

# The History of Crime and the Courts in Three Dimensions: a half-day workshop.

Tuesday 20th October

Sussex Humanities Lab,  
Silverstone Building,  
University of Sussex,  
Brighton, BN1 9SH.

[Campus Map](#)



**9:00:** Coffee

**9:30:** Linda Mulcahy (LSE), and Emma Rowden (Sydney), Unicorns and Urinals: Why do modern courts look the way they do?

**10:15:** Valeria Vitale (King's London), An Ontology for 3D Visualization in Cultural Heritage

**11:00:** - Coffee

**11:20:** Tim Hitchcock, Re-imagining the Voice of the Defendant at the Old Bailey.

**11:50:** Nick Webb (Liverpool), Analysing historic works of architecture using digital techniques.

**12:30-1:20:** Lunch.

**Organiser:** Tim Hitchcock – [Hitchcock.t@gmail.com](mailto:Hitchcock.t@gmail.com)

**Registration:** Please register via the Eventbrite page at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-history-of-crime-and-the-courts-in-three-dimensions-tickets-18436876193>



**The Digital Panopticon**

The Global Impact of London Punishments, 1780-1925

## Synopses

**Professor Linda Mulcahy (LSE), and Dr Emma Rowden (UTS Sydney):**

### **Unicorns and Urinals: Why do modern courts look the way they do?**

In this paper we will explore the history of ideas about court design and why it is that contemporary English courts look the way they do. Drawing on the findings of a Leverhulme grant we will explore the principles and claims underpinning debate about how the different actors in the trial are positioned in the courtroom. In particular we are keen to identify the conditions of possibility that have made the form and content of the various centralised design guides produced since 1970 legitimate. We argue that in addition to concerns about how design facilitates due process the history of court design has been progressively fuelled by fears about lay users of the justice system.

**Valeria Vitale (King's College, London):**

### **An Ontology for 3D Visualization in Cultural Heritage**

The use of 3D computer graphics and modelling techniques in the study of the ancient world has been mainly limited to the display of traditional research. Often, their value has been assessed merely on aesthetic quality.

Behind every scholarly 3D visualisation is a thorough study of excavation records, iconographic documentation, literary sources, artistic canons. However, this research is not always detectable in the final outcome, and 3D visualisations do not seem able to meet the standards of scientific method (reproducibility) and academic publishing (references and peer-review).



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*The London Charter* presents methodological guidelines for recording data, but it does not offer a formal framework in which to place this information. Each modeller is left to simply follow their own style. Time and resource constrains not only affect the accuracy and availability of the documentation, but also make it very unlikely that a researcher, or even a team, develop more than one visualisation of the same cultural heritage place/object, perpetrating the naive idea that only one visualisation is possible or correct.

The growing compatibility between 3D content and web browsers allows the application of RDF technology to 3D visualisations for cultural heritage to try overcoming these issues. Dividing a 3D model into smaller elements, assigning a Unique Resource Identifier (URI) to each of them and applying a dedicated ontology would make possible to connect the 3D elements with each other and with external resources.

More specifically, an ontology for 3D visualisation in cultural heritage could, in the first place, define and describe the components of the 3D model and their relationships. This would help rebuilding data and metadata if the visual component was not readable anymore, enhancing accessibility, sustainability and longevity of the information.

Through a dedicated ontology, a researcher could also assess the degree of speculation involved in the creation of each 3D element and its relationship with sources and referents, thus presenting 3D visualisation as a scientific hypothesis and not an «exact reconstruction».

Moreover, the use of a specific ontology would:

- constrain and standardise the documentation, making it synthetic instead of verbose
- speed up the recording process thus reducing time/cost and making the documentation more likely to be retained in a project,
- allow 3D visualisations to join and enrich the growing network of linked digital resources to study the past,
- making 3D visualisations human- and machine-searchable, connecting them with the literary and historical sources that mention the visualised artefact or building,
- allow and encourage comparison of different visualisations and interpretations of cultural heritage, as the same resource (historical, archaeological, literary



etc...) will be connected to all the related visualisations that share the same vocabulary,

- allow citations, re-use and peer-review of 3D visualisations, as every 3D element (and its author) will be always identifiable and linkable through the URI,
- contribute to transform 3D visualisation from a univocal display of traditional research to a collaborative virtual environment that can be shared and implemented by different scholars.

**Tim Hitchcock (University of Sussex):**

### **Re-imagining the Voice of the Defendant at the Old Bailey**

When the sessions house at the Old Bailey was rebuilt in the 1770s, a traditional open courtroom was transformed into a fully enclosed space, with a new and complex internal layout. The relative positions of the judge, jury, defendants and witnesses were substantially reconfigured. This presentation represents a preliminary attempt to capture the significance of that transition in sound: to explore how the different actors in the legal drama of a trial heard, both their own voice, and that of other participants. By modelling the location of different speakers in the courtroom both before and after the rebuilding, and acknowledging the very different sense of space encountered in a room open to the elements, to one enclosed by four walls, this paper seeks to help recapture the eighteenth century experience of being tried and sentenced at the Old Bailey.

**Nick Webb (University of Liverpool, School of Architecture):**

### **Analysing historic works of architecture using digital techniques**

This presentation will discuss the use of digital techniques to analyse significant works of architecture, whether they exist, are destroyed or are not built at all. A methodology is introduced for future research employing digital tools in this context. Examples will show how the process augments research already undertaken by architectural historians, who provide traditional critique and analysis, by testing such studies further using a range of contemporary digital techniques.



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The findings demonstrate the significance of the *process* of constructing digital representations of architectural artefacts. This is important, as inferences have to be made due to representational source data such as architectural drawings almost always being incomplete. Therefore parallel study into the architect, their architecture and the contemporary context they worked within has to be investigated in order to fill in gaps in an informed way. The study of such primary and secondary source data may also reveal lines of enquiry that can be investigated using digital techniques. The key here is the advanced knowledge that digital tools bring compared to the critique of a work of architecture that was carried out in a pre-digital context.

Two projects will be discussed; firstly a digital construction of Sir Edwin Lutyens' Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, that was only partially built, which reveals new information about the design by following structured lines of enquiry as well as serendipitous results that occurred as a by-product of the methodological process. Secondly, an ongoing project investigating the medieval vaulting of Wells cathedral choir aisles will demonstrate how digital laser scanning can enhance understanding of an existing building's design and construction.

