



# *Revisiting the Pains of Imprisonment*

## Dr Ben Crewe

Institute of Criminology Public Seminar Series

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2010, 5.30pm

Seminar Room B3, Institute of Criminology,  
Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA

The 'pains of imprisonment' have been a longstanding concern within prison sociology. This seminar revisits the topic, suggesting that modern penal practices have created a range of new burdens and frustrations that differ from other pains in their causes, nature and effects. It argues that the pains of imprisonment can be divided up conceptually, and to some degree historically, into those deriving from the inherent features of incarceration, those resulting from deliberate abuses and derelictions of duty, and those that are consequences of systemic policies and institutional practices. The seminar explains the relevance of the concept of 'tightness', as well as 'depth' (Downes 1988) and 'weight' (King and McDermott 1995), to the contemporary prison experience, and illustrates how the current range of pains and frustrations impacts not only upon the personal experience of imprisonment but also the terms of prisoner culture and society.

Dr Ben Crewe is a Senior Research Associate at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge. He has published widely on prison issues, including drug culture, staff-prisoner relationships, and power and resistance. His latest book *The Prisoner Society: Power, Adaptation and Social Life in an English Prison* was published by Oxford University Press in 2009.

This seminar is part of the IoC Public Seminar Series, and is open to all interested in attending. If you wish to be added to the seminar mailing list, please contact: Joanne Garner, on:

[jf225@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jf225@cam.ac.uk)