

CFP Neo-Victorian Criminalities, Detection, and Punishment

University of Wolverhampton, 23rd-24th June 2025

Keynote speakers: Professor Claire Nally, Lee Jackson, and Nat Reeve

Organisers: Dr Helen Davies, University of Wolverhampton, and Dr Maria Isabel Romero-Ruiz, University of Malaga

The contemporary fascination with Victorian criminalities and the popularity of the detection genre within Neo-Victorianism necessitates close critical attention. In particular, neo-Victorian literary and visual representations of criminals, murderers, serial killers, etc. as well as of sleuths raises ethical issues connected with the avidity of audiences for sensation and drama.

The neo-Victorian city becomes the scenario both of petty crimes and dreadful killings that are shaped by current perceptions of the Victorians and our own cultural context. The city is the place where identities become changeable, and choices can have deadly consequences. In this context, the question of ethics comes to the fore as revealing the identity of criminals and victims and dealing with issues connected with the dark side of society can be questionable and exploitative, especially when discussing the Victorian past.

At the same time, we need to explore the intersection of crime and detective fiction in connection with gender, ethnicity, class and disability, together with the LGBTQI+ community; certain groups were more likely to be criminalised in the Victorian era, with a troubling legacy in terms of contemporary social and cultural attitudes. Therefore, establishing the boundaries between historical crime and fictional crime and identity politics in neo-Victorianism become essential in the representation of both criminals and victims as well as sleuths in popular genres such as crime fiction and detection.

This event will run over two days, with public engagement events on 24th featuring Lee Jackson and Nat Reeve.

We invite contributions that include but are not limited to the following topics in relation to Neo-Victorian representations of crime:

- Historical crime versus fictional crime
- Neo-Victorian sensationalism and detection
- The aesthetics and ethics of crime
- Detection, crime and identity politics
- Gender and detection
- Crime and ethnicity
- Crime and class
- Crime and Disability
- LGBTQI+ sleuth identities

-LBTBQI+ criminals and victims

-Neo-Victorian remediations of past crimes

Please send a c. 250 word abstract and c. 100 word biography to neovictorianscrimes@gmail.com by 14th March 2025.