted that this special issue, the first appearing post the trauma of the most recent REF exercise, celebrates a theme that hopefully the majority of our readers are genuinely enthused by and interested in, the teaching of crime and criminal justice history. This has been a theme addressed in a number of recent workshops and events, and HEFCE is fully supportive of initiatives in this area, so we are very pleased that SOLON is able to make what we believe to be a useful and distinctive contribution. We are immensely proud that this particular Special Issue has been produced by the holder of one of the first ESRC-sponsored SOLON PhD studentships, Dr Henry Yeomans, who has since gone on to develop and create a bespoke Crime History module at the University of Leeds. His article acts not only as a general editorial to this collection of essays including a synopsis of the papers presented, but as an introductory examination highlighting the way in which current research in this area has matured and consequently informed the development of teaching and learning to occur within this context. Hence it would be redundant for us, in our general editorial, to be anything less than concise. However, we would wish to emphasise our appreciation not just to Henry Yeomans but also to the other contributors who have enabled us to sponsor here an issue which addresses core teaching issues for an increasingly digital age, and does so in a way that retains a consciousness of the longer-established values of research-driven pedagogy, that cornerstone of tertiary education. The value, both intrinsic and extrinsic, of non-vocational degrees or topics within degree subjects such as law is currently being questioned as the costs of undergraduate courses rise and there are complaints about the failure thoroughly to 'engage' those who do undertake such degrees or modules. We believe that the articles in this issue will prove to be a resource and an inspiration to many to imitate and develop the innovative thinking that underpins these approaches to teaching criminal justice history. SOLON is thus honoured to publish an issue which we believe will have a resonance for criminal justice scholarship across both disciplinary and national boundaries.

Relating to the core theme of this issue, we are also pleased to include the third and final Conference Report of Our Criminal Past by Jo Turner and would wish to add our congratulations to those in her concluding comments about the excellent series that Heather Shore and Helen Johnston organized, supported by the AHRC. We are also (again) honoured that they have nominated *Law Crime and History* as the locus to publish a future Special Issue from the series. The second conference report is from a small but challenging closed workshop in Cardiff last month, addressing the methodological tensions and problems inherent in the study, across a recent historical past, of child abuse – always a difficult and an emotive subject but one that therefore absolutely needs such forensic attention. As the workshop shows, the issue is extensive in terms of the challenges facing scholarship, but equally – that discussion is now taking place which promises developments in scholarship of a nature to have a real and useful impact on this area of criminal activity.

Judith Rowbotham, Kim Stevenson and Samantha Pegg

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