In England and Wales, the sentencing of offenders is recognisably lawless – except for the limited guidance given copiously by the Sentencing Council to judges, and the attempt by Parliament in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 to steer the sentencer through an intolerable thicket of powers of public intervention. Judicial pronouncements of deterrence and retribution in the process of sentencing sustain the view that the prevailing aim of sentencing is punishment; but punishment should play no part in a civilised penal system. A loss of civil liberties – those fundamental freedoms that form part of the international human rights law – suffices to uphold a sound system of sentencing of those convicted of crime. Sentencing is about the enforcement of the criminal law and the need for fairness to those involved.

Enquiries to CCCJ@law.cam.ac.uk All welcome.

Tuesday 11th October 2016, 5.30pm, B4, Institute of Criminology