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RIPPEROLOGIST

The Journal of Jack the Ripper, East End and Victorian Studies

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Dear Readers,

Welcome to Ripperologist Magazine No. 174. This year we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Ripperologist Magazine by opening up the time-capsule and taking a look back at selections from some of the earliest issues.

Ripperologist Magazine began its life as 'The Cloak and Dagger Club Newsletter' under the editorship of Mark Galloway. By Issue 4 the newsletter had been rechristened 'Ripperologist' but was still the 'Newsletter of the Cloak and Dagger Club' and increased to 20 pages. Mark Galloway was the Honorary Editor and Martin Fido and Paul Begg had become committee members.

It was with issue 8 (December 1996) that Paul Daniel became editor of Ripperologist, albeit 'under the auspices of Mark Galloway' as Editor-in-Chief. Effectively, Paul was the editor and in charge of production. It was still a stapled-together magazine of 32 pages, plus a front and back cover of a colour different to the white pages inside. The content was greatly improved and there was a chatty style about it.

In issue 10, Paul Daniel wrote a short piece about a chap called 'Gilleman' who was reported to have discovered the body of Elizabeth Stride. Paul Begg then wrote a piece for issue 11 about 'Gilleman', arguing that it was a name used by or applied to Diemshutz, and in issue 12 there was a rather insulting response from Peter Turnbull. Begg wrote a piece in his own defense in issue 13, and finally, Paul Daniel stepped in to close the debate. In these days of Facebook and the message boards, it would probably have gone on and on and on.

Sometimes we really wish we could go back to the past, don't we?

But we must fast-forward to the present and you'll find that we've added two new staff members, and we welcome back a returning contributor. Debra Arif has agreed to be a much-needed research standards editor, and Michael Hawley will be aiding in the copy-editing department. Long-time columnist and fiction review editor David Green has returned to the pages the magazine and we are thrilled to have him back on board.

Until next time,

Jonathan Menges

Editor-in-Chief

Assisted by Paul Begg

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The All Hallows Exploration Project

Perspectives on Mary Jane Kelly's Pre-Dorset Street Dwellings

Jurriaan Maessen

Introduction

If the decade-long search for Mary Jane Kelly has taught us one thing, it is that her name, as a starting point, has not aided to alleviate our frustrations as we struggle to make sense of the often self-conflicting accounts we have to work from. As anyone dedicated to the search knows all too well that this particular area of interest is one of utter scarcity, and the temptation to throw in the towel at times irresistible.

The late great Christopher Scott has repeatedly pointed out that our failure to lift Kelly from historical obscurity is undoubtedly a result of our fixation on the name. After all, what are the chances of finding her out in, say, a Welsh marriage record, if the name was an assumed one, adopted by her at some point shortly before, during or after her move to London?

The problem is further compounded by her alleged husband's surname "Davis" (or "Davies") successfully competing with "Evans" and "Williams" for the number one and two positions most common Welsh surnames.

As I have proposed on several occasions in the past, staring directly into the soft-glowing coals of history is unlikely to reveal to us the whereabouts of Kelly at any given time; God knows people have tried. Permit me, therefore, to submit the proposition that our hopes of success are better served when we work to adopt a more oblique, squint eyed-approach to the subject, so to speak, hoping to increase our chances to uncover something hitherto overlooked in the historical record. Perhaps such an approach may provide us with some fresh leads to aid us in our efforts to reconstruct some of the likely paths a Mary Kelly-type immigrant may have traversed before finally ending up where she did. The following study is such an effort.

I hasten to add that this probe should be viewed as strictly exploratory in nature, not with the aim of building a case in favour of any particular identification, but simply to weigh several options on the scale of probabilities. This may in turn enable us to widen the aperture of our endeavors.

As I attempted to explain in my last written contribution to this esteemed publication, research into John Morgenstern and Elizabeth Boeckee has quite naturally moved the needle in a more easterly direction and towards a part of the East End we previously had little reason to explore in any depth.

Before dragging the reader along with me as I plunge into this fast-flowing river of historical circumstance, I will first revisit some of the reasons why I believe such an effort is worth taking the trouble to undertake.

Questions

Although our reference point consists mainly of Joseph Barnett's somewhat jumbled recollections, the association of Morganstone with a gasworks appears to have been one of just a few items he appeared to be fairly confident about. On the other hand, the question of which gasworks we are supposed to settle on is subject to confusion; some versions referring to "Commercial Gasworks" and others describing "Stepney Gas Works" instead.

The how and the why of this proposed association, not to mention the when, appear to have been wholly unclear to the poor fellow as he struggled to recollect his former lover's words during what must surely have been the most trying time of his life. If it was not for two additional statements collected from some of Kelly's

past acquaintances, independently provided by peripheral sources, the question of what came first Morgenstone or Fleming, would have remained forever unresolved.

The first account mentioning Breezer's Hill in relation to Kelly was provided by a "Mrs. Phoenix," who walked into Leman Street police station on the evening of the 11th to state that "*about three years ago...the deceased resided at her brother-in-law's house, at Breezers-hill, Pennington-street...*"

The other account we have to consider, is one attributed to the *Press Association* and printed by several newspapers on November 12th mentioning that Kelly "*appears to have lived with a woman named Buki.*", adding that "*She [Buki] appears to have received Kelly directly from her West End Home.*"

"The two women shortly afterwards went to the house of the lady at Knightsbridge, and demanded her trunk, containing dresses of a costly description."

The source goes on to place Kelly's time with Buki prior to her time at Breezer's Hill by stating that she, Kelly, "*next resided with a Mrs M'Carthy, Pennington-street, which place she left about eighteen months ago, for her last residence in Dorset-square.*"

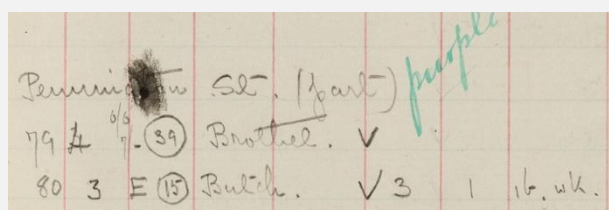
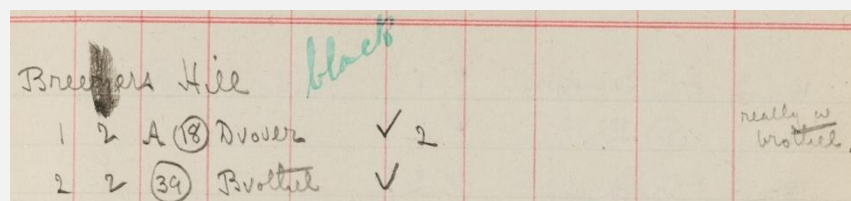
The confusement arising from this account is due mainly to the statement that "*Her first experience of the East-end appear[s] to have commenced with Mrs Buki, who resided in one of the thoroughfares off Ratcliffe-highway, now known as St Georges-street.*"

If these accounts can be relied upon - and that's a pretty big 'if' -, Kelly's arrival at Pennington Street occurred somewhere in late 1885 and may have taken place *after* she had been received by Mrs. Buki "*directly from her West End Home.*" Around the time, in other words, before John Morgenstern's and Elizabeth Boeckee's first recorded presence at the address in October of that year.

It is not surprising that Elizabeth Boeckee's and John Morgenstern's well-established association with 79 Pennington Street has for obvious reasons been the focus of attention for most researchers interested in tracing Mary Kelly's pre-Dorset Street whereabouts. After all, both surnames correspond beautifully with Joseph Barnett's "Morganstone" as well as the Mrs. Buki mentioned by yet another source as Kelly's purported post-West-End benefactor.

Additionally, it is in the adjacent 1 Breezer's Hill that Kelly's former landlady (Mrs. Carthy) has Kelly staying before she hooked up with the mason's plasterer Joseph Fleming prior to leaving Mrs. Carthy's for good.

As we can see from the 1887 Booth survey¹, both 1 Breezer's Hill and 79 Pennington Street were heavily associated with the brothel business, adding the description "*really a brothel*" to the former, and "*brothel*" to the latter, leaving little room for doubt as to its designation in the previous couple of years.



Although all of these accounts seem decidedly self-contradictory, both in terms of location and association, we must concede that the reference to Mrs. Buki's residence does not automatically mean that Kelly actually resided *with* her in one of those thoroughfares before going to live at Breezer's Hill. After all, as 79 Pennington Street and 1

Breezer's Hill actually consisted of one single property, the move cannot have involved much of a transfer anyway, which increases the probability that "*Mrs. Buki's place*" might have been a reference to Elizabeth Boeckee's last documented abode *prior* to her giving birth to the twins in October of 1885.

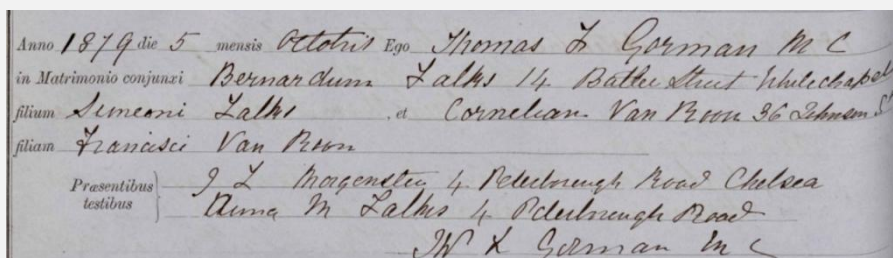
¹ Notebook: St George's-in-the-East. School Board Visitors, Miss Martin (District F), Mr Golding (District E), Mr Dwane (District E), BOOTH/B/36, 1888-1889.

It would seem the Barnett account, Phoenix statement and Mrs. Buki box retrieval-anecdote have the benefit of not being subject to cross-contamination and may therefore serve to bolster the suggestion that this association predated Kelly's time at Breezer's Hill. If we overlay the accounts by Mrs Carthy, Mrs Phoenix and Joseph Barnett on top of each other, like an evidentiary pancake of sorts, the picture emerges that Mary Jane Kelly may have first resided with John Morgenstern and Elizabeth Bouquet in Ettrick Street, only to transfer shortly thereafter to 1 Breezer's Hill in the late 1885-early 1886 timeframe.

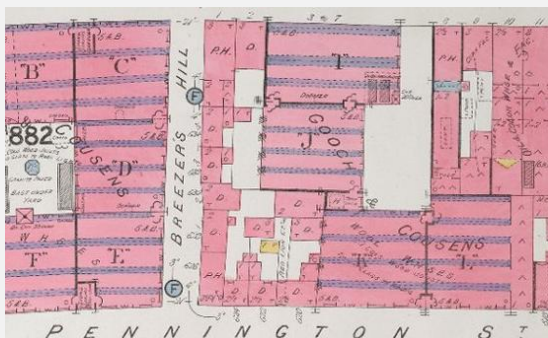
As a consequence it stands to reason to use Elizabeth Boeckee's three documented pre-Pennington Street residencies in the period from early 1881 to early 1885 as stepping stones as we proceed to follow the rushing river further along upstream. Before rushing off into a more or less in-depth exploration effort, however, I should first draw a clear distinction between what is and what's implied.

What is

On October 5th 1879, John Morgenstern and his wife appeared as witnesses on a marriage record of one of the Valk siblings². On this record, J. F. Morgenstern gives his address as 4 Peterborough Road, Chelsea.



This is not too far removed from the addresses we have for John's brothers Marin and Adrian in Fulham, both of whom appear on the 1881 census. As far as we know by this time there is no known association of the Boeckee couple with either Fulham or Chelsea.



Around the time John Morgenstern was apparently still stomping about in Fulham, Louis Boeckee is already recorded as living at 79 Pennington Street in the electoral register of 1880.³ Because this register drew from data of the year prior, we can fix Louis to the address as early as 1879.

As the 1881⁴ electoral register has him still registered at Pennington Street, Louis' association with the address remains unchanged. This is independently confirmed by a May 26th 1880 complaint received by the Metropolitan Board of Works⁵ and issued by a "Mr. Bockee" decrying the "flooding of his premises, No. 79 Pennington-street, St. George in the East" during a storm on the 3rd of that month.

The association appears to have come to an end somewhere in the subsequent twelve months or so as gas fitter Louis Boeckee (as "Louis Bouque") emerges at 21 Portree Street, Bromley-by-Bow with his wife Elizabeth (36) and his children Louisa (12) and Louis (6) in the 1881 census.

18. Read a Report by the Engineer, dated 26th May, 1880, on a complaint by Mr. Bockee, of the flooding of his premises, No. 79, Pennington-street, St. George-in-the-East, stating that during a storm, which occurred on the afternoon of the 3rd instant, flooding was caused to the complainant's premises through straw and rubbish having been washed over the gully-grating, so that the water could not flow down the gully-drain; that this was a circumstance not within the power of the Board to prevent, and recommending that Mr. Bockee be so informed.

It was moved by Mr. Dresser Rogers, seconded, and resolved—That the Report be approved, and that Mr. Bockee be informed accordingly.

370	21	40	1	Louis Bouquet	Head	Mar	28	J. Gas Fitter	Amsterdam 13 Outpost
				Elizabeth	Wife	Mar	36		Hillem
				Louisa	Daughter		12	Scholar	do do
				Louis	son		6	do	do do
377	22	40		John Feller	Head	Mar	40	St. George's	do do
378	23	40		Elizabeth Bouquet	Head	Mar	33	St. George's	do do
379	23	40		Henry Horan	Head	Mar	42	Leathermaker	do do
377	23	40		do	Wife	Mar	49	do	do do

² England and Wales, Marriage Registration Index, 1837-2005, FamilySearch, Bernard Falks, 1879; from "England & Wales Marriages, 1837-2005

³ London, England, Electoral Registers, 1832-1965, 1879/1880.

⁴ London, England, Electoral Registers, 1832-1965, 1879/1880, Ibid.

⁵ Minutes of proceedings of the Metropolitan Board of Works, January-June 1880, page 741/742 (paragraph 18).

Lodging with the couple is a 40-year-old skin dresser named "John Felix", as well as a 33-year-old dressmaker named Elizabeth Busman.

From the regular mentions of the surname "Felix" by the other London-based members of the Morgenstern family, the age attributed to this John Felix and his absence at any other address in the census, we may be confident that this is none other than John Morgenstern by this time already having made his acquaintance with the Boeckee's.

Meanwhile, the 1881 census record for 79 Pennington Street records a John Miller at the address as head of a single household as well as a variety of young women. By August 1882, the Boeckee's appear to have moved from Portree Street to 50 Athol Street, hardly a stone's throw away, where Elizabeth Boeckee registered her husband's death on the 10th of that month.

Superintendent Registrar's District <u>Poplar</u>									
Registrar's Sub-District <u>Bromley</u>									
1882. DEATHS in the Sub-District of <u>Bromley</u> in the County of <u>Middlesex</u>									
Columns:—	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
363	Tenth August 1882 50 Athol Street	Louise Boeckee	Female	44 years	Housewife	Bronchitis certified by E. J. Hunt E. J. H.	Elizabeth Boeckee widow of deceased present at the death 50 Athol Street Bromley	Tenth August 1882	E. Saville Registrar

The next record for Elizabeth Boeckee (as E. Bockee) dates from September 15th 1884, this time on the death certificate of her daughter Louisa two days prior at 25 Ettrick Street.

Superintendent Registrar's District <u>Poplar</u>									
Registrar's Sub-District <u>Bromley</u>									
1884. DEATHS in the Sub-District of <u>Bromley</u> in the County of <u>Middlesex</u>									
Columns:—	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
498	Thirteenth September 1884 25 Ettrick Street	Louisa Boeckee	Female	16 years	Daughter of Louise Boeckee Gas Fitter (else add)	Apoplexy certified by A. Moore S.	E. Boeckee Mother present at the death 25 Ettrick Street Bromley	Fifteenth September 1884	E. Saville Registrar

The next time Elizabeth reappears in the historical record is October 27th 1885, when Elizabeth no longer carries her deceased husband's surname, but adopted that of John (as Eliesabeth Morgenstern, late Boeku, formerly Bluma), both of whom residing at her late husband's former abode of 79 Pennington Street, at which location the birth of twin daughters is registered.

By this time Elizabeth is recorded as common-law wife to John (as "Johann") Morgenstern. Unfortunately I have not been able to secure the certificate itself; instead I'm relying on its accuracy by using the transcription provided by Neal and Jennifer Shelden.

Some six months later, on April 4th 1886, gas stoker John Morgenstern (as John Morsten⁶, John Morganstein⁷ or George Morgenstein⁸) is involved in an incident at Gas Factory Lane (Fulham) with another gas stoker named George Zecher, who bites John's finger after the latter had, allegedly, assaulted the former's wife.

During the subsequent court proceedings, John gave his address as "Victoria Road, Fulham". Just five months later, another death certificate⁹ was made up, this time for one of the twins (Elizabeth), who died at 79 Pennington Street on September 10th 1886.

⁶ (1886) "Alleged Biting", West London Observer, 10 April.

⁷ (1886) "Biting a Man's Finger Off", Mid-Surrey Times, 17 April.

⁸ (1886) "The Charge of Biting a Man's Finger", West London Observer, 17 April.

⁹ England & Wales Deaths, 1837-2006, St. George In The East, London, England, General Register Office, Southport, England.

Superintendent Registrar's District <i>Saint George in the East</i>									
Registrar's Sub-District <i>Saint Georges North</i>									
18 <i>86</i> . DEATHS in the Sub-District of <i>Saint Georges North</i> in the County of <i>Middlesex</i>									
Columns:—	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
417	<i>Pennington Street</i> <i>September 1886</i> <i>79 Pennington Street</i>	<i>Elizabeth Morgenstern</i>	<i>female</i>	<i>11 months</i>	<i>daughter of Johann Morgenstern</i>	<i>Marasmus 5 months</i> <i>certified by Dr. C. S. Lee</i>	<i>Elizabeth Morgenstern</i> <i>mother-in-law</i> <i>attendant</i> <i>79 Pennington Street</i>	<i>Eleventh September 1886</i>	<i>William Shing</i> <i>Registrar</i>

This is the couple's last recorded association with the Pennington Street address. The next time we pick them up in the historical record¹⁰ is some three years later, when John attacks several young unfortunates at Jamaica Passage, Limehouse.

For more information on John Morgenstern's whereabouts prior to October of 1879 and after September 1886, my Morgenstern article published in the fall of 2024 provides a more or less detailed overview.

What's Implied

Although previous research has understandably focused mainly on Pennington Street (where we find both Morgenstern and Boeckee associated with number 79 from October 1885 onward), their whereabouts in the five or so years prior has so far been subject to superficial glances only.



1. Portree Street
2. Athol Street
3. Ettrick Street

We know that Mrs Boeckee moved from Bromley-by-Bow to St. George in the East at some point between September 1884 and October 1885. That is quite consistent with the period - late 1884 or thereabouts - when Mary Kelly is purported to have arrived in London.

For all of the dreadful gaps in our knowledge when it comes to Mary Kelly's possible pre-Dorset Street whereabouts, the aforementioned timeline is clear in terms of three things. Or addresses, rather.

The first to spell out the inevitable¹¹ was researcher extraordinaire Chris Philips, who was moved to remark that "All three of those addresses - Portree Street, Athol Street and Ettrick Street - were in the shadow [probably literally at some times of the day] of the gasometers of Poplar Gas Works..."



That Philips was not exaggerating may be illustrated by this post-Blitz image of Ettrick Street¹², sufficiently expelling any doubts we may have as to the veracity of his statement:

"...we know", Philips continued, "that Johannes Morgenstern did live by a gas works before he went to Pennington Street." He was living [as John Felix] in the same house - 21 Portree Street, Bromley - as Louis and Elizabeth Bouquet at the date of the 1881 census. Given that he later appeared in Pennington Street as

Elizabeth's husband, we can guess that he was probably still with the family at the date of Louis Bockie's

¹⁰ (1889) "Brutal assaults on women", *East End Observer*, 16 November.

¹¹ Chris Philips, May 28, 2022, Re: The Morgenstern brothers, Felix Family & 79 Pennington Street, <https://www.jtrforums.com/forum/the-victims/mary-kelly/27698-the-morgenstern-brothers-felix-family-79-pennington-street?p=591689#post591689>.

¹² Photograph by William Whiffin, 1955, Brunswick Road, Bromley-by-Bow; taken from the corner of Dee Street, looking north-east towards Poplar Gas Works. The houses on the left are on the north side of Ettrick Street.

death in August 1882 - at 50 Athol Street, Bromley - and at the date of the death of Louis's and Elizabeth's daughter Louisa Bockee, in September 1884 - at 25 Ettrick Street, Bromley."

I am very much inclined to agree, especially considering that the chronology is supplemented by peripheral statements with a large degree of consistency, namely an association with Morganstone near the gasworks, combined with the independently acquired statement about a Mrs. Buki accompanying the aggrieved Mary Kelly to a residency in Knightsbridge to reclaim the box of dresses confiscated by the French Lady after Kelly's alleged return from France.

As the aforementioned timeline provides us with a fairly well-documented paper trail for Elizabeth Boeckee and her whereabouts in the first half of the 1880s, it should be pointed out that the only documentation on John Morgenstern's presence in the area is the 1881 census, fixing him firmly as lodging with the Boeckee's at 21 Portree Street. More tenuous is the proposed connection when we consider Elizabeth's next Bromley-by-Bow abodes of 50 Athol Street and 25 Ettrick Street. On the other hand, John's absence from these certificates for Louis and Louisa, respectively in 1882 and 1884, does not argue either for or against him living at those addresses during that time; the nature of these particular records did not necessitate signatures by non-family members.

Assuming for the sake of argument that John did continue to cohabitate with Elizabeth after the 1881 census, it is plausible that John had come to substitute for Elizabeth's deceased husband at some point between 1882 and 1885 as manager of day-to-day operations of whatever business the deceased and his wife were engaged in during that time. The fact that John later appeared in Pennington Street as Elizabeth's husband when they registered the birth of their twin daughters, may be suggestive of a continued association in the years prior. But then again it may not. After all, counting the term of pregnancy from October 1885 backward, the twins have had to be conceived in the first few months of 1885, at which time it's plausible Elizabeth was still residing at 25 Ettrick Street. The reason being that according to an advert published in the *Builder*¹³, the address was sold shortly before 18 May 1885, leaving enough time for John and Elizabeth to have settled into their 79 Pennington Street address sometime in the intermediate five months.

There is also the possibility that Elizabeth Bouquet was managing day-to-day operations from Pennington Street for Louis from 1881/2 onward while John Morgenstern hung back in Bromley-by-Bow. Or vice versa. The April 1886 finger biting incident in Fulham involving John Morgenstern and his brother Marin, exactly within the period the historical record has him associated with the brothel in Pennington Street, might be suggestive of a more flexible role for John which allowed him to secure the couple's interests further afield as Elizabeth was holding the fort back home.

Since recent findings¹⁴ have confirmed John and Elizabeth's involvement with the managing (or keeping) of disorderly houses in Limehouse some years later, as well as her and her deceased husband's confirmed association with 79 Pennington Street more than a decade earlier, I decided to initiate a probe of the area, with a special emphasis on the presence of disorderly houses in the time period 1880-1886. A probe few researchers have had any reason to attempt in the past. As it turns out, the amount of them was quite staggering.

The Aberfeldy Estate

From roughly 1881 to 1884 the area in a five-street block-radius around all of the known abodes of Elizabeth Bouquet and the gasworks adjacent to them was known as the Aberfeldy Estate and, at the time, of comparatively recent vintage.

Geographically located between Limehouse in the west and West Ham to the east, this recent housing project was situated to the north of and parallel to the main artery connecting Bromley-by-Bow to the rest of the East End: the East India Dock Road.

¹³ *The Builder*, 1885-05-30: Vol 48 Issue 2208, page 781.

¹⁴ (1895) "Routing out Limehouse Pest Houses", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 2 October.

Developed in the 1860s by a Scottish builder named Mackintosh, the designated area and individual street names alphabetically corresponded to towns and cities in the architect's home region: from Athol to Zetland, Culloden to Ettrick, the only exception being Abbott Road, which the builder named in tribute to his wife.

There were, as it stood, three major centres of employment in the immediate vicinity, most notably the headquarters of the North Metropolitan Tramways as well as the London General Omnibus Corporation, both of which situated in Athol Street. Just south of Athol Street, at the corner of Brunswick Road and East India Dock Road, was Poplar Hospital.

Not only was the area home to the stablemen, conductors, and drivers employed by the tramway, it also served to provide beds to sailors and shipyard workers labouring in the East India Docks, south of Poplar Hospital. In addition there was a notable match stick factory employing hundreds of workers at any given time in the early to mid-1880s.

Lastly, the whole thing was properly sanctified by All Hallows Church, providing for the spiritual needs of the people. Over a decade after the relevant timeframe of this investigation a Booth's surveyor provided a lively description of the area¹⁵:

"On the East of the Abbott Road a block of streets lying between Oban Street and Abbott Road namely Portree Street, Moness Road and Oban Street. Portree Street Oban Street purple, Moness Road light blue-a poorer class come to Moness Road because the rents are lower than in the other two streets. Rents are lower because the street is on a lower level and houses risk being flooded. Things are better now and the sewers have been so improved that there is no longer any back flow. The north side of Oban Street is light blue on our map but there is no perceptible outward difference between the north and the south sides. Then north west up the Leven Road marked all dark blue in our maps. The south end may perhaps still be dark blue and there are a few mixed houses towards the centre, higher up it is distinctly better. Many house doors were open, oil cloth & coconut mats in the entrance passages, flowers in the windows, decent curtains, sometimes a case of stuffed birds on the top of a book or two, all pointed to greater respectability. Has the appearance of a street which is on the road upwards. At the north end is a large open waste which there is some talk of turning into a public garden. At present it is mostly full of heaps of gravel rubbish etc, but not fresh rubbish. Many gasworkers live in the Leven Road."

As the last sentence indicates, there was a significant presence of gasworkers in the area, and that leads us to the last major employer in the area: the Commercial Gas Company-owned *Poplar Gasworks* located immediately adjacent to the Boeckee's first recorded address in the area, Portree Street, where John Morgenstern (as gas stoker "John Felix") cohabited with the couple in 1881.

Later that year Portree Street featured in a court case report¹⁶ when a man named Cockle was charged by a linendraper for outstanding rent of No. 5 Portree Street. During the subsequent proceeding the defendant's wife stated she and her husband did not occupy the house, adding that *"they were only lodgers."* The argument was summarily dismissed and the defendant deemed liable for the rent.

By that time Elizabeth and Louis may have already moved on to 50 Athol Street, at which address she registered Louis' death in August of the following year. Perhaps the move was prompted by a recommendation submitted by Works Committee District No. 2 to the vestry in July of 1881, which saw fit to recommend¹⁷ *"that the carriage way of Athol Street [east end] be drained and made up"*, adding furthermore that *"the footpaths [be] curbed and paved [if necessary] at the expense of owners..."*

The premises themselves do not seem to have been too comfortable. In an advertisement¹⁸ dated June 11th 1889, the premises are described as *"cheap"*, consisting of *"7 rooms and scullery"*.

¹⁵ George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 11 [Poplar and Limehouse], District 12 [Bow and Bromley] and District 13 [South Hackney and Hackney], page 41-47.

¹⁶ (1881) "Ridd v. Cockle", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 9 December.

¹⁷ (1881) "Untitled", *Tower Hamlet Independent and East End Local Advertiser*, 16 July.

¹⁸ (1889) "Advertisements", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 11 June.

The Gasworks divided Bromley-by-Bow and West Ham with state-of-the-art gasholders, gas-o-meters and giant chimney towers rising up above the dreary rows of houses as they belched up a continuous stream of black smoke blanketing the surrounding rooftops.

Like any other area of concentrated employment, All Hallows Parish was home to a complimentary share of public- and disorderly houses providing some liquid relief from the hardships of everyday survival. In fact, the epicenter of the disorderly house nuisance, causing the local authorities the most concern, was located almost exactly around Boeckee's three subsequent residencies in the early to mid-1880s, clustered as they stood against the great towering gasometers and gasholders at the outer end of the parish in the east. For reasons that hardly need elaborated upon, it is this gasworks that commands our particular attention as we proceed to develop some understanding of its possible significance to Mary Kelly and her associates. Not with the objective of making a case for the area as a plausible landing spot for Mary Kelly, but simply as an attempt at reconstructing the conditions in the area.

The Nuisance

In the course of my investigations even a fairly cursory first glance betrayed the presence of no less than twenty disorderly houses in Ettrick Street, a dozen or so in Athol Street and five instances of related activities in Portree Street from 1880 to 1887, not to mention many other dens of infamy servicing laborers, stevedores and sailors alike. I have no doubt that a more in-depth inquiry will no doubt reveal an even more impressive amount, but we have to start somewhere.

On July 30th 1881 the *East London Observer* published a volley of complaints¹⁹ expressed by the secretary of Poplar Hospital on behalf of vestry members decrying "*the riot, the ribald noise, the brutal violence characterizing the immediate locality of the hospital*".

The vestry clerk, in response, rushed to confirm the hospital secretary's grievances, adding that "*the scenes in the road were really alarming; marks of blood were repeatedly seen on the pavement*."

In an article titled "The Social Evil" from 1885 the Aberfeldy Estate area within Bromley-by-Bow was singled out as being especially worrisome, mentioning that "*a general belief prevailed that Poplar, including Bromley- more especially the New Town- was becoming largely tainted by an increasing number of prostitutes and disorderly houses*."

In a letter addressed to the sitting magistrates of the Thames police court²⁰ dated just four days after Louis' death at 50 Athol Street, T.D. Langdon, the vestry clerk expressed the concerns of "*several parishioners of Bromley Saint Leonard*" about the apparent increase of the nuisance:

"...the inspectors were quite aware of the disorderly scenes, that many of the houses in the bye-streets out of the East India Dock-road, below Poplar Hospital, were brothels; and constables were afraid to go alone on account of the women's bullies; but, above all, did not get the support of the magistrates at the Thames police-court."

As it turns out, the disorderly state of affairs was not restricted to the area below Poplar Hospital. In fact, the situation in pretty much all directions around Poplar Hospital was the source of similar concern from inhabitants within the parish.

As an apparent example of the deplorable conditions in the area, Athol Street featured²¹ in August of 1882 when "*Annie Gray, a young woman, living at 60 Athol-street, Bromley, was charged at the Thames police-court with attempting to commit suicide at ten minutes to two o'clock on the afternoon of the 4th inst.*"

After the failed attempt at taking her own life by jumping off the wharf and into the water, she is reported to have pleaded insensibility at first, later on arguing for her defense she had been drunk when she made the plunge into the river Lea.

¹⁹ (1881) "Where are the Police?", *East London Observer*, 30 July.

²⁰ (1882) "Untitled", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 5 September.

²¹ (1882) "Untitled", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 29 August.

To the 21st century observer it seems almost inconceivable that people attempting suicide were brought before the magistrate for criminal sentencing, let alone children charged with frequenting brothels, but that is inverted late Victorian moralism for you.

The historical record presents us with a never-ending parade of complaints, often in the form of letters submitted by concerned members decrying the vestry's inability to appropriately deal with the problem, as well as the failure of the police court magistrates to organize an effective crackdown.

The September 5th letter of complaint²² voiced the vestry members' concern quite clearly as well as their intention of keeping the Thames police court magistrates apprised of the situation and expressing their wish that they *"use the power invested in them to put down ruffianism and disorder."*

"...the Vestrymen testified to the fact that horrible language was used, and disgraceful scenes were constantly taking place in Bromley, both in the East India Dock-road and in other thoroughfares."

The letter was acknowledged by the magistrates on August 18th *"respecting the turbulent and disorderly scenes alleged to have occurred lately in the East India Dock-road"*, adding that they, the magistrates, were *"most fully alive to the duty which rests upon them...by all lawful means at their disposal."*

The Growing Evil

The question of disorderly houses was brought forward consistently throughout the years, manifesting a deeply felt and widely experienced dissatisfaction on the part of parish members with the daily disorderly scenes with which they found themselves confronted, as well as the apparent lack of resolve on the part of the authorities to deal with them. This included disgruntled shop owners, ambitious lawmakers and reticent parish members all approaching the nuisance quite unapologetically through the lens of their own respective interests.

Although the laments were usually greeted with general agreement, the concern appears not to have been of sufficient severity as to prompt any serious effort to put a stop to the nuisance. At least not before the problem first rose sufficiently high on the national priority list to prompt a dedicated effort to deal with the problem in any comprehensive way.

Probing the relevant newspapers reveals a great passing of resolutions, often on a weekly basis. On July 31st 1883 the *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* reported²³ on a letter by a representative of the London School Board, directing attention to several recent parliamentary decrees devoted to *"allowing the removal of young girls from the pernicious influences of residence in houses of ill-fame."*

On September 7th the vestry's chairman expressed his commitment²⁴ in plotting a course against the spread of disorderly and immoral houses, ending on the somewhat cryptic note that any public statement in regards to the disorderly houses *"would frustrate the object in view; we therefore refrain from occupying space with the unsavoury subject."*

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Boeckee was presumably still residing in the very heart of all the squalor, at 50 Athol Street, when an incident was reported on occurring just two doors down. The *East End News and Shipping Chronicle* of September 14th 1883 reports²⁵:

"William George Oliver was charged, on remand, at the Thames police-court, with unlawfully breaking and entering the house 54, Athol-street, Bromley, and he was further charged with unlawfully damaging a quantity of furniture...the property of Margaret Adiar, the occupier of the said house."

A few days later a memorial letter signed by 21 parties was drafted and read aloud²⁶ before the vestrymen assembled *"complaining of certain disorderly houses in Oban-street, stated to belong to the Property and House Agency Investment Company, Cannon-street..."*

²² (1882), "Untitled", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 5 September; *Ibid*.

²³ (1883) "The Industrial Schools Amendment Act", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 31 July.

²⁴ (1883) "The Jones' Specialite", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 7 September.

²⁵ (1883) "A Remarkably Lucky Prisoner", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 14 September.

²⁶ (1883) "Correspondence", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 18 September.

The agent of this company co-signed the letter. The vestry chairman instructed the clerk "*to write to the owners to that effect, and that they should get rid of their tenants and be careful who they let their houses in [the] future.*"

Perhaps unrelated to the chairman's instructions the *East London Observer* reported²⁷ on the sale, by auction, of 26 to 50 Athol Street in February of 1884, prompting us to speculate on the early 1884 timeframe as a probable moving date for Elizabeth (and possibly John Morgenstern) before settling in their last known Bromley-by-Bow abode of 25 Ettrick Street.

In April of 1883 Mr. Bradshaw Brown is reported²⁸ to have sold by way of auction "*nine valuable freehold houses in Blair-street and Aberfeldy-street, four in Athol-street, and two leasehold houses in Blair-street, East India-road.*" The notice goes on to add that "*the property was arranged in twelve lots, to suit the convenience of purchasers...*"

On October 16th 1883²⁹ the *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* has the vestry clerk once again voicing the general concerns from "*persons residing in various parts of the parish*" on the growing evil of disorderly houses, recommending the adoption of more vigorous measures, one gentleman even going so far as to contribute no less than a hundred pounds "*to assist in the expenses of a prosecution*".

I would point to a case highlighted on August 8th 1884³⁰ concerning a 10-year-old girl named Louisa Hill, who was charged at the Thames police court with frequenting houses of ill-fame, in this case referencing such a house in Blair Street and mentioning the girl's father having died. The girl's mother was left to keep a brothel along Blair Street, the next street north running parallel to Athol Street. The police constable responsible for bringing the poor girl before the magistrate reported "*the house where the child was found was one of the worst in East London.*"

The case was referenced³¹ later that month in a letter to the editor of *East End News and Shipping Chronicle* as an illustration of the squalor experienced by people in the area:

"Seeing that action has been taken against a brother house-keeper carrying on her trade in Blair-street, would it not be well that our local authorities, having the legal power and responsibility of dealing with these evils, should bestir themselves? ...The new district of Bromley, known as Abbott's Town, has a large proportion of most respectable tenants, but with no inconsiderable mixture of brothel house-keepers and prostitutes."

Pointing to the fact that "*there can be no difficulty in naming the houses occupied*", the letter writer stresses the need for "*vigorous*" steps to rescue underaged girls from the brothel keepers active in the area:

"From observation, I believe the yong ones are entrapped by the keepers of these brothels, and that if a vigorous move were made and successfully carried through, the root of the evil might be reached and removed."

Although there was no shortage of resolutions passed, the root of the evil does not seem to have been reached, let alone removed. In reference to the many prostitutes frequenting the streets, one Mr. Richardson unceremoniously noted³² in a December 9th 1884 article titled "The Social Evil" that "*only last week 'a cartload of these creatures' was brought into the district and deposited in a certain street*".

In March of the following year another letter of complaint was printed³³ in the *Eastern Post*, expressing the concerns of "*the inhabitants of Arnold Road and neighbourhood, complaining of the intolerable nuisance arising from the existing of certain disorderly houses in that road, and asking the vestry's interference.*"

²⁷ (1884) "Advertisements", *East London Observer*, 9 February.

²⁸ (1883) "Untitled", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 10 April.

²⁹ (1883) "Disorderly Houses Again", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 16 October.

³⁰ (1884) "A Shocking Case", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 8 August.

³¹ (1884) "The Social Evil at Bromley", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 26 August.

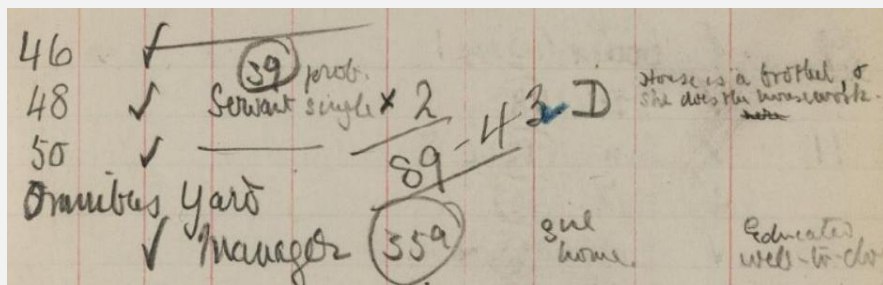
³² (1884) "The Social Evil", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 9 December.

³³ (1885) "Disorderly House Again", *Eastern Post*, 28 March.

On April 7th³⁴ 1885 a number of ladies connected to the church mission made what's being described as "a noble attempt to rescue the most degraded from a life of sin and misery", adding that the majority of these "degraded women" consisted of "prepossessing young girls, who had been induced to enter houses of ill-fame, under false pretences. Some had come up from the country, in answer to advertisements."

On 16 November 1885 Athol Street featured yet again, this time within the pages of the *Evening News*, when it published a report³⁵ on the case of one John Bailey (alias George Matthews) of 28, Athol-street, Bromley-by-Bow", being charged with the offence of facilitating a brothel on his premises. Some years later the Booth survey³⁶ interestingly designates 48 Athol Street as a brothel, noting that a servant girl living at the address "does her housework here".

The tendency to subdivide premises into separate lots to accommodate more tenants is echoed by the same *Booth's survey*³⁷ highlighting the example of Wilson Street (one of the streets running a bit westward from Ettrick Street), where one particular residency was apparently accommodating up to three families.



On the first of May 1886 Ettrick Street was the scene of another induction. As the *London Evening Standard* reported³⁸ a couple of days later:

"Bridget Ambrose was charged with stealing two purses and a sovereign from George Taylor, a sailor, living on board the ship *Romania*. - On Saturday night the Prosecutor met the Prisoner, and was induced by her to go to 50, Ettrick-street, Bromley. He then fell off to sleep, and on waking he missed a sovereign, two purses, and two discharges. George Carroll, 121 K, was called to the house, and the Prisoner was given into his custody."

In October of the same year, and just four numbers up from Elizabeth Boeckee's 1884 address, 58 Ettrick Street was also mentioned in connection to a brothel, recording the presence of two unfortunate children charged with keeping the company of prostitutes at the premises.

According to the *Eastern Post* of October 16th³⁹ observation of the premises was kept by an officer of the Charing Cross-based Reformatory Rescue Union "in consequence of information...received." The mother, purportedly also a prostitute, is reported as pleading to the officer to not send her children away.

Ettrick Street featured yet again in February of the following year, when *The People* carried a complaint⁴⁰ by the mother of a 14-year-old girl who had been allowed into a public house in Ettrick Street. Apparently the mother, eliciting the help of a constable, had attempted to organize an intervention. Alas the historical record does not record a follow up account informing us what, if anything, came of it.

In some instances however, there do seem to have been attempts at action, such as notices served on the keepers of several brothels, although generally the reaction was one of skeptical acknowledgement without subsequent resolve.

The *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* of September 27th 1887 published⁴¹ a letter of petition "signed by the Rev. Mr. Dalton, of All Hallows Church, East India Docks, and others, complaining of the disorderly state of 16 houses in Ettrick-street then moved to propose...that any lessee, landlord, or their agents

³⁴ (1885) "Untitled", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 7 April.

³⁵ (1885) "Untitled", *London Evening News*, 16 November.

³⁶ Notebook: Poplar, Mile End Old Town and Stepney. School Board Visitors, Mr Trenoweth (District X3), Mr Burrows (District S1, S2).

³⁷ Notebook: Poplar, Mile End Old Town and Stepney. School Board Visitors, Mr Trenoweth (District X3), Mr Burrows (District S1, S2), 1887, BOOTH/B/14 (page 22).

³⁸ (1886) "Untitled", *London Evening Standard*, 3 May.

³⁹ (1886) "Untitled", *Eastern Post*, 16 October.

⁴⁰ (1887) "Alleged Attempt to Entrap a Girl", *The People*, 27 February.

⁴¹ (1887) "Disorderly Houses Again", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 27 September.

who shall knowingly let, receive rents, &c., from the occupiers of such houses shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a penalty of 20 pounds, or may be imprisoned for three months with hard labour."

On the 11th of the following month one Mr. Owen inquired⁴² into what had been done with regard to the 16 houses in Ettrick-street, upon which the clerk rushed to assure him that "*two of the houses would be cleared immediately.*"

Interestingly the aforementioned reverent Dalton was named by Montagu Williams in his 1893 "Later leaves" where he celebrates⁴³ the Bridge of Hope mission and its efforts to "*save...women from the horrors of a prostitute's life*", specifically mentioning Dalton as an excellent recipient of funds from any merciful philanthropist who might "*permit this gentleman's name to figure on their cheque-books.*" By 1888 the situation did not seem to have been resolved.

As the *London Evening Standard* of September 15th of that year reported⁴⁴, one Mary Woodman, "*...a smart-looking, well-dressed woman, of Ettrick-street, Poplar, was charged by the Central Vigilance Society for keeping a disorderly house.*"

In April of that year the Vigilance Committee is reported to have successfully prosecuted a woman named "*Spink, otherwise Spearman, of 43, Ettrick-street, for keeping a disorderly house,*" after which she was sentenced to two months imprisonment with hard labour. Just two months earlier the East London Observer reported⁴⁵ on an assault by a brothelkeeper residing at 43 Ettrick Street upon an unfortunate named Edith Brockwell who lodged at the address. According to the victim's statement, the accused had "*punched her about the face, knocked her down, kicked her, and afterwards held her by the throat until she became exhausted.*" After hearing the witnesses however, the magistrate discharged the accused.

In addition to the frequent mentions of Athol Street and Ettrick Street, Blair Street features quite heavily in the reports, not only recording several brothels there, but- interestingly- also discerning the presence of a Welsh Wesleyan chapel in the very heart of the Aberfeldy Estate, which in turn raises the tantalizing possibility of a Welsh immigrant presence in the area around the time of Mary Kelly's purported arrival in the area.

The Welsh Connection

In June of 1882 the *Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald* reported⁴⁶ on some of the activities developed by the chapel for some of the female Welsh inhabiting this part of the East End, stating that "*a large and enthusiastic gathering of Welsh women*" was organised in the Welsh chapel located on the corner of Brunswick Road and Dee Street.

In 1882 a Welsh methodist chapel was situated⁴⁷ on the corner of Brunswick Road and Blair Street. In October of the following year we find another reference⁴⁸ to it. In October of the year thereafter the Welsh Chapel on Blair Street was no more⁴⁹.

The *Western Mail* of January 3rd 1884 gave some insights⁵⁰ on the matter. Speculating on the number of Welsh in the whole of the East End amounting to no more than 5000 there was but, "*one city missionary. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists have a small chapel in Poplar, and I believe services are held in a desultory fashion by the Welsh Wesleyans; and, so far as I can learn, that is all that is done by the Welsh for the spiritual and religious needs of their fellow-countrymen.*"

The article goes on to state that this Welsh missionary, A Mr. David Thomas, "*has 400 families on his visiting book, and has laboured in the East End for 25 years. He is now on the point of leaving this sphere of*

⁴² (1887) "Disorderly Houses Again", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 11 October.

⁴³ Williams, Montagu Stephen, "Later leaves, being the further reminiscences of Montagu Williams, Q.C.", 1893 (page 247).

⁴⁴ (1888) "Untitled", *London Evening Standard*, 15 September.

⁴⁵ (1888) "Fracas in a Brothel", *East London Observer*, 7 July.

⁴⁶ (1882) "Entertainment to Welsh Women in East London", *Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald*, 10 June.

⁴⁷ (1882) "Freehold Properties", *East London Observer*, 6 May.

⁴⁸ (1883) "Blair-street Band of Hope", *East End News & London Shipping Chronicle*, 2 October.

⁴⁹ (1884) "East London Tract Society and Christian Mission", *East End News & London Shipping Chronicle*, 10 October.

⁵⁰ (1884) "New Year's Eve Among the Poor Welsh of the East End of London", *Western Mail*, 3 January.

work, having been appointed to the charge of the Welsh poor in the City of London and in the Northern District."

Indeed, the *East End News & London Shipping Chronicle* of August 5th 1884 mentions⁵¹ that earlier that week "a freehold chapel and school house, situated at the corner of Blair-street, Brunswick-road, Bromley [was] sold for 680 pounds".

Apparently, meetings by the Welsh Wesleyans continued to be held in the area after the chapel had been sold. The *London Daily Chronicle* of September 13th 1884 mentioned⁵² one such meeting taking place at the "Assembly Rooms, Newby-place, East India-road, Poplar."

The only reference to a Welsh chapel after March of 1884 was more than 18 months later when the same newspaper reported⁵³ that "a grand concert was given in aid of the funds for building a Welsh Wesleyan Church in Poplar; to provide for the wants of the Welsh Wesleyans in the neighbourhood, the old building formerly used having been sold on the removal of the church to Stepney."

So it seems that from March 1884 to late 1885 the rallying point for Welsh new arrivals in the East End was not available in the area. This might have left any new arrivals from Wales extra vulnerable to opportunistic brothel keepers on the lookout for new arrivals.

It must however be pointed out that the Welsh, in contrast to East-European Jewish (or even Irish) immigrant communities, were not especially known to have clustered together in any significant way as to discern a convergence between Welsh new arrivals and the other immigrant residents living in the area. On the other hand there apparently did exist more or less coherent clusters of Welsh at specific geographical locations around particular centers of employment, as well as places of worship exclusively designed to accommodate the needs of the incoming Welsh.

If the state-of-affairs persisted up until around the turn of the century, the example of Calvinistic methodists in the City⁵⁴ has the Reverend John Davies of the New Jewin Welsh Church describing his centre as "the rallying-point for Welshmen coming to London."

In Charles Booth's *Labour and life of the people*⁵⁵ the Welsh example was mentioned specifically as a general example of how exactly this clustering mechanism worked:

"Doubtless cases of a similar kind could be multiplied, - where a country nucleus once established in any particular district in London, grows in geometric ratio by the importation of friends and relations. We find one village sending the flower of its youth to Finsbury, another to Hornsey, a third to a big establishment in Cheapside. So, if an employer is Welsh, we may find a Welsh colony near his works; if from Devon, a colony of Devonshire men.

Probably one of the most powerful and efficient migration agencies is that supplied by the letters written home by the country girl settled in domestic service in the great town. But it is needless to labour the argument. The life history here traced offers at once a striking picture and a fair sample of the mode in which the influx from the country takes place."

An already settled "enclave" of Welsh workers as point of landing for the newly arrived Kelly would be consistent with a commonly observed migration pattern, making it reasonable to contemplate the possibility of there having existed something of a Welsh rallying point for new arrivals during the time of Elizabeth Boeckee's possible cohabitation with John Morgenstern in the relevant timeframe. Considering the fact that the Welsh chapel of All Hallows was the only one to serve the entire Welsh population within the East End, it must be taken into consideration for whatever it's worth.

⁵¹ (1884) "Evidence of Local Value", *East End News & London Shipping Chronicle*, 5 August.

⁵² (1884) "Untitled", *London Daily Chronicle*, 13 September.

⁵³ (1885) "Untitled", *East End News & London Shipping Chronicle*, 18 December.

⁵⁴ BOOTH/B/247, Notebook: Nonconformist District 1 [The City], page 4.

⁵⁵ *Life and Labour of the People in London: First Results of An Inquiry Based on the 1891 Census. Opening Address of Charles Booth, Esq., President of the Royal Statistical Society. Session 1893-94.*

If indeed she first landed in Bromley-by-Bow, it does seem rather striking that she just happened to surface near the only Welsh rallying point in the entire East End. Equally curious to consider that she appeared to have done so precisely at the time the chapel had just closed shop as a migrant magnet for the incoming Welsh.

Personages & Pitfalls

It almost goes without saying that any exploratory probe, however dispassionately undertaken, will inevitably include the researcher noticing names relevant to the ultimate objective of his endeavors. God knows I have. And as so often the case when impatience overtakes resolve, I was immediately let down.

You can, for example, imagine my initial excitement when stumbling upon an incident⁵⁶ that occurred in October 1887 in the immediate locality around Poplar Hospital, involving two unfortunate women (named Mary Kelly and Mary Williams) who were picked up and charged for “*behaving in a disorderly and indecent manner in Brunswick Street*”, Kelly acting in a “screening” capacity whilst Williams improperly behaved with a 14-year-old lad.

Mary Kelly and Mary Williams were charged with indecent conduct in a public thoroughfare.—For some time past frequent complaints have been made of the conduct of unfortunate women like the Prisoners infesting the locality of Poplar Hospital, and behaving in a disorderly and indecent manner.—On Sunday night Albert Millor, 413 K, was on duty near Poplar Hospital, and from what he was told he at once went to Brunswick-street. He there saw Williams behaving in an improper manner with a lad about 14 years of age, while Kelly was screening her, and he took both of them into custody.—Mr. Saunders fined each of the Prisoners 5s.

The report proceeds to point out that “*for some time past frequent complaints have been made of the conduct of unfortunate women like the Prisoners infesting the locality of Poplar Hospital...*”

Although the late 1887 timeframe of the incident is not exactly consistent with Mary Kelly's presumed cohabitation with Joseph Barnett all the way over in Spitalfields at that time, the “Mary Jane Kelley” who a year later had appeared before the Thames magistrate on a charge of being drunk and disorderly was initially dismissed by me and others as a false positive. Unjustly so, it turned out; after the confirmation of Edward Newberry's 1911 claim⁵⁷ to have arrested Kelly “shortly before the murder”, and actually finding his name on the Thames police court record as one of the arresting constables, it became clear that the the idea of Joe and Mary continuously living together from “Easter 1887 until October 1888” might be a little less continuous than Barnett would have it.

The example of the Newberry Mary Kelly serves as a powerful reminder not to be too quick to summarily reject such items, even if they don't tally with what we think we know about the victim and her movements at any given time. As such I wasn't prepared to dismiss the Brunswick Street Mary Kelly out of hand.

Because the report fails to mention an age for the Brunswick Road-Mary Kelly, I elicited the help of the extraordinary Jose Oranto, who curates an enormous amount of Thames court records, and it was not long before he proved my enthusiasm unjustified; the Brunswick Road-Mary Kelly's age (37) mentioned on the relevant record was way off to justify further inquiry⁵⁸.

8	28th Jan	196	Amuel Brooks	19	Disorderly Conduct	1958	3 days
9	28th Jan	413	Mary Kelly	34	Disorderly Conduct	1958	5 days
10	28th Jan	413	Mary Mabel Williams	26	"	1958	5 days
11	28th Jan	154	Arthur Hudson	16	"	1958	5 days

In another example of the sudden appearance of a familiar name, allow me to mention an incident published⁵⁹ in the *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* on March 14 1884, describing an accident involving a baker named John Miller who was charged for running over an unfortunate girl whilst driving his

⁵⁶ (1887) "Untitled", *London Evening Standard*, 10 October.

⁵⁷ <https://www.jtrforums.com/forum/the-victims/mary-kelly/591376-pc-e-newberry-retired-in-1911-claimed-to-have-locked-up-kelly-for-drunkness>.

⁵⁸ PS/TH/A/02/007, Collection: Thames Magistrates Court 1887-1888

⁵⁹ (1884) "Untitled", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, March 14.

cart through Oban Street (two streets west of Portree Street; only a couple of turns away from Athol Street and Ettrick Street).

Although the 79 Pennington Street John Miller was listed as an "Unemployed Tailor" in the 1881 census and "Skin Dyer" in the 1891 one, we do have him as a "baker" in 1885 on his daughter's birth record as well as "journeyman biscuit maker" on her death record the following year.

Not an absolute definite of course, but a solid 'maybe' at this stage, possibly strengthening the possibility of a regular commute between Bromley-by-Bow and St. George in the East by members of what researcher Gary Barnett has coined "The Breezer's Hill Mob" in or around the same period Elizabeth Boeckee and John Morgenstern might have commuted between these two locations in a similar overlap.

The Servant Box Question

In an interestingly illustrative report printed on 3rd 1885⁶⁰, we are being presented by a case somewhat reminiscent of the Mrs. Buki anecdote who, according to several accounts in the aftermath of the Kelly murder, accompanied Mary Kelly to the French lady's residence near Knightsbridge to assist her in retrieving the box of dresses.

A young woman, who was reported to have just recently come over from Germany "*for the purpose of getting a livelihood*" was "*persuaded to go and live in a house at Poplar...This place*", the article goes on to say, "*was a house of ill-fame, and the unfortunate girl, whilst there, was seduced and compelled to live an immoral life.*"

Shortly after the induction, the article goes on to explain, the girl decided to remove herself from the situation only to find the landlady had hijacked her servant box.

"When she demanded her box, containing all her things, the landlady of the house refused to give them up, saying that she should not have them at all. The young lady then got a friend to apply for the things belonging to her, but they were not given up."

The magistrate before whom the case was submitted subsequently moved to summon the landlady for illegally detaining the things.

In the following month a similar case⁶¹ was brought before the magistrate, describing a respectably dressed young woman named Isabella Smith, installed as a servant in Mile End, who discovered the house was "*one of ill-fame*", the landlady of which also refusing to give up the girl's belongings.

In order to adequately illustrate the magistrate's inability to exert influence in alleviating the hardships of the entrapped girls, this example published in the March 26th issue of the East End News and London Shipping Chronicle⁶² should suffice:

This is just one out of countless similar such circumstances experienced by the victims of these practices as well as their parents.

In the 1886 publication *Purity Crusade*⁶³ Charrington is quoted as stating that during the previous week "*three girls had been rescued from a house of ill-fame, near Victoria Park, but that their boxes had been detained by the keeper of the den of infamy for debt.*"

In response one Mr. Wookey put forth the question who would go with him to demand the items, after which it would seem both Wookey and Charrington marched off to the brothel in question, followed by a procession that was several thousand strong.

1,000,000
SISTER CAROLINE AMY, of 57, St. Leonard's-road, Poplar, who was accompanied by a girl of 14 years of age, applied to Mr. Saunders, at the Thames police-court for advice. On Saturday last the girl had left her mother, who kept a disorderly house, as she did not wish to lead such a life. Applicant made inquiries and found the girl's statement was confirmed. She wished to know if his worship could assist the girl in any way. Mr. Saunders said he had no authority to deal with such a case, but if the case were made public no doubt some charitable lady would be found who would be willing to get the girl into a situation or a home.

⁶⁰ (1885) "English Traffic in Foreign Girls", East End News & London Shipping Chronicle, 3 July.

⁶¹ (1885) "A Trap", East End News & London Shipping Chronicle, 28 August.

⁶² (1886) "Sister Caroline Amy", East End News and London Shipping Chronicle, 26 March.

⁶³ Dyer, Frederick N, *The Purity Crusade: its conflicts & triumph*, Morgan & Scott, 1886.

After they confronted the agent of the property, assurance was immediately given that the boxes in question would be delivered at Charrington's Assembly Hall in the Mile End Road "by nine o'clock the next morning."

There is an absolute wealth of similar such situations both within and beyond the confines of the East End, oftentimes involving the confiscation of the possessions in exchange for room and board. Because such instances are too numerous to comprehensively cover here, I'll wrap it up with a curiously familiar example, detail-wise, reminiscent of the situation Mary Kelly purportedly found herself confronted with.

The *London Evening Standard* of 26 January 1886 titled "A Welsh girl and her mistress"⁶⁴, describes a servant girl of around 19 years of age and of "respectable appearance", taking a situation in Sloane Street (Chelsea) immediately after her arrival from Wales.

"The applicant stated that she came up from Wales on the 4th inst., and entered a situation in Sloane-street, Chelsea, whither she went immediately upon her arrival in London. The second day after she had been in service she was allowed by her mistress to go to Bow to see the only friend, and that a female, she possessed in London."

After detailing that the girl was forced to stay the night with her friend in Bow due to severe wintery weather conditions, the article goes on to state that her mistress had employed another girl in her absence, effectively ending her employment and turning her out on the streets in the bitter cold.

"Her mistress had also detained Applicant's box, containing her clothing, and declined to give it up until she was reimbursed the 18s."

Although the age is off for the presumed age of Mary Jane Kelly, of course, and the period does not exactly feel right, I do find the apparent similarities with the Mrs. Buki-story to be of some interest, especially the close proximity of Sloane Street to Knightsbridge, not to mention the box of dresses retained by the landlady. You can image my excitement when a follow-up article⁶⁵, printed at the beginning of the following month in the *Liverpool Daily Post*, provided some additional detail about the Sloane-street landlady, describing her as a "French dressmaker". The article also mentions that another young woman had apparently issued a similar complaint against the same landlady.

In her 1912 remembrances *Opals from sand*⁶⁶ famous London based charity worker Mary Hannah Steer commented on the disorderly houses in the East End and her attempts at rescuing vulnerable young women from the hands of the brothel keepers, thus turning the tide of moral decline:

"Many a one had been first beguiled into Ratcliff Highway. Perhaps she had been met at the Docks as she landed from her journey from the North, and in her innocence taken into one of the bad houses, where she was ruined and rendered hopeless and ashamed. The poor women themselves are almost always willing to render us all the help they could in such a quest (perhaps naturally, for they could scarcely desire the importation of fresh young girls), but the keepers of the houses were enraged, and a sort of underground railway was established. We found houses in Ratcliff Highway which were in communication with the keepers of similar dens in King's Cross or Kennington or Camberwell, as well as other places."

I couldn't help but think back to the phrasing used by the *Associated Press* in describing the Mrs. Buki situation, the significance of which had previously escaped my attention entirely.

Joseph Barnett, quoted in the *Star* of November 12th, is reported to state that Kelly "came to London about four years ago". In the same issue he states that "after leaving Cardiff she came to London, and was in a gay house in the West-end."

In the same November 12th issue an unnamed source is quoted by a *Press Association* reporter who had made inquiries "in Ratcliff-highway and other quarters of the East-end" the night previously, collecting statements from Kelly's former acquaintances. Apparently one of those acquaintances was quoted as saying that the move to the West End occurred immediately upon arrival when, it is stated, "she suddenly drifted into

⁶⁴ (1886) "A Welsh Girl and her Mistress", *London Evening Standard*, 26 January.

⁶⁵ (1886) "A Welsh Girl in Trouble", *Liverpool Daily Post*, 2 February.

⁶⁶ Steer, Mary H, "Opals from sand: a story of early days at the Bridge of Hope", 1912, Morgan & Scott (page 48/49).

the East-end”...after which “*her first experiences of the East-end appear to have commenced with Mrs. Buki, who resided in one of the thoroughfares off Ratcliff-highway, now known as St. George's-street.*”

The *Echo*, also published on the 12th ⁶⁷, withholds the Buki-name but elaborates somewhat to the ‘suddenly drifted’-part by adding that “*this person seems to have received Kelly directly from her West-end home*”.

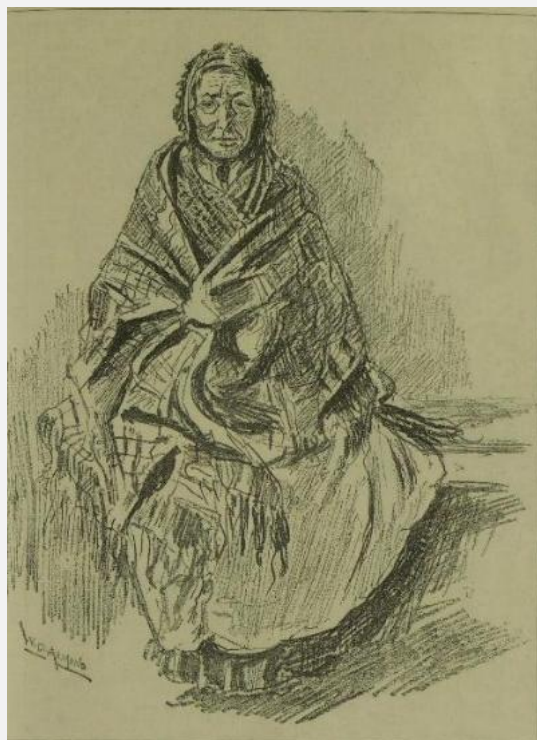
Additionally, the report goes on to say that she, Kelly, “*had not been very long with her when, it is stated, that both women went to the French "lady's" residence, and demanded the box, which contained numerous dresses of a costly description.*”

The references to “received directly” and “suddenly drifted into the East-end” both appear to explicitly preclude any intermediate period of time, suggesting the possibility that the transfer was indeed part of some sort of underground railway-style transaction between, say, Mrs. Buki and the French Lady in the neighbourhood of Knightsbridge. I always wondered why Mrs. Buki would accompany Kelly to a rival brothel keeper, purportedly one of some stature. The reason might be that it was Mrs. Buki who had initially transferred Kelly to the West-End, and was now keen on cashing in on a former investment. The detained box, if indeed it contained dresses of a costly description, may have been a prize item not only for Kelly herself, but also for her next procurer unwilling to give up valuable collateral.

In any case the possible connection I think is worthy of further inquiry, and will undoubtedly be part of a future exploration project. That, and a probe into the possibility of a similar such underground railway-construction that may have existed between Welsh methodists in South-Wales and those in the East End.

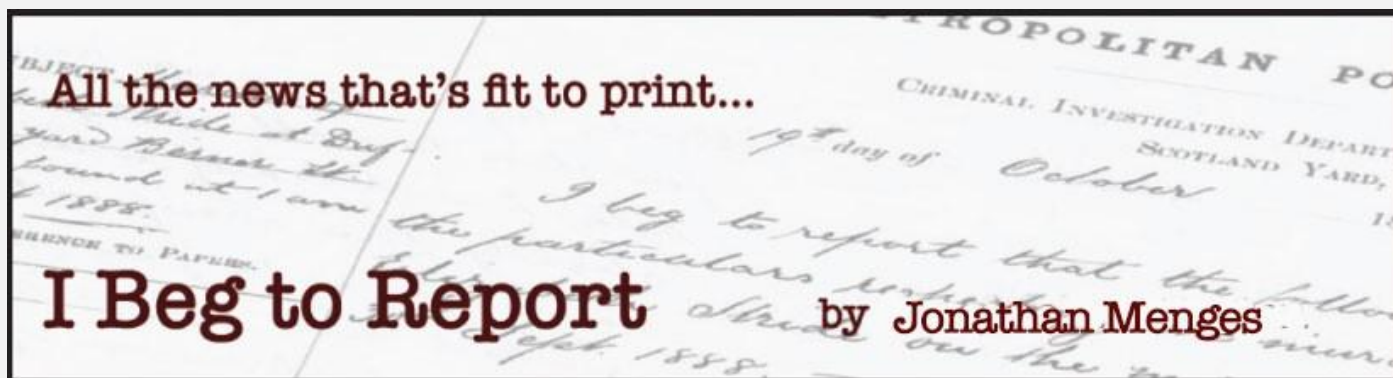
Looking ahead I’m secretly hoping I have managed to do more than just excite my own interest. If I have succeeded in tempting just one or two fellow-researchers into a future collaboration, the All Hallows Exploration Project has not been in vain.

Jurriaan Maessen is an author and researcher based in the Netherlands.



The first of four evocative drawings from the 22nd September 1888 edition of the Illustrated London News. The drawings accompanied an article on the Spitalfields lodging houses and their inhabitants. This one is of a deputy, name unknown.

⁶⁷ (1888), “Victim’s Life in the West-End. Her Visits to Paris. Good Scholar and an Artist”, *Echo*, 12 November.



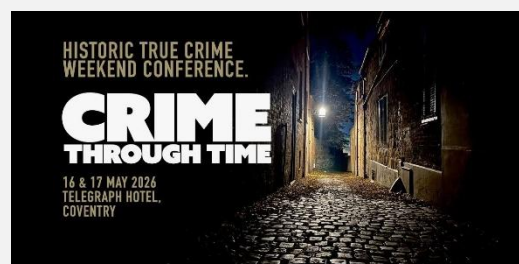
Researcher Discovers Dramatic New Stride Arrest...

Last July, while looking through the *Morning Advertiser* newspaper issues recently added to the British Newspaper Archive, researcher Jurriaan Maessen came upon a June, 1886 report of Elizabeth Stride being arrested in the East India Road in Poplar. The newspaper report misstated her age as 27, but through the work of fellow researcher Jose Oranto in examining the Thames court records, it was revealed that she actually gave her age as 50, which, as Debra Arif points out in a thread on JtRForums, is more in keeping with what we know of the Whitechapel murder victim's routine of adding years to her real age. It is stated that Stride assaulted PC 182K John Bartlett while being drunk, disorderly, and using "bad language". The report continues to describe that, while at the station, Stride again attacked PC Bartlett and it took five constables to subdue her. For this incident Stride was sentenced to one-month hard labor. It's wonderful to see ongoing research collaboration and that there are still new details about the victims out there, just waiting to be unearthed.

Elizabeth Stride, 27, was charged with being disorderly and assaulting Constable 182 K.—On the previous night the defendant was in the East India-road, Poplar, very drunk and making use of bad language. She behaved indecently, and when the constable spoke to her she spat in his face on 12 different occasions. She also kicked him a number of times about the legs. While the charge was being taken at the station defendant suddenly rushed out of the dock and "scuffed" him round the neck. It took five police officers to separate them.—Mr. Saunders sentenced her to one month's hard labour.

Adam Wood Announces 'Crime Through Time' Conference...

Adam Wood, former long-time Editor of this magazine, has announced a two-day, historical true crime conference to take place at the Telegraph Hotel in Coventry in May 2026. The roster of speakers includes author Mark Russell on the murder of Julia Wallace, Sarah Wise on Victorian lunacy panics, and Paul Stickler on serial killer John Reginald Christie. Adam plans on having eight speakers in total, along with a walking tour and books for sale. Surely an event not to be missed. For more information visit truecrimeconference.com



Ripperologist 31st Birthday Online Conference...

While we're talking about conferences, we've decided to mark the 10th anniversary of 2016's *Ripperologist Magazine* 21st Birthday Conference with a two-day online conference of our own. Scheduled for August, 2026 and featuring a slate of guest speakers, roundtable discussions and interview segments. It will be free and take place entirely online with real-time audience participation. Similar to the *Rippercast* conferences that took place during the COVID years, but this time with a focus on the magazine. More details to come.



RIPPEROLOGIST

I Beg to Report - 1995



The London Dungeon updates and revamps *The Jack the Ripper Experience*

The Jack the Ripper Experience was a tourist attraction first opened at The London Dungeon in 1993. It was subsequently revamped and updated in 1995.

We spoke with author, researcher, tour guide and former employee of The London Dungeon, Philip Hutchinson, about working at *The Jack the Ripper Experience* in the mid-1990s...

‘At the London Dungeon, the public really were just herded around. For the guides, it was a case of ‘get everyone into one section and then push them through to the next one’. Each section would last about five minutes before you’d move them on into the next.

The Jack the Ripper Experience formed a large part of the exhibit. I have to say probably about a quarter to a third of it, which is an awful lot when you know how big the attraction was. When you reached *The Jack the Ripper Experience* section, you’d already be halfway through and you would have been through an entire walking section with a lot of fake torture devices and tableaux of various ways of killing people, and martyrdoms and things. Then you’d go into a courtroom where a judge would condemn you to death. You’d be seated in a boat and take a dark ride until you washed up from the sewers and arrive in Whitechapel.

At that point a guide would pick you up and take you to stand in a long corridor, which led into the Ripper section, and you would be held there awaiting your turn. The next guide would then take you into a large room called Owens Yard. It had bits of décor around and barrels, staircases and windows with flickering lights behind them, and here the guide would give you some background about the Whitechapel murders. Very basic, and often erroneous. You then would be taken by another guide through a little passageway which had a reconstruction of the outside of the Ten Bells, which basically looked like some kind of Tudor house, with a couple of workers hanging out of the widows, talking to each other in a loop, saying ‘I had money eight times today and spent the lot’ and that kind of stuff. And then you’d be brought into the first room which had the actual exhibits and information.



So, the first room you entered into after Owen’s Yard had the mortuary photographs of the women above dummies of them, lying in various places on the ground. The reconstructions of the bodies, and there were just the canonical five, looked nothing like they did in reality. They were fairly generic, wearing grey dresses and lying on the ground with their intestines thrown everywhere. They weren’t done with any finesse. The guide would take you around each one. Polly, then Annie, then Elizabeth Stride. Next the tourists were led through to yet another room where they would then be left by themselves. The guide would shut the door on them and press a button which started an audio/video recording. This covered Catherine Eddowes, the apron, the Goulston Street Graffito and Mary Jane Kelly.

Finally, you’d go through to the last room which was what they called the mortuary. There’d be some spooky music playing, wax dummies of Doctor Bond and Inspector Abberline, and lying on a mortuary table was supposedly the body of Mary Jane Kelly. It was quite gratuitous with her breasts on full display and a

mortician's incision up the front of her body. The tourists would stand on a tiered riser like you would see in a choir or a lecture hall, and a presentation would begin about 'Who was Jack the Ripper?'. It had the same narration as before. Slides would come up, and these slides never matched the accompanying audio narration. Like, while the audio was describing Aaron Kozminski, they would show you the promotional photograph of Richard Mansfield from Jekyll and Hyde. And it was the same for the rest of the suspects. They just used all kinds of weird things and never put them in any order.



At the end of that, the piped-in audio says "Jack the Ripper is here!" and then you'd hear people screaming, and shutters would then open and this massive ball of flame would go out towards the audience. This fire ball was controlled by the actors by pressing a button. So, if there were too many people in the room, you had to keep your finger off the button so the flame didn't go off and injure anyone.

The information that the actors had to recite about the Ripper came in a little information pack and it was bollocks. The biggest one that sticks in my mind is the mortuary image of Annie Chapman. You know how there's some kind of long, white, straight collar around her neck? Well, we were told to say that it was a mortician's card placed into a neck to show how deep the wound was. So it was all a load of nonsense. The actors would all work on shifts rather like a school timetable. Nobody stayed in one section for the entire day, we'd be moved around to various parts of the dungeon. If you stayed in the Ripper section you'd usually be there for two hours.

I used to get put in there an awful lot because most of the staff didn't like being there. They found it creepy and it was quite cold there. But I enjoyed it, so I got put in The Jack the Ripper Experience far more than most people did. The pay was atrocious at only £4.50 an hour. It just paid for my train fare and not much else, but the work was so much fun. You were basically paid to be rude to people, shout at them and tell them all sorts of disgusting things.



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All Roads Lead to Mitre Square

Steven Blomer

This article follows on from my speculative *The Ripperologist* article in edition 173 entitled *All Roads Lead from Mitre Square*, and like that article it is based on and adapted from chapters from the upcoming book *A Death in Mitre Square, Catherine Eddowes: An Analysis of Murder* due to be published in 2026.

Having looked at the possible escape routes from Mitre Square, the next question is where the killer met Catherine Eddowes, and therefore what was their most likely entry point into the square. Linked to this we will look at which route or routes Catherine could have taken from Bishopsgate Police Station to meet her killer. And finally we shall consider which route the killer may have taken to meet her, assuming that he was responsible for the murder of Elizabeth Stride and had thus come from Berner Street. Below is an overview map¹ of the area we will be concentrating on:

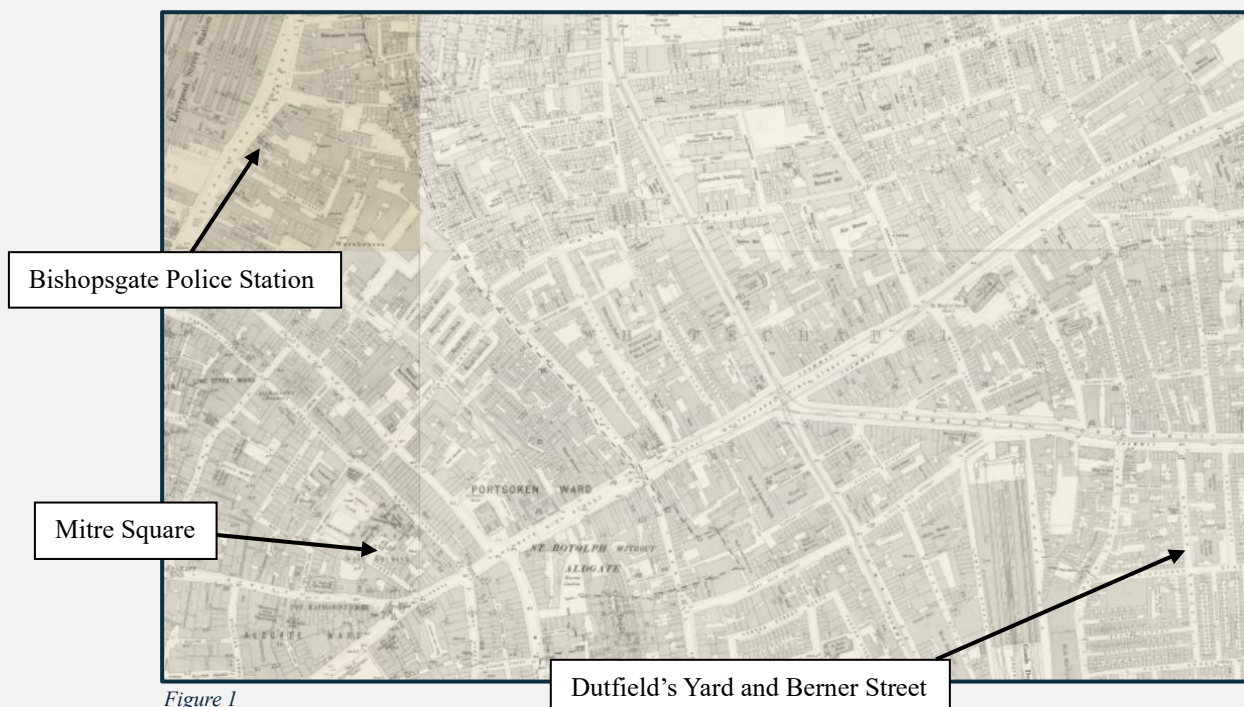


Figure 1

Firstly, let's look at the area around Mitre Square as shown on the 1890s OS map². In general we will be using sketches of the area when looking at the possible routes taken, but the OS map gives a far better indication of the various place names involved:

¹ 1:1056 scale series of maps-1895 reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

² *Id*



Figure 2

Where the killer first met Catherine Eddowes is our first point to consider, and there are several possibilities which I've detailed in *Figure 3*³. These assume, on the balance of probability, that Catherine met her killer relatively close to the square itself. We will therefore start with at or around Aldgate Station (teal).

The next possibility that we'll consider is further west along Aldgate High Street (blue) up to or just after the junction with Mitre Street. We'll then look at Houndsditch (mauve), followed by Duke Street (light blue). We must also look at the section of Duke Street running from Houndsditch into St James's Place (red). There's also the possibility of meeting in Mitre Street, and finally we should consider a meeting in Mitre Square itself (golden).

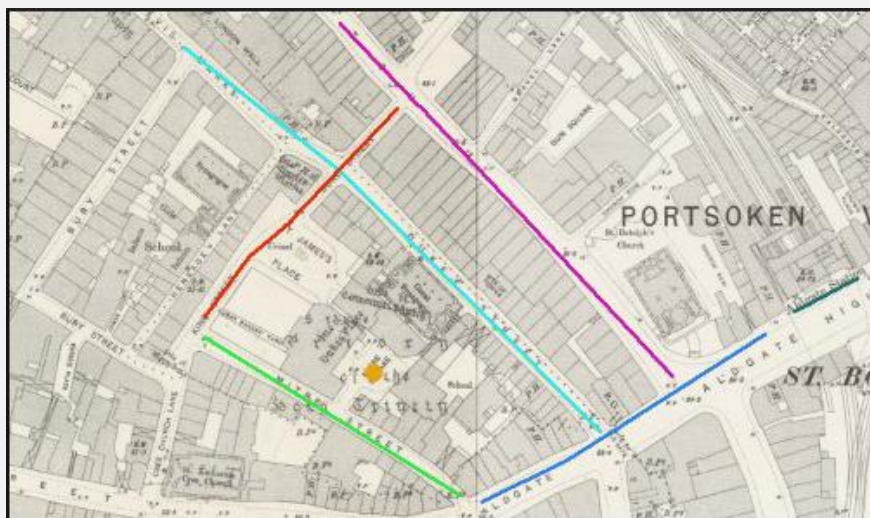


Figure 3

Looking at Aldgate Station, we do have reports of a man and a woman seen leaving the station towards Mitre Square⁴, and logistically it fits well with the killer having come from Berner Street. The report however must be treated with caution.

Further along Aldgate High Street is another reasonable location, but one should note there are no reports to suggest this may have occurred. The same applies to Houndsditch and Mitre Street. We are left with two options in Duke Street, where we have the sighting by Lawende and his companions at Church Passage⁵, which, while not conclusively shown to be Eddowes and her probable killer, is generally accept as being likely.

³ 1:1056 scale series of maps-1895 reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

⁴ <https://www.jtrforums.com/forum/the-victims/catherine-eddowes/11580-another-sighting-of-eddowes-prior-to-death>,
<https://www.casebook.org/dissertations/rip-butchersrow>

⁵ Coroner's inquest (L),1888,No.135, Catherine Eddowes Inquest, 1888 (Corporation of London Record Office)

We should also take some note of the account of Blenkinsop.⁶ There are some real questions about the timing and the reliability of this report, but it would be wrong to ignore it, and such may indicate a meeting in either Dukes Street, Houndsditch or the connecting Duke Street, now call Creechurch Lane.

Finally one cannot completely disregard the possibility that the killer and victim actually met in the square itself, with the man sighted with Catherine in Church Passage presumably leaving and a new person meeting her afterwards.

The first five of our possible routes are based around the probability of the killer and possibly Eddowes being at the junction of Houndsditch and Aldgate High Street (less than 60 yards from Aldgate Station) prior to the murder:



Figure 4

Here the killer meets Catherine on the junction of Houndsditch and Aldgate High Street and then enters the square via Duke Street and Church Passage, this fits very well the account given by Lawende and Levy⁷.



Figure 5

In this scenario the pair walk along Duke Street, passing by Church Passage, turning left into St James's Place and entering the square via St James's Passage. This allows for Blenkinsop's account.⁸



Figure 7



Figure 6

Figures 6 and 7 consider the possibility of heading north along Houndsditch before turning left at Little Duke Street and heading west. Figure 6 goes via Duke Street south to Church Passage, aligning with Lawende, while Figure 7 instead enters via St James's Place and allows again for Blenkinsop's story.



Figure 8

Entry via Mitre Street is in Figure 8, however there are no supporting accounts for this, unlike the previous scenarios. And finally, we have Catherine and her killer meeting in or around Mitre Square itself, which obviously doesn't require a diagram.

But what if the killer did come from Berner Street but avoided, for whatever reason, the junction of Houndsditch and Aldgate High Street? Before we look into these possibilities we need to see how these routes

⁶ <https://forum.casebook.org/forum/ripper-discussions/general-discussion/1176-did-schwartz-and-lawende-describe-the-same-man?p=809693#post809693>

⁷ Coroner's inquest (L), 1888, No. 135, Catherine Eddowes Inquest, 1888 (Corporation of London Record Office)

⁸ <https://forum.casebook.org/forum/ripper-discussions/general-discussion/1176-did-schwartz-and-lawende-describe-the-same-man>

would fit into Catherine's movements following her release from Bishopsgate Police Station. We have it confirmed she left at around 1am⁹ and is reported to have turned left towards Houndsditch, rather than by the most obvious route back to her lodgings in Flower and Dean Street¹⁰ (*Fig 9*).



Figure 10



Figure 9

It should however be noted that leaving by turning left did not prevent her from heading back to Flower and Dean Street, it would just have been a longer route (*Fig 10*).

From the evidence we have available it appears Catherine did not head towards Flower and Dean Street, for reasons beyond the scope of this article but which have been debated many times¹¹. Instead, it seems she headed in the direction of Mitre Square and Aldgate High Street.



Figure 11



Figure 12

There are several routes she may have taken, in *Figure 11* Catherine would have turned left out of the station, (assuming she left by the main entrance) or if she left via the side entrance she would have entered Rose Alley¹². She would then head south-west along Bishopsgate, turning left into Devonshire Street and on via Devonshire Square. This assumes Stoney Lane was open, but if it wasn't, the dotted line allows for it being closed and her arriving either at the junction of Little Duke Street and Duke Street or she heads to the junction of Houndsditch and Aldgate High Street. *Figure 12* heads further south-west down Bishopsgate before turning left at Houndsditch and either then turning into Bevis Marks at St Mary Axe or heads on to the other end of Houndsditch.



Figure 13



Figure 14

⁹ Coroner's inquest (L), 1888, 135, Catherine Eddowes Inquest, 1888 Corporation of London Record Office)

¹⁰ Coroner's inquest (L), 1888, No.135, Catherine Eddowes Inquest, 1888 (Corporation of London Record Office)

¹¹ <https://www.jtrforums.com/forum/the-victims/catherine-eddowes/29500-sept-30th-rain-catherine-eddowes-last-half-hour>

¹² <https://forum.casebook.org/forum/ripper-discussions/victims/catherine-eddowes/7388-where-is-catherine>

¹² <https://forum.casebook.org/forum/ripper-discussions/victims/catherine-eddowes/752804-kates-missing-45-mins>

Figure 13 follows Figure 12, but instead of turning into Bevis Marks at St Mary Axe, it continues on to the junction of Little Duke Street. Figure 14 shows a route that continues on past the junction of Bishopsgate and Houndsditch and instead turns left onto Camomile Street leading into Bevis Marks and Duke Street.

For completeness, at this stage we need to mention a theory suggested by author Trevor Marriott, that, after leaving Bishopsgate Police Station, Catherine went first to Goulston Street, dropping part of her apron, which the author suggests was used as a sanitary towel before then heading to Mitre Square¹³.



Figure 15

Figure 15 shows the most direct route that Catherine could have taken if she did head left out of the station as reported at the inquest by PC George Hutt 968¹⁴, and if she headed back towards her lodgings in Flower and Dean Street, passing close to the location the apron was found at, marked G. We should note that this proposed route involves Rose Alley, as mentioned earlier in the article. While the front entrance of the police station is used in Figure 15, a side entrance would work just as well.

14



Figure 17



Figure 16

The next two maps look at the possible routes that Catherine could have gone back towards Mitre Square using Mr Marriott's theory. Figure 16 assumes the most direct route using either Stoney or Gravel Lanes. Figure 17 goes with one of the routes suggested by Frederick Foster, when talking about possible escape routes from Mitre Square¹⁵.

We can now consider possible routes from Berner Street, working on the assumption that the same individual responsible for the murder of Elizabeth Stride was also the killer of Catherine Eddowes. Figure 18¹⁶ gives a clear view of the immediate area of Berner Street:



Figure 18

¹³ Jack the Ripper: The 21st Century Investigation 2007 and other publications

¹⁴ Coroner's inquest (L), 1888, No.135, Catherine Eddowes Inquest, 1888 (Corporation of London Record Office)

¹⁵ Ripperologist magazine 173, All Roads Lead from Mitre Square. Coroner's inquest (L), 1888, No.135, Catherine Eddowes Inquest, 1888 (Corporation of London Record Office)

¹⁶ 1:1056 scale series of maps-1895 reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

We will now look at some other possible routes the killer could have taken from Berner Street towards Mitre Square, and some will not end up at the earlier proposed meeting place of the junction of Houndsditch and Aldgate High Street (for Aldgate Station).



Figure 20



Figure 19

Figure 19 shows a direct route back up Berner Street, along Commercial Road, Whitechapel High Street and then Aldgate High Street. It passes both Aldgate Station and the junction of Houndsditch and allows for entry to the square via either Church or St James's Passages. Figure 20 initially goes the other way via Fairclough and Back Church Lane, before following the rest of the route suggested in 19. Both of these routes are the longest exposure the killer would have on any of the major roads.



Figure 21



Figure 22

The route suggested in Figure 21 begins by duplicating the first section of 20 but then attempts to keep from the main thoroughfares by using both Little and Great Alie Streets, then Mansell Street before re-emerging onto a main road. Figure 22 again uses Fairclough and Back Church Lane; however it then crosses Commercial Road and proceeds up Church Lane before entering onto Whitechapel High Street / Road. It must be said that whilst this route cuts out walking west along Commercial Street, it results in walking a very long stretch of Whitechapel High Street / Aldgate.

The next possibility, Figure 23, is one suggested by author, researcher and tour guide M P (Mick) Priestley in his seminal work, *One Autumn In Whitechapel*¹⁷.



Figure 23

This route goes with Priestley's chosen suspect, Albert Bachert, returning home to 13 Newham Street (marked AB) after killing Stride to possibly change his clothes before proceeding to Mitre Square.

The next two options avoid the main roads entirely except for the crossing of Aldgate High Street. Both routes go via Fairclough Street, Back Church Lane, Hopper Street and Great Prescott Street. Figure 24 then uses Goodman's Yard and turn north along Minories, to come out opposite our starting point of the junction of Houndsditch and Aldgate High Street. Figure 25 crosses Minories into John Street, Crutched Friars and Jewry Street to enter Aldgate High Street slightly further west, opposite Duke Street.

¹⁷One Autumn in Whitechapel 2016, M P Priestley p441



Figure 26



Figure 25

The final series of routes are ones that include shortcuts, be that via passages or courts. *Figure 26* goes north along Berner Street before reaching the now long-gone Sander Street which ran from Berner Street to Back Church Lane. In using this route the killer would avoid the risk of being seen exiting the top of Berner Street. *Figure 27*¹⁸ shows the entrance of where Sander Street formerly stood, a few yards to the right of the driveway.



Figure 24



Figure 27



Figure 28

The next possible escape route (*Fig 28*) uses a shortcut which is less than 25 yards north of Dutfield's Yard. Batty's Gardens (which again comes out in Back Church Lane) also has the advantage of avoiding the top of Berner Street. With both 26 and 28 it should be noted that the killer could, of course, escape in the other direction as in *Figures 24* or 25.



Figure 29

Just like Sander Street, Batty's Gardens is now long gone, covered over like Dutfield's Yard itself by the Harry Gosling Primary School. *Figure 29*¹⁹ shows the view today, with its entrance to the left of the two smaller gates, very close to the large gateway.

¹⁸ Image courteous of Chris Maybank

¹⁹ Image courteous of Chris Maybank

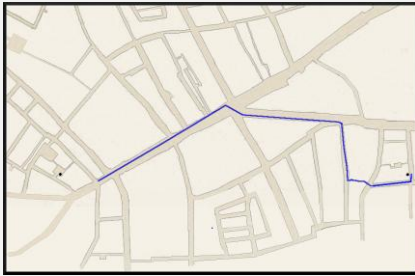


Figure 30

The next possible route takes us via Cherry Tree Passage which ran from Back Church Lane to Gower's Walk. Again, this route has the advantage of taking the killer away from Dutfield's Yard almost immediately. While *Figure 30* heads towards Commercial Road and then Whitechapel High Street, the killer could easily head in the other direction via Gower's Walk and use the routes shown in *Figures 23, 24 and 25*.

Between the second and third doorways from the left in *Figure 31* is the approximate position of the entrance to Cherry Tree Passage in Back Church Lane. The footpath to the left of the main gate in *Figure 32* shows where Cherry Tree Passage exited onto Gower's Walk²⁰.



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33

In our final route, *Figure 33* shows us the killer crossing Berner Street and exiting via Hampshire Court into Batty Street.

Conclusions

Drawing any conclusions from this is largely impossible. We cannot conclusively prove Catherine's murderer was making his way from Berner Street as we are all aware there is disagreement amongst Ripperologists on whether Elizabeth Stride was a Ripper victim or not. And if Stride was not a Ripper victim we have even more options to consider, particularly from the north of Mitre Square.

Nevertheless, we do have some parameters which we can work from. We have a solid starting point of Catherine leaving Bishopsgate Police Station at around 1am and turning left, and we have her body being found by PC Watkins at his stated time of 1.44am.

What happened in between those times, or, at least, for part of that time, is our final aspect we're going to look at. If Catherine did go home to her lodgings at Flower and Dean Street, *Table 1* provides approximate timings for the route she may have taken. In doing so, it may assist in any assessment we choose to undertake regarding Catherine's movements during that time. We don't however, have any reliable means of assessing



²⁰ Figure 31 and 32 images are from the author's own collection

how fast Catherine was able to walk, and given she was probably still not absolutely sober, I have allowed for not only 3mph, but also 2.5mph and 2 mph.

Route	Approximate Distance in Yards	Time At 3mph	Time At 2.5mph	Time At 2mph
Fig 9	733	8'20"	9'59"	12'25"
Fig 10	807	9'10"	11'03"	13'41"
Fig 13 to Little Duke Street	533	6'03"	7'18"	9'02"
Fig 13 to Church Passage	609	6'55"	8'21"	10'19"
Fig 13 to Houndsditch / Aldgate	743	8'26"	10'11"	12'36"
Fig 14 to Little Duke Street	550	6'15"	7'32"	9'19"
Fig 14 to Church Passage	627	7'08"	8'35"	10'38"
Fig 14 to the junction of Houndsditch / Aldgate	781	8'53"	10'42"	13'14"

Table 1

Our second table (*Table 2*) takes into account Trevor Marriott's theory that after leaving Bishopsgate Police Station Catherine went to Goulston Street. It then provides the various options once the apron had been dropped there including continuing on to Flower and Dean Street and returning to Mitre Square via either Stoney or Gravel Lanes.

Route	Approximate Distance in Yards	Time At 3mph	Time At 2.5mph	Time At 2mph
Fig 15	1053	11'58"	14'25"	17'51"
Fig 15 from Bishopsgate Police Station to Gravel Lane	653	7'25"	8'57"	11'04"
Fig 16 via Stoney Lane				
Direct the junction of Houndsditch / Aldgate exclude Duke Street	497	5'39"	6'48"	11'04"
To Little Duke Street	373	4'14"	5'06"	6'19"
To Church Passage	450	5'07"	6'09"	7'38"
To the junction of Houndsditch / Aldgate	583	6'38"	7'59"	9'53"
Fig 16 Via Gravel Lane				
Direct to the junction of Houndsditch / Aldgate exclude Duke Street	487	5'32"	6'40"	8'15"
To Little Duke Street	428	4'52"	5'52"	7'15"
To Church Passage	505	5'44"	6'55"	8'34"
To the junction of Houndsditch / Aldgate	638	7'15"	8'44"	10'49"

Table 2

In our final table (*Table 3*) we see the timings relating to the various available routes from Dutfield's Yard to Mitre Square, should he have come from there. Assuming he was walking at an average to a brisker 3 – 3.5 mph, it seems almost certain he would have traversed the intersection of Houndsditch and Whitechapel High Street whichever route he took.

Route	Approximate Distance in Yards	Time At 3mph	Time At 3.5mph
Fig 19	966	10'58"	9'25"
Fig 20	1056	12'00"	10'18"
Fig 23	1262	14'20"	12'19"
Fig 24	1223	13'54"	11'56"
Fig 25	1476	16'46"	14'24"
Fig 26	964	10'57"	9'24"
Fig 28	983	11'10"	9'35"
Fig 30	1001	11'23"	9'46"
Fig 33	1057	12'00"	10'19"

Table 3

All the timings of course can never factor in the unknown, he may, for instance have paused for whatever reason, or doubled back on himself and changed his mind on where he was heading. We don't know if he slowed down to avoid drawing attention on certain parts of the route, or if his visibility was impaired by the street lighting. We can never know how long he spoke to Catherine for before securing her services, nor can we rule out that he wasn't distracted by anyone approaching him. These all affect the figures provided in the above tables, but even if we use them as a rough guide, I think the exercise has been a useful one.

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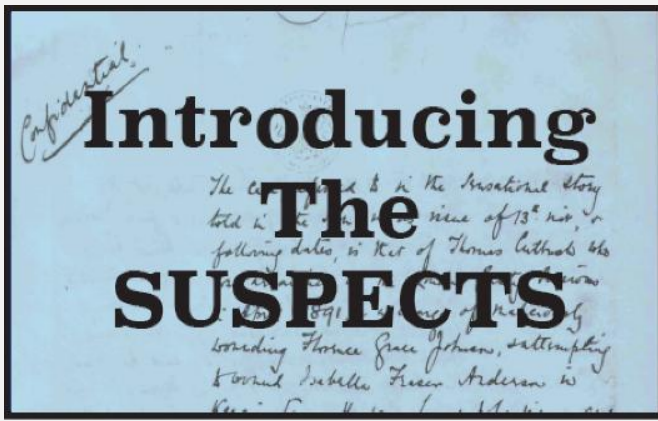
UNJAM THE ANAGRAM

Big teashops

Clue: Police Station associated with Catherine Eddowes

Answer at the end of this edition

H H Holmes



There are cyclical patterns in Ripperology when it comes to suspects, and in recent times these cycles have generally revolved around a heavily promoted documentary or documentary series. The suspect in question becomes the man (or woman) of the moment, and the theorists ride a crest of a wave in popularity before, inevitably, the yeah-but-no-but brigade spoil the party with their inconvenient and decidedly *irritating* y'know...facts.

Such was the case for the candidature of Dr Henry Howard Holmes, or, to use his real name, Herman Webster Mudgett. In 2017 Jeff Mudgett, Holmes's great great grandson presented an eight-part investigation into his belief that Jack the Ripper and Grampa Holmes were one and the same. *American Ripper*, as it was named, really put the theory on the map, although this wasn't the first time Holmes had been mooted as a Ripper suspect, the idea had caught hold from 2010 onwards when Mark Potts first put forward the idea based on handwriting similarities between Holmes and some of the Ripper letters. Jeff Mudgett himself had also written a book on the subject in 2011.

That Holmes was a serial killer is not in doubt, but his association with the Whitechapel murders is more tenuous. Born on the 16th May 1861 in Gilmanton, New Hampshire, USA, he was eventually hanged at Moyamensing Prison in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on the 7th May 1896 for the murder of his former criminal partner, Benjamin Freelon Pitezel.



H H Holmes – public domain

Much has been written about Holmes and the murders he committed, but the level of embellishment we see in the accounts of his 'Murder Castle' belies a man who ostensibly killed for financial reasons and convenience. None of the murders attributed to him, either during his confession or as postulated by contemporary and post-contemporary researchers, display any noticeable similarities with any of the Whitechapel deaths. Holmes sought to hide his victims or destroy their remains, there were no elements of display following their deaths, and all his victims / proposed victims were previously known to him, either as employees, partners, guests or as part of his wider step-family. Proponents of the H H Holmes's theory therefore are on a distinct backfoot before we even begin to consider the plausibility of him charging across the Atlantic in a homicidal rage.

Adam Selzer, the well-regarded Holmes investigator, wrote *The True History of the White City Devil* in the same year the Jeff Mudgett History Channel series first came out. Selzer's research concluded that as Holmes's daughter Lucy was born on the 4th July 1889 her conception date would have been around the end of September 1888 (forty-weeks before the 4th July 1889 was the 29th September 1888). At its most basic level, this means Holmes must have been in the same place as Myrta Belknap, Lucy's mother, in order for the impregnation to take place. We have no reason to doubt Holmes was Lucy's father, although I haven't been able to find any formal DNA confirmation online. Regardless of a proven genetic link, Holmes himself never claimed he *wasn't* Lucy's father, and looking at a photograph of her, you can clearly see the family resemblance.

If we are to accept that Holmes and Myrta were at the same location at some point between mid-September 1888 to mid-October 1888 (the logical window when conception took place) we must establish Holmes's whereabouts in comparison to the dates of the Whitechapel murders. And that's where things get complicated. A transatlantic trip would have taken between six to eight days then depending on the time of year and which ship you travelled on. We have



Lucy Theodate Holmes – public domain

no record of a 'Henry Howard Holmes' in any ship passenger logs for that time but that, of course, assumes he was using that name, he may well have been using a different moniker.



The 'Murder Castle' - public domain

According to Englewood (Chicago, Illinois) electoral register, Holmes registered to vote on the 9th October 1888. Whilst the record displays no signature of the voter, there would be nothing to gain from either Holmes or the clerk incorrectly completing the entry. Levi Mudgett, Holmes's father, is also on record as stating his son visited his family in New Hampshire at some point in October 1888. Again, he had no reason to lie.

Then we must consider the various lawsuits Holmes was juggling during this period. Dependent on how you wish to interpret the evidence, this would make Holmes *more* likely to be held up in Chicago during late 1888, or, knowing Holmes's penchant for doing a bunk in the face of an awkward situation, he may have been laying low elsewhere.

All this makes the theory, at best, ambiguous. It also asks the reader to accept Holmes was to-ing and fro-ing across the Atlantic losing six to eight days at a time during the journey itself to then head for Whitechapel, a place he had no knowledge of, and succeed in stealthing his way around undetected within a cat's whisker of the murders taking place. It's a big ask, but can we conclusively rule it out? No.

What we *can* rule out however is the supposedly damning existence of Holmes's diaries, which Jeff Mudgett detailed extensively in his book, *Bloodstains*. It was via these 'diaries' that we see Holmes's handwriting which can be favourably compared to the 'Dear Boss' letter, both stylistically and in its syntax. Holmes, it claims, had a companion in Whitechapel assisting him with the murders and not only was he Jack the Ripper, but he also escaped his execution in 1896 and skipped off into the sunset, never to be heard from again.



H H Holmes's skull.
why.org/articles

Unfortunately for Jeff Mudgett, his enthusiasm in adhering to these claims resulted in Holmes's body being exhumed from under a self-requested block of concrete it had been buried under. Holmes's corpse was found remarkably well preserved, even to the point of his distinctive moustache remaining in situ. It was conclusively identified as him and any kudos previously attributed to the 'diaries' rapidly waned when it became clear they were, in fact, forgeries.

For Mudgett it was a disastrous outcome and as quickly as Holmes rose as a popular suspect, he fell again, largely into obscurity. Today it's regarded as a fringe theory and one that few take seriously, which is probably for the best.

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FIVE QUESTIONS WITH A RIPPEROLOGIST

For this edition we've invited our very own Steven Blomer to answer our five standardised questions. As regular readers will know, the answers can only contain a maximum of two words, so here's Steven's responses for you to cogitate over:

1. How many people did 'Jack the Ripper' kill? **Six**
2. Who is your preferred suspect? **Anderson's suspect**
3. Who has influenced you the most in this subject? **Paul Begg**
4. Will the case ever be solved? **Probably not**
5. How would you describe the current state of Ripperology? **Suspect led**

The Unfortunate Life of an Unfortunate

Jonathan Tye

The written history of our past is shaped and determined by our world view, politics, morality and understanding of the present. As a result, historical interpretation and emphasis continually evolves and changes, we who write today do so with a superior air of having better knowledge of those who wrote before us, the history writers of the next generation will do the same and what remains is a debated, much ploughed through set of sources and facts. What may have been considered important by one generation of writers may not be viewed so by the next. As such, the history of the Whitechapel murders is no different from any other historical subject.

In recent years it is our view of the victims that has fallen under the spotlight of historical reinterpretation with a particular focus on whether they were, to use a modern term, 'sex workers', or to use a more base term 'prostitutes'. A new feminist historical perspective of the victims of the murders has in many ways sought to disconnect them from this role in the belief that such a label somehow relegates their value as individuals and women. It is perhaps best expressed in the recent book *The Five* by author Hallie Rubenhold. Whilst writing a history of the period from the viewpoint of the women who lived it is most welcome, it is the author's belief that to disconnect them from the reality of their situation is mistaken, but not entirely so.

Firstly, it must be stated, that occasional readers of the subject who have read the book are very quick to applaud it for focusing on the lives of the women killed rather than that of the killer. It is rather an absurd notion considering that to date we don't not know anything about the life of the killer other than that proposed by theorists. Furthermore, what is so consistent about many suspect books is the sheer amount of knowledge, accumulated over the years by many passionate researchers on the lives of the women themselves. Secondly, to almost downgrade or relegate the women to homeless vagrants merely seeking shelter and a place to sleep denies them the truth of their story and, in many ways, their sheer doggedness and determination to survive. It renders them with a sense of helplessness and weakness that was not entirely true and, it must be pointed out here, 'prostitution' is not an issue of women, but one of men.

However, as stated, the interpretation expressed in the book *The Five* is not entirely without merit. I have long listened and watched with unease documentaries on the Ripper and indeed, film portrayals such as *From Hell* (2001) which portray the victims as 'prostitutes' in an entirely modern sense, the terms 'clients' and 'sex workers' and 'conducting/ looking for business' are used liberally. Take a look at the Wikipedia entries for the victims today and you will see that all are described as prostitutes, even if the term 'casual' is inserted before the word in some cases. Yet, as contradictory as it may seem, it is the belief of the author that on the night of their murders (perhaps with one debatable exception), the victims were indeed selling themselves sexually. The word 'prostitute' however, is entirely the wrong word to define them by, as it is too narrow a definition that denies them their individuality and the reality of their daily lives and back story. There is a far better, all embracing term for these women, and it was one that was used at the time in describing all the victims, they were named 'unfortunates'.

This article will attempt to tell the story of a Victorian unfortunate and the lives and tales behind the often press quoted women who stated, "*I am an unfortunate*" (In this case the words of Alice Graves who identified Rose Mylett, as reported in the *Evening Mail* 24th December 1888). It is a story of trafficking and abduction, of, to use a modern term, 'grooming', and of the normalisation of promiscuity in the overcrowded slums of

the East End. It is the story also of robbery, theft, deception and violence. A tale of victims and perpetrators. In the blackest streets of Booth's description, it is about the world of gangs and exploitation, and the area of the docks and the coffee houses and brothels within its environ. It is a world in which the unfortunate was not always the victim despite their original descent into the abyss, in many ways it is about the exploitation of a source of income far greater than an average East End woman's ability to achieve, the disembarked sailors. Ultimately it is a story of despair, of desertion, alcohol, misery, disease and suicide.

In concluding this article, we shall weigh up the Whitechapel victims from 1888 and beyond, not just the canonical five, in order to see how appropriate that term 'unfortunate' given to them by the contemporary press was, and as to whether it should be applied today. An understanding of unfortunates of the area in general also perhaps has implications for the profiling of the killer which we shall discuss. In writing this article I have narrowed sources, unless stated, to the local press. Primarily, the *East London Observer*, the *Tower Hamlets and East End Local Advertiser*, the *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, but I have also drawn upon the national press and the short lived but very insightful *Toby*. Let us then begin our discussion by looking at the descent into the abyss, how to become an 'unfortunate'.

There are obviously many reasons why a late Victorian woman's life could tumble, falter, and fall into such a state that she described herself, and was regarded by those who knew her, as an 'unfortunate'. Every individual had a story, but there are some broad trends that we can perhaps identify, and certainly some which were shared by most, if not all, of the Whitechapel murder victims, of which alcohol abuse was one of them.

Firstly, it was in the very nature of the area itself, more specifically the poverty stricken, overcrowded and blackest streets to the south of the Commercial Road leading down to the Ratcliffe Highway and the docks in St George in the East, stretching easterly to Limehouse and Bow. Streets of the area, roads such as Nelson Street, Devonshire Street, St John's Place (known as 'Jack's Hole'), Wellclose Square, Pennington Street and Artichoke Hill, were more than liberally peppered with brothels, some almost their entire length. It was here that the selling of sex, or at least the lucrative targeting of shore leaved sailors, was normalised and commonplace. In short, the area created the conditions whereby leading the life of an unfortunate, for those impoverished local girls and women at least, was normal.

On the eve of the Whitechapel murders many of these brothels were being targeted, cleared and closed by the reforming efforts of Frederick Charrington. Coupled with this were actions as a result of the enforcement of the amended Industrial Schools Act (1874), often represented in the press by an officer named William Hiscocks and the benevolent actions of rescue officers from a Strand based reformatory organisation, namely two men named Stevens and Girling. As a consequence, as a result of legal actions on behalf of the children in the area we gain an insight into the women known as 'unfortunates' and can see clearly how young East End girls could easily drift into such a life.

In July 1881, Sarah Mullenger, aged 12 was charged under the Industrials Schools Act after she was found to be sleeping in a brothel where her mother worked at 50 Betts Street (Tiger Bay). In 1883, Ellen O'Donnell, aged 11, was charged under the same act after it was established that she was running errands between three brothels in Limehouse. In July 1883, nine-year-old Charlotte Richley was found in bed with two boys, one aged 14 in a 'house for girls', at 7 Palmers Place, Shadwell. The young girl had no father, and her mother worked in the brothel within.

Worse still is the case of Clara Pogandorn, aged 8, who was rescued by Richard Stevens and Constable 212 H from 3 Breezer's Hill. It was suspected that she had been outraged on at least two occasions, her father was absent in hospital and her mother possibly working in the brothel as a result. Indeed, many of the children rescued had mothers who were drawn into the world of the brothel because they had been separated or deserted. It was such a case for the mother of Annie and Elizabeth Spink (aged 8 and 9) in March 1885 who was living at 69 Ernest Street, Stepney. On this occasion the magistrate, Lushington, refused to separate her from the children.

This was not to be the case for Annie Walker, aged 13, who begged to be able to stay with her mother after being removed from what was described as a 'Den of Iniquity' at a brothel in Bromley by Bow. In October

1884, William Girling, Rescue officer of the Refuge and Reformatory Union found Elizabeth Louise Godley, aged 9, and her younger brother sleeping in a bundle of rags in a house of ill repute where their mother, who was separated, worked. The children were sent to a new life in Ashurst, Kent.

Clearly, therefore, in an age before the welfare state and support for separated families, many women were drawn into the life of an unfortunate after being deserted or separated, or losing their partner. This certainly ticks a box with some of the Ripper victims. Some children were further vulnerable if they had no mother and father at all. In July 1885, Adelaide Nodding, aged just 5, was found in bed with two ‘prostitutes’ at 5 Station Place, Shadwell. The brothel keeper was her aunt as both her parents were in prison. Elizabeth Lappage aged 7 came from her family where both her mother and uncle were brothel keepers of well-known houses in Nelson Street, Jack’s Hole and Devonshire Street.

Ultimately, therefore, the fate of many of these young girls, if they were not lucky enough to be rescued, was to drift into a life they were all too familiar with. In March 1885, Sarah McLaughlin, 12, was said to be supporting her only guardian, her grandmother, by getting money on the Ratcliffe Highway. When 36, Lady Lakes Grove was subject of a Charrington closure, two unfortunates were mentioned in the press, Mary Ann Gibbs aged 36 and Elizabeth Jay, just 15, who had “*been at the game a long time*”. In October 1885, Maurice Levy of 7, Eaton Place, Mile End, was convicted of taking 15-year-old Miriam Hart to a brothel in Maidment Street. She was said to have regularly stayed out all night with men whilst frequenting the Stepney Green Area. Even in cases where a vulnerable young girl had been rescued, many soon returned to the world of the brothel and the blackest Streets.

Charlotte Wickens, a 15-year-old orphan absconded from a home for fallen women at 27, Blakesley Street, Shadwell, after stealing drawers and 6d only to be found back in a notorious brothel at 4, Devonshire Street by a local H division police inspector Marriot (he lived in Nelson Street). Many unfortunates who walked the streets of St George in the East, walked also the long broad Whitechapel Road and could be found outside the London Hospital, or at the intersection of Sidney Street and Cambridge Heath Road.

Not only sailors arrived in London with money to spend. Many ‘lived’ if it can be described as such, or stayed at the lodging houses in a few notorious streets east of Commercial Street. These were Thrawl Street, Flower and Dean Street, and George Street. Thus, in many parts of the districts of St George in the East, Whitechapel and Spitalfields, women selling sex to men was normalised, but it was not only in the world of the brothels and the blackest streets that this was the case, another aspect which was touched upon in a speech by Reverend R C Billing in November 1883 concerned the area of Spitalfields:

“The unfortunates of our streets are not always the children of dissolute and drunken parents” [but a result of the] *“overcrowded habitations where decency cannot be observed, and where virtue is early destroyed.”*¹

The many working-class families who were able to rent their own rooms or houses did so still in extremely crowded conditions, large and growing Victorian families in one or two affordable rooms must have meant that, inevitably, the young were exposed at a very early age to sexual relations and acts between parents and in darker circumstances were subject to abuse by parents or siblings. With such exposure from an early age both in and out of the home it is possible that many local working-class girls drifted into the life of an unfortunate, as an attractive escape from the monotony of low paid factory work and suffocation at home. It is certainly in the case of a ‘good looking girl’ named Eliza Richardson, who we shall meet again later in this article. Eliza was born in the late 1850’s, the youngest child of elderly couple William, a tailor and Frances. In 1881 they were living in Richard Street, Commercial Road, right in the heart of the district previously discussed. Frances Jones, the victim of Edward Buckley and described as an unfortunate in May 1888 (the *Evening News* 4th May) did not follow her parents into a shop or dressmaking career but lodged in one of the many coffee Shops in Whitechapel that were all but brothels in name. Perhaps too, this was the case for Frances Coles who shielded her father from her real way of life.

So, locality certainly created many conditions that led to young girls and women leading the life of an unfortunate, as did desertion and separation from a husband, or sudden financial hardship. For a very few it

¹ *East London Observer*, 3rd November 1883

was a life choice. Another descent into the life of an unfortunate was one related more to deception, cruelty and exploitation, as can be found again in the local press as a result of the efforts of Frederick Carrington, in the wake of the sudden death of a notorious brothel keeper at 78, Nelson Street, a certain Mrs Blackley:

“3 girls attached to the houses, all of whom relations of the deceased, who were induced to come over from Ireland to ply their shameful vocations in the street.”²

In short, trafficking, and in the opinion of the author it is certainly the story of at least one, possibly two, of the Whitechapel murder victims.

On the 10th December 1888, the *East London Observer* reported on the “*Wholesale trafficking of British girls*” in an article discussing the large number of Belgium girls, many of whom were unable to speak English who had been trafficked over to bogus situations in London and then frightened and intimidated into a life in the East End brothels. It reports on the value of British girls going the other way who were treated no better than packages valued at £8 or £10, where the young and ignorant were targeted and names and ages changed via Somerset house. It goes on to state:

“from the inquiries we have made there can be little doubt but what many disappearances of girls and young women in east London are to be traced to the doors of these agents, who have been carrying out their terrible business for some time past.”

Perhaps girls like Mary McDonnell, aged 15, who was reported missing from her home in Goulston Street by her stepfather in March 1888. On the 9th October 1886, the *East London Observer* reported on a story of the arrest of Hannah Cebrow, 29, for a theft that had occurred some three years previously. She was arrested after being seen on the Commercial Road, by Clara Johnson in whose house she had previously lodged at 9, Artichoke Hill. She had absconded with two dresses and items to the value of £15 in August 1883. Before the magistrate Hannah stated, “*I took the things, I went to France with a man, and he took the things away from me*”. I went to France with a man, words, of which have been attributed to Mary Kelly, and perhaps for many other East End unfortunates. Artichoke Hill was a side turning off Pennington Street, as was Breezer’s Hill of Mary Kelly fame.

It was to a house of ill repute at 88, Pennington Street that Laura Pearce (or Pears) and Bertha Christopherson were accused of trafficking by false pretences 15-year-old Dorothea Dalhoff, a German girl from the port of Antwerp in April 1888. On the 23rd December 1882, the *East End Observer* reported on the arrest of Leonard Jesson, of no occupation and aged 28. Jesson had enticed Louisa Rivers Larson to accompany him over from Le Havre to live with him as his wife in Ship Alley, St George in the East. Within two weeks he had sent her back to France, to Paris to find some suitable girls in order to set up an ‘establishment’, providing instruction as to what type of girls he was seeking. Whilst she was abroad, she met another woman who had followed her out to France who informed her that in her absence, Jesson had taken her possessions including a watch and chain, two gold shirt studs and two gold rings. Jesson was ultimately discharged by the magistrate.

So many young women from home and abroad were deceived and duped into a life that led them to the world of the unfortunate. Another case in example is that of Jessie Franz who, in December 1882, told her story via an interpreter. She had been charged with wounding Elizabeth Hill of 7, Ship Alley. They had been fighting in the street and Hill was struck twice in the face, possibly with a key and as result attended the London Hospital.

In her defence Jessie Franz said she had been defending herself after being attacked by a gang of girls and then told her story, she had been “*decoyed from her home in Russia by a young man who promised her marriage, seduced her and left her in the streets*”.

Ruin, another route into the life of an unfortunate but trafficking was not just between the East End and Ireland or the continent, it happened at home too whereby fresh-faced agricultural girls from English villages were brought to the East End in hope of a better life in domestic service. The *Reynolds’s Newspaper* of 18th

² *East London Observer*, 22nd October 1887

March 1888 reported a story that illustrates the cruel methodology of the traffickers and brothel keepers. The story concerns the investigation by Inspector Edmund Reid of a 26-year-old married woman from Worcester named Eliza Ann Smith and an infamous brothel keeper named Eliza Millings who ran an establishment in Ernest Street, Stepney. Eliza had enticed from Worcester young Kate Spencer, aged 18, in order to become a prostitute for Millings. Upon arrival in Ernest Street Kate's possessions were taken from her, she was plied with brandy and sent to the local music hall in order that she would no doubt be picked up by some man. Luckily for Kate she was rescued from the situation, as she is reported as saying "*I will not go back to that house where you took me today – I am 120 miles from home*"³. The removal or custody of possessions like dresses, of travel documents and tickets, monies and subtle blackmail were all methods employed by women like Smith and Millings, who had already served 12 months for similar crimes.

In all these trafficking stories there are some echoes or whispers of the tale of Mary Kelly's life as told to Joseph Barnett. Sadly too, unfortunates were not always to play the role of victim as shown in the case of 22-year-old Elizabeth Turner in September 1882. Turner took a ten-year-old blind girl of 9, St John's Place (Jack's Hole) after she had been standing listening to a street organ player, her gold earrings stolen, and she was later found sleeping in a common lodging house with Turner. It is dreadful to think what life Turner may have had in store for her had she not been apprehended and, it is a stark reveal of the darkest side of Victorian east London.

The most common shared aspect that runs through the lives of unfortunates is the perceived abuse of alcohol or drunken behaviour. The question here perhaps should be how many of the unfortunates, as reported in the press and living in poverty in the East End, fell from grace as a result of alcoholism, or one of the results of such a life creating a dependency on drink? Alcohol was a relatively cheap escape from the misery and horrors of life in the abyss.

Regarding the victims of the Whitechapel murders, and their appetite for alcohol, we do not get to hear their own story, their version of events of the life they led before. Our picture is largely constructed by the men who they left or were abandoned by, or outlived them, whether that be William Nichols, Thomas Conway, John Kelly, Joseph Barnett or Michael Kidney. It is perhaps, rather a chicken and egg story of what occurred first, but there are hints particularly in the life of Annie Chapman. Regardless, alcohol is a common theme in the life of all the unfortunates of the East End and certainly features in the last known hours of most, if not all, of the victims of the Whitechapel murders.

The press is full of examples, many of which add to the picture of the lives the Whitechapel murder victims were living immediately prior to their deaths. For instance, as reported in the *East London Observer* on the 26th August, Catherine Flannigan was charged with being drunk and disorderly and using foul language. At around 1:00 am she was seen by a H division constable outside the entrance to the London hospital behaving in the manner described and quarrelling with other unfortunates. When the constable tried to move her on, she spat at him. The London Hospital were where unfortunates were known to congregate and cause a nuisance, and the direction of travel of Polly Nichols on that fateful night in August 1888.

It was not only the London Hospital that had such a problem, the Poplar hospital, in the East India Dock Road had its fair share of issues. In March and April 1881 both Matilda Dace and 28-year-old Catherine Sawyer were charged with being drunk and disorderly and refusing to move on. As did Ann Morris when she was charged by Constable George Ball 345 H in the Commercial Road on the 18th August 1883 and Lilian King, aged 20, who took a bite at the palm of the hand of Constable Joseph Pierce, 385 H, in Russell Street, Stepney in April 1881. On the 24th January 1884 the *London Evening Standard* reported on the drunken behaviour of Elizabeth Smith who had been arrested in Sidney Street by Constable 397 K. He had been on his beat on the Commercial Road when his attention was drawn, to her arguing with a "*gentleman*". When he tried to get her to go home, she threatened the officer, used bad language before laying on the floor screaming. Refusing to move on, drunken behaviour, threatening and bad language was all in a day's work but it could get worse for the constables of H and K division.

³ *East London Observer* 16th December 1882

In July 1881 a drunk Elizabeth Finn aged 22 assaulted William Moon 281 H hitting him 3 times in the face and then kicking him between the legs before turning on the assisting officer, 332 H. For her troubles Finn who, according to a local inspector Marriot, had a history of drunken violence was sentenced to six months hard labour. The *East London News and Shipping Chronicle* of July 1881 covered the story of Annie Williamson who had assaulted Constable 223 H in The Bear public house in Leman Street. She had spat, punched and abused him and was given 21 days by the magistrate, Lushington, for her behaviour. In reply she is reported as saying “*thank you, I can do that lot in my head*”, before addressing the arresting officer, “*wait till I come out, you shall have more.*” Her sentence was of course increased as a result.

Where drunken behaviour is not brought to our attention by the press in regards of an arrest, there are other examples which illustrate how alcohol was a blight on such women’s lives. Ellen Maria Allen of 8, White’s Row, a 36-year-old widow and unfortunate was said to be of intemperate habits and at her inquest of her mysterious death at the Weavers Arms, Bakers Row on 11th September 1886, it was concluded that her death from violence had been accelerated by her alcoholism. The examples of the drunken and violent behaviour mentioned must therefore pose a question regarding the perpetrator of the Whitechapel Murders. The potential volatility of the victims must have added to the risk the killer was taking. Had he been attacked or turned on by a potential victim before? Or was such behaviour a trigger, part of the killer’s own profiling?

It is possibly all the more interesting when one looks at a recent press find by Jurriaan Maesson from the *Morning Advertiser* on the 24th June 1886 which reports on an Elizabeth Stride charged with being disorderly and assaulting a Constable 182K in East India Dock Road, Poplar. She was said to be very drunk, using bad language and behaving in an indecent manner. Her reported behaviour included spitting and kicking at the officer who required assistance at the police station. This may or may not have been Ripper victim Elizabeth Stride, the news article reports her as being 27 years old, however, when one adds the Jose Oranto discovery of the official record which states she was 50, and the location in which it occurred, we could say that the odds of this being Stride the victim does increase considerably. Did the Whitechapel murderer have difficulty subduing Stride in Berner Street in 1888? Drunken violence amongst unfortunates did not just extend to the police, when Catherine Power and Charlotte Walsh refused to quit the Royal Standard public house in Wells Street in August 1881, they scratched and tore at the face of the landlord William Bishop. Elizabeth Creek, according to the *East London Observer* of 25th July 1888, was charged with stabbing a seaman named Samuel Rocardo who was left hospitalised with a wound to his left breast.

On 17th July 1886, the *East London Observer* reported the story of 24-year-old Annie Sayers who, along with a man, had engaged a room at a coffee House at 35 White Horse Street. Her quarrelling with the man had caused her to be ejected by the coffee house keeper, John Tiddler but she was to return, forcing her entry at 6:00 am on the following morning and when Tiddler tried for a second time to make her leave, took up a table knife and threatened him with it. Unfortunates also turned on each other, on the 1st February 1888, the *London Evening Standard* reported on Margaret Kennedy who had violently assaulted Mary Scully of Star Street, Commercial Road. The assault had occurred outside the Victory Arms public house at the corner of Watney Street where, after ordering a pint of rum, Scully was struck on the head with a pewter pot. Revenge is the apparent motive in July 1887 for Ann Martin, Elizabeth and Mary Ann Ritchies’ assault on a notorious brothel keeper named Martha Lappidge who was beaten, bitten, stripped and left naked in Devonshire Street. It was a brothel keeper named Ellen Keith, who, in October 1881, assaulted Margaret Creamer at 1 Union Place, Limehouse with a glass when she ordered Creamer to go out and earn some money. In an incident reported in the *East End News* on Friday 5th October 1888 during the height of the Ripper terror, Mary McCarthy was charged at Worship Street after stabbing with a skewer into the neck of the deputy of Wilmot’s Lodging House. She had been refused entry on the night of Tuesday the 2nd October, just two days after the double event, her desperation to secure a bed perhaps unsurprising.

The abuse of alcohol, and menacing behaviour coupled with the promise of sexual services was, for many unfortunates, not just a means of existence, their femininity combined with alcohol were weaponised for a far more lucrative aim – robbery. It is here perhaps, that we find examples of a different kind of unfortunate, women who were not always helpless victims but in control and prepared to coordinate with others to take advantage of the foolishness of men. Robbery, in its various forms whether pick pocketing, deception or a

direct act could certainly be profitable, although had a high degree of risk. On 21st October 1882, the *East London Observer* carried a story illustrating one such risk. Under the headline “*Trade Jealousy*”, it reported on 19-year-old Ellen Connolly who had stolen a silver watch and chain plus 15 shillings off of the boss of a steamship, the *Potama*, only to be turned in or ‘grassed’ upon by some fellow unfortunates.

The most common victim, particularly in the area closest to the docks in St George in the East were the recently disembarked sailors. In January 1881, a sailor named George Jarvis was robbed of a sovereign by Isabel Sargent from the notorious Betts Street, (eventually to become home to Mary Steers reforming houses for unfortunates) A black sailor named George Williams, of 5 Ann Street, had his purse snatched and was assaulted in a public house off the Ratcliffe Highway on 23rd July 1881, by a 30-year-old Elizabeth Mack. In another story to be found in the *East London Observer* on 22nd September 1882, under the heading, “*A Fool And His Money*”, young Jemima Kelley must have felt she had hit the jackpot with sailor John Evans after she robbed him of £10 in gold in a brothel in Albert Square, Shadwell.

On 6th December 1884, 45-year-old Mary Ann Robinson stole £12 from a seaman named Frank Head who she had taken home. The method was often quite simple, sailors, such as Charles Laves who had arrived ashore at the end of April 1885 after a long voyage, were picked up by an unfortunate and then taken to various public houses in the district. When suitably relaxed and drunk, the unfortunate, in this case Nellie Morris, would take them back to a house, in this instance to Cable Street, where they were robbed of their money whilst they slept off the excesses of the evening. Yet some sailors did attempt to resist the evident charms of the unfortunates who roamed the area, not that it deterred the inevitable. In August 1885, a sailor from 27, Jubilee Street, was struck three or four times around the eye with a key by 30-year-old Emma Evans in Cable Street, his gold chain and locket stolen, but she was unable to obtain his watch before disappearing down North East Passage. Victims were not only sailors, and in many cases, despite an arrest, prosecutions were not followed through because the victim either had returned to sea or there was an element of shame and embarrassment.

In January 1881, Emma Anderson was accused of stealing £10 from a city lighterman in a brothel in Thrawl Street but despite being arrested by Constable Nicholas 381 H, was not prosecuted. In October 1882, William Taylor a drapers assistant who lived just off the Commercial Road was accosted by Elizabeth Polter, who got him drunk in a public house before taking him to a house in Bridge Street. When he awoke his silver watch and gold locket had been stolen. In her defence Elizabeth Polter claimed the items were taken in lieu of money for her services and that they were brass, not gold or silver. Nevertheless, she was still sentenced to one month’s hard labour. Watches, chains, lockets, gold, coin and even medals were targeted by the unfortunates of the area. In February 1881, the *East London Observer* reported that Mary Ann Holland had been sentenced to three months for stealing a silver medal from Private Patrick Kelly. Later in March 1884, Catherine Connolly aged 28 snatched the silver Egyptian campaign medal from a private of the Scots Guards named Charles Telfer, who had refused to treat her for a drink in the Ratcliffe Highway.

Perhaps the ultimate expression of the robbery and thievery in the East End can be found in the gangs known as the ‘Trippers up’ and it was possibly the activities of just such a gang that may have been behind the last murder to occur in the area on the eve of 1888, that of the mysterious John Brown. The ‘Trippers up’ were not a gang as such, it was perhaps more a way of life and a loose methodology of criminal behaviour employed by men and women cooperating in the area. The *London Evening News* on Thursday 17th November 1887 reported on the inquest of the murder/death of John Brown in St George in the East. Inspector Reid was asked by the coroner to explain what a ‘Tripper up’ was, his reported reply was that they were someone, “*who will knock you down and rob you, and jump on you if you make a row*”.

A typical example of such a robbery can be found in in the *Echo* of the 26th October 1887. Three women, Bridget Hearne 37, Margaret Carter 27, and Margaret Smith 38, were all charged at Thames police court with



Toby 28th May 1887

stealing £8 from a sailor named Daniel Meddick. Two of them had accosted Meddick and Hearne asked, “*Have you heart enough to give us a drink*”. Meddick obligingly treated the women at a local public house before moving on to a house to have rum. There the two women were joined by Smith who refused to let Meddick leave whilst his pockets were rifled for a £5 note and three sovereigns that fell to the floor. Once Meddick was able to liberate himself from the clutches of the women, he escaped and eventually found Constable 429 H but of course the women had long flown the scene when they returned to the house.

On the 18th June 1887, two well-known trippers up, Margaret Welch and Ann Donavon were reported in the *Tower Hamlets Independent and East End Local Advertiser* after they stole money from a sailor named Lewis Anderson. They had approached Anderson in the Ratcliffe Highway after midnight when he had been seen talking to a friend, within a few minutes they had taken his money, only half of which was later found inside the mouths and shawls of the two women. The reader may find it difficult to understand why well fed, and well-paid sailors of all nations were in many cases so wary and in fear of such women but wary they were. On the 22nd January 1888 the *London Evening Standard* reported the arrest for disorderly conduct of a young woman named Mary Sullivan. She had been part of a gang of six trippers up who had been observed by Constable 115 H following a sailor who was forced to take shelter in a shop to elude them.

As reported in the *East London Observer* in February 1881, Mary Ann Arnold was able to steal a silver watch to the value of £2 from Andrew Maxwell of the sailors home in Wells Street after he had treated her to drinks. He was taken back to a house in Albert Street, Shadwell where he was robbed and then pushed into the street by a gang of women. Another sailor of the same home in Wells Street, Peter Murphy, had his pocketbook and £20 in shillings and cash stolen by Elizabeth Jones and Sarah Rowley in the Duke of Wellington public house in Cannon Street Road in the same month. On the 31st May 1884, 30-year-old Bridget White was described by the *East London Observer* as a “*Trippers up*” and “*a young lady of the unfortunate class*”, when she robbed 30 shillings from a seaman named William Stokes of the ship *Saxon*. Newly arrived sailors were even more vulnerable, in July 1882, four women including two named in the *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* as Jones and Larkin, managed to lift from John Ericksen £4 and £20 in five-pound notes from Frank Jones after they got them drunk. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the sailors failed to turn up to prosecute the women.

It was not only drink and menacing behaviour employed by the trippers up, as on the 2nd September 1881 the *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* reported the story of two stylishly dressed women named Catherine Charles and Ellen Madden who William Kinch, a ships carpenter, claimed to have drugged him at the Sir John Franklin public house in Poplar. Kinch also failed to turn up to prosecute. These gangs were not always exclusively women, many worked in conjunction with male bullies and thugs who also pimped, controlled and punished many of the female members. On the 13th March 1886, the *East London Observer* under the headline, “*Robbing A Farmer*” told the story of James Walker, a Texan farmer, who had been staying in the Commercial Road. He had been taken by 21-year-old Jessie Jewell to a brothel in Devonshire Street (very likely the same brothel where Edward Buckley had carried out a horrific attack on Frances Jones in October 1885). There he stripped and got into bed and when he did so the gas was suddenly put out and he was bundled and robbed by Jessie and 18-year-old Charles Johnson and others.

As 1887 drew to a close and the dark clouds of the horrific events to come in 1888 began to form and gather, a trial was heard at the central criminal court, a transcript of which can be found at; <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t18871212-142>. On trial for murder was Charles Edward Hammond a 22-year-old allegedly Swedish sailor residing at the Sailors home in Wells Street. He had been accused of the murder of a fellow resident, Glaswegian John Brown. The principal witness in the case was Honora Cotton of 8, Artichoke Hill, a dark street we have already mentioned. According to Honora she had been drinking with Brown and some Spanish sailors in the Neptune Public House and, upon leaving and whilst standing on the corner of Wells Street, Brown had attempted to assist another Spanish sailor who had been hurt in a street fight. As he helped the Spaniard who was bleeding from a head wound, Brown was fatally stabbed in his side near his thigh. Cotton identified Hammond as the attacker, but the trial was to end in a not guilty verdict because the evidence and identification were not clear. Yet there was much more to this apparent

street brawl that ended in murder, it can be found succinctly in the words of Inspector Edmund Reid at the earlier coroner's inquest and reported in the *London Evening Standard* on Thursday 17th November 1887:

"beyond doubt the deceased was a native of Glasgow. He was in the company of Laura (Honora) Cotton and was in the Ratcliffe Highway, when he fell into the company of some "Trippers ups" and was stabbed".

Apparently too, Honora who was in fear of her life and was threatened at Leman Street police station not to provide any information or statement by two men, Jeremiah McCarthy of 3, Pennington Street but who certainly had at times lived in Artichoke Hill, and John Sullivan. McCarthy, no stranger to the press and a local thug and bully was there that night claiming that he had been in Wellclose Square as an innocent witness. The *Eastern Post* of Saturday 12th November states that he was there with three or four young men and women, one of whom was named Mary Ann Cameron. Therein lies the possible solution and answer to what happened on that confusing November night, McCarthy was a violent bully who operated and ruled with fear a small group of tripper ups, including Margaret Sullivan who he had violently assaulted in April 1887. If he did not plunge the knife into the side of John Brown, he had instructed it, but fear of reprisal and violent retribution caused a conspiracy of silence, perhaps a lesson for our understanding of the Autumn of Terror itself.

Men like Jeremiah McCarthy, men like Edward Buckley, ultimately unfortunates were the victims. As much as they may have robbed, they were stolen from, as much as some of them were violent and volatile, many were subject to violence and assaults and set upon themselves and of course in 1888 and before, even murdered.

On the 27th January 1882, The *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* reported the rather comic case of two Chinese seaman, Hong Ching and Wang Hi who had been charged with stealing a pair of red leather shoes from Louisa Taylor of 4, St John's Hill, Shadwell. They had stayed with her for six days during which they had paid her £2 10 shillings in cash, a pair of gold earrings, a pair of boots and more. Perhaps they had considered she had been overpaid. However, retribution and treatment at the hands of sailors could be far more violent. In September 1883, as reported in the *East London Observer* a seaman named Hugh Armstrong was charged with feloniously wounding Clara Sweeney, "*an unfortunate girl*". Armstrong had caught hold of her in the White Bear public house in Leman Street and pulled back her head to expose her throat when someone cried, "*mind yourself Clara he's got a razor*". Sweeney was to be treated for her injuries in the London Hospital whilst Armstrong was reported as saying, "*you shall never do anyone anymore*". Unfortunates could even be vulnerable as they slept.



Toby 17th September 1887

In July 1882 Jane Levis engaged a room in a lodging house with respectably dressed 36-year-old George Cherubin. As she slept, Levis was stabbed in the face and her lip cut right through. Earlier on the 27th May 1882, and also reported in the *East London Observer*, Elizabeth Mutton was savagely kicked in the abdomen, her attacker receiving a six-month sentence. Worse was to happen to Caroline Sears of 1, Back Alley, Bow when she suffered a violent assault at the hands of another "*respectively dressed*" man, 23-year-old Robert Cannovan, despite treatment at the London Hospital she was to lose an eye. Approaching men could be risky and unpredictable. Jane Brady was beaten around the head with a stick by a youth named John Coombes after midnight in the Mile End Road as reported on the 29th July 1882, the reason he gave was that she had "*bothered him*". On 9th August 1884 Margaret Cromer of Rich Street, Poplar was accosted by a violent carman named Andrew Pementa who forced her down and beat her knocking out six of her teeth. Emma Elizabeth Smith, first victim in the Whitechapel Murders file was to have allegedly said that she had been once thrown out of a window.

Strange too, the incident reported by the *East London Observer* in May 1886, concerning Joseph Pimm, a 23-year-old, who had wounded Caroline Douglas by stabbing her in the knee, in Bedford Street Stepney. The danger of strangers, but also the danger of men more familiar, the bullies, to use a modern term – pimps.

Michael Ryan was one such individual. Reported in the *London Evening Standard* on the 4th October 1887, he had been living off the immoral earnings of Jane Morris of Flower and Dean Street, a married woman who he beat so badly it opened up a wound he had previously inflicted long before, all because she had not returned from Piccadilly with sufficient money. The lodging houses of Flower and Dean Street, home to many unfortunates, was the scene of much violence to women. As early as 1876, two mysterious deaths had occurred in lodging houses there.

In April 1876 an inquest was heard into the death of Mary Connolly aged around 36 who had been brutally kicked to death. Later on, on 14th May 1876, in a case investigated by the famous Frederick Abberline, a woman known as Curly Kate was found dead from a fractured skull in a lodging house. On the 16th November 1879 the *Lloyds* weekly reported on another case which featured a figure later to be associated with the Whitechapel Murders when Dr Phillips of 2, Spital Square was called to attend to Maria Burke in Flower and Dean Street. Her jaw had been broken, and she had been kicked, beaten and robbed by William Manger. On Sunday 14th March 1880 the *Reynolds's Newspaper* reported the case of Annie Fitzpatrick who had been passing along Brick Lane shortly before midnight when carman John Freeman rushed across the street and grabbed her by the neck and indecently assaulted her. When she struggled, she was struck to the ground and kicked in the stomach. We have already mentioned the death of Ellen Maria Allen in September 1886. She had been admitted into the Whitechapel infirmary from 8, White's Row on the 5th August complaining of pains in her side after being ill used by a man she did not know.

On 12th April 1888, not long after the death of Emma Elizabeth Smith, Patrick Sullivan of Fashion Street followed Esther Hewet back to her lodgings in Brick Lane, at around 1:00 am in the morning he punched her to the ground and held her by the throat. Only the intervention Constable 451 H who found him kneeling on her, saved her from a worse fate. At 11:45 Friday evening, 15th July 1881, Alice Watkins life was to be changed forever after she was shot through the face and jaw outside a coffee house in Brushfield Street, Bishopsgate. She was the victim of an attempted murder suicide by an out of work journeyman tailor named William Robertson who later died in the Metropolitan free hospital. Alice, whose real name was Harriet, had only known Robertson for just over 5 weeks and this incident represents many themes of the life of an unfortunate, not least one of fake identity or the use of an alias as well as the ever-present danger of violence and control from brutal men. Despite such cases of violence, the death of unfortunates from murder or as a direct result of an attack was not a common occurrence prior to the horrific events of 1888.

One case stands out before the now more familiar deaths of Emily Horsnail and Annie Millwood who are both cited as possible early Ripper crimes. It is an incident that should serve as a strong warning to all of us in our desire to seek answers and truth of who was behind the Whitechapel Murders in 1888 and beyond. On the 22nd March 1882 Deputy Coroner George Collier held an inquest into the death of an unfortunate known as 'Long Kate' at the Bromley Sick Asylum in Bow. Long Kate, whose real name was Charlotte Spencer, had been found on the ground by fellow unfortunate Eliza Burrell outside the Duke of Cornwall public house in Rich Street, Limehouse. She had several wounds to her head, an incised wound over her right eye and her body was bruised – she was to die a week after the attack. Although an attempt was made to place the blame for her assault on a woman named Minnie Hastings, shadowy figures remained in the background who had been witnessed on the night of the attack, in particular a carrotty whiskered man, who may have struck the blows but who was never named. The incident is a dark reveal of the world of the unfortunate, a false identity or local pseudonym was used by Charlotte Spencer, just as it was likely to have been used by Mary Kelly and certainly was by Rose Mylett. Charlotte was also from the world of the Limehouse brothels, a world subject to the violence of not only brothel keepers, but customers and bullies. The incident, to the utter frustration of Deputy Coroner George Collier, was marked by confusion, untruths and a conspiracy of silence. How much of the later events of 1888 were distorted in a similar fashion we possibly will never know. Finally, 'Long Kate' otherwise Charlotte Spencer was said, like so many of her fellow unfortunates, to be of intemperate habits.

Ultimately, the life of many unfortunates was marked by an inescapable cycle of alcoholism, violence, crime, poverty and tragedy. Every unfortunate had a story to tell whether it contained a strong grain of truth or otherwise. There were some opportunities for a way out of course. The Bridge of Hope Mission, established

initially at 26 Princes Square by Mary Steer sought, “*To rescue from a life of shame, any of the unfortunates who have the impulse towards a better mode of life*” (*East London Observer* 26th November 1887). Yet for many more, such was the hopelessness and despair, their only escape beyond the oblivion of alcohol was to end life itself. Ironically the most common means to do so, was the same source of the rich pickings of the Trippers Up and the trade in vice in the East End, the River Thames.

Despair, another aspect in the life of an unfortunate. On Friday 2nd January 1880, the *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* reported that Emily Roberts had been arrested after being drunk and attempting suicide. At the old Gravel Lane Bridge in Shadwell, she had been about to hurl herself over the railings into the Thames when she was stopped and arrested by Constable William Travers 487 K. He reported her as saying, “*You don’t know my deep troubles. I am going to sleep in the water tonight*”. In 1882 on the 17th January Ellen Foster was prevented from throwing herself into the river by Constable Rendell 373 H. She had been heard shouting in Broad Street, Ratcliffe Highway. Old Gravel Lane Bridge seemed to be the destination for many local women who wished to end it all. In February 1882 34-year-old Mary Gibbons was grabbed at the bridge by Constable Bickerstaff 152 H before she entered the water. Annie Gray made a similar attempt on the 26th August 1882. Indeed, in an article written in the *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* on the 9th June 1882 discussing dead bodies dragged from the Thames in the Metropolitan district, it noted 548 corpses of women of which 122 were suicides, “*one more unfortunate, weary of breath, rashly importunate, gone to her death*”. Not just the river, on the 4th July 1884 under the headline “*Very Nearly Gone*” the *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* reported on 26-year-old Kate Morris’ attempt to take her own life in the Mile End Road by fastening a leather strap around her neck until the intervention of Constable Mecham 392 H.

Even more determined was Charlotte McGinn who had tried to take her own life in Hungerford Street, St George in the East. McGinn was found in her police cell with a band tied tightly around her throat. At the beginning of this article, we were introduced to a good-looking young unfortunate named Eliza Richardson. On Saturday the 5th August 1882, the *East London Observer* reported that she had been found wandering up and down Dempsey Street, Stepney after having taken a quantity of phosphor paste in order to take her own life. She had attempted to take more when she was arrested by Constable Walsh 319 H. Yet Eliza’s brief appearance in the local press did not end there, nor did her dalliance with suicide. In July 1883, whilst behaving in a drunk and disorderly manner on the Commercial Road, she claimed she would cut her own throat, and during Christmas 1883, she was observed by Constable Walter Cole making her way down to the tow path of the canal in Oak Lane where, according to the *East London Observer*, she said, “*I am going to make away with myself*”. Eliza Richardson, an unfortunate with a tortured soul like so many of her fellow women. The route of Eliza’s trouble may have one contributory factor, a stillborn child born to her in the workhouse infirmary back in 1878.

This leads us on to our final look at the unfortunate lives of such women, that ultimately, they were also marked, if the river hadn’t claimed them first, by the tragedy of lost children, disease and early death. They were blighted by the ravages of alcohol, hunger, exposure, violence and ill treatment. The Whitechapel murderer savagely cut short the existence of several unfortunates in 1888 and 1889, but had he not done so it is sad and a cruel irony that their lives would have ended in anonymity, a barely traceable record and would most certainly not lived a long and healthy life. Annie Chapman’s health is testimony to that, as were the many other unfortunates recorded in the workhouse infirmary books of the East End. A rough reckoning of the Whitechapel infirmary admission records for some of the months prior to the Whitechapel horrors is very telling. Whilst the use of the word ‘prostitute’ is actually quite rare in the local press reports of the period, it is here that we do find the use of the word, almost entirely for women admitted with syphilis or gonorrhoea. In November 1887 for example there were six admissions for syphilis, and three for gonorrhoea. Five of the admissions were male all listed as labourers and aged between 24 and 40. The women, with one exception of ‘charring’ were all classed as prostitutes, their ages ranging from 17 to 48 years old. Anyone who reads these records cannot fail to notice the reoccurrence of some, all too familiar, addresses from amongst the lodging houses to the east of Commercial Street and with close associations to the Whitechapel victims. Of the November admissions four came from 16 Thrawl Street, one from 18 Thrawl Street, and one 48-year-old Sarah

Smith, from 18 George Street. The records for January and February 1888 illustrate the sad descent of many young women into the life of an unfortunate. Three women were admitted and gave birth to stillborn children or miscarried. There was an 18-year-old Kate Lyons of 16 Thrawl admitted with syphilis, an Eliza Cooling and Annie Smith, both just seventeen, of George Street and Flower and Dean Street likewise admitted. Annie Harris of 12 Thrawl Street was admitted whilst pregnant and with gonorrhoea. 16 and 18, Thrawl Street, Flower and Dean Street, George Street, 30 Dorset Street and 8 White's Row addresses repeated endlessly in connection with sexual disease, pregnancy, stillbirth, and alcohol related illnesses. More subtle but evident was the signs of violence, Sophia Townsend, 33, was admitted with syphilis and a black eye, 27-year-old Mary Dunlop of 16 Thrawl Street admitted with an injury to the face, Frances Coleman of 18 Thrawl Street likewise, Eliza Hewet of 16 Thrawl Street with a scalp wound, Annie Millwood...

The purpose of this article was never to deny the reality of the final hours of the majority of the victims of the Whitechapel murderer. On the night they had their lives brutally taken from them, they were in some capacity selling sex in order to pay for shelter, food or drink. There are some possible exceptions but we are totally reliant upon the words of a single witness, Mary Ann Connolly (Pearly Poll) in the case of Martha Tabram, and Catherine Eddowes, the Mitre Square victim, must raise some doubts because of the evidence of her life as provided at her inquest. If, as traditionally believed she was led or taken by her killer to Mitre Square in order to sell sex, then she must be considered to be at the very edge of the definition of 'sex worker' or 'prostitute'. Herein lies the basis of this whole article, that the author is strongly of the opinion that the use of the term 'prostitute' or 'sex worker', with all its modern and indeed some traditional associations, is not the best or most appropriate way to refer to the victims of the Whitechapel murderer. The five canonical victims did not stand together on the corner of Commercial Street asking each other, 'how's business?' before walking off into the fog with a 'punter'.

This article has attempted to illustrate that the contemporary press term or word used as reported by the women themselves, 'I am an unfortunate', is far more all-encompassing and more respectful of the diversity and experiences of their own back stories. Let us therefore take look at the victims in relation to some of the themes discussed here concerning the life of an unfortunate. All had a close association or described behaviour as a result of alcohol or heavy drinking. Emma Smith was said to be drunk on the night/morning of her attack but not to the extent that she couldn't state what had happened to her. Her character as discussed at the inquest talked of her behaviour when she had been drinking. Martha Tabram was drinking on the night of her death having been seen entering the White Swan by her sister-in-law. Polly Nichols had a history with drink, and it is evident in the actions of her last known hours and movement, likewise Annie Chapman. There is evidence of drink being an issue with Elizabeth Stride, and Catherine Eddowes had been put into a city police cell to sleep off her drunken state. The last hours of Mary Kelly, whoever we decide to believe involve the 'horrors of drink'. Alcohol therefore is a common thread. Martha Tabram, Polly Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride and even Catherine Eddowes all had broken marriages or partnerships. In the case of the mysterious Mary Kelly, as previously stated, there is a hint her being part of the world of brothels and trafficking, an aspect that she, perhaps, shared or had more in common with the Swedish Elizabeth Stride. It is this that, to some extent, separates them from the other victims and reinforces the argument that 'prostitute' is far too simple a term to describe them. There is nothing to tie the women to the robbery and activity of the Trippers up gangs of St George in the East, but it has to be said that if Mary Kelly was connected to Pennington Street and Breezer's Hill she would have been fully aware of such goings on if not part of it. Frances Coles and her last hours in the company of Sadler which included him being robbed could suggest she was part of a gang that operated that way. All the victims lived in an area where amongst the poverty of its lodging houses and the criminality of its streets, the selling of sex was normalised, part of a way of life. This was Dorset Street, Thrawl Street, Flower and Dean Street and Devonshire Street. Yet women like Martha Tabram, Polly Nichols, Annie Chapman and Alice McKenzie were at the very fringes of this way of life. They sold items on the streets, they cleaned for the Jews, and when times were hard, and they were forced by necessity, they sold themselves. Is this perhaps, a clue to why these victims were selected? Martha Tabram, Polly Nichols and Annie Chapman were, of all the victims, the most ill-equipped to deal with the ever-present dangers of drunk and violent men seeking to use their services or, indeed, the street bullies and gangs, and even fellow aggressive and volatile

unfortunates. Polly Nichols it may be remembered was relatively new to the area when she was murdered, Annie Chapman was weak, ill, tired and hungry.

What implications does this have for our profiling of the killer? Far from the strong mythical killer of legend did he merely seek out, or was lucky with, the inexperienced, desperate and frail? What if he had come across the unfortunates we have previously discussed, those that carried a knife or were capable of using such a small object as a key as a weapon, or even those who worked with others? Had the killer failed before or was he selective and careful in the victims he chose? There is maybe some evidence, in the case of Elizabeth Stride, a more experienced woman of the streets, who struggled and fought back and left the killer with his murderous desires unfulfilled.

If you take anything from this short article, the next time you discuss the Jack the Ripper's murders, whether with those who have little knowledge, or on a crime podcast, at a conference, or even giving your views in a documentary, pause before you call them what they were. They were what they regarded themselves to be, unfortunates.

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Jonathan Tye is a researcher and writer who graduated in History from the University of Kent. His book on Edward Buckley and the Ripper murders will be published by Pen & Sword in November 2025.



The second of four evocative drawings from the 22nd September 1888 edition of the Illustrated London News. The drawings accompanied an article on the Spitalfields lodging houses and their inhabitants. This one is labelled as "A Professional Beggar".

Jonathan Tye's PRESS TRAWL

AN ARREST IN WHITECHAPEL.

It is reported that a man was arrested in the East-end early this morning under very suspicious circumstances. Between 1 and 2 o'clock a woman, who was in company with a man, was in the thoroughfare near Brick-lane and "Police"

For this edition we are going to focus our trawl on the incredible life of Thomas Power. A notorious troublemaker and local thug, Power had remarkably lost limbs in an industrial accident sometime in his youth. Although one record states he was born in Newcastle Upon Tyne, it is more likely he was born around 1866 in Birmingham, Warwickshire, a place and area he returned back to despite a long association with the East End.

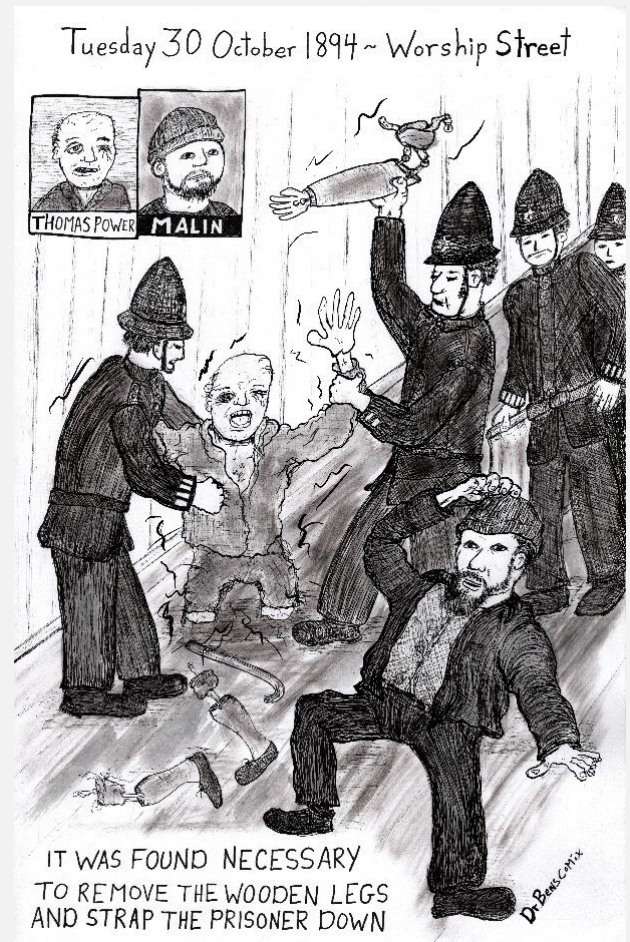
Eastern Post - Saturday 21 January 1888

At the Worship Street Police-court, on Tuesday, a man named Thomas Power, who had wooden legs and had lost his left arm, was charged with being drunk and disorderly, and further, with having assaulted a police-constable. The charge was proved, and the magistrate sentenced him to 10 days hard labour. It would be interesting to know what would be the hard labour for a man with no legs and one arm!

London Evening Standard- Tuesday 30 October 1894

Worship Street

Thomas Power, 28, described as a labourer, was charged, on remand, with being concerned with others not in custody in violently assaulting a man named Malin, and robbing him of 15s.-'The Prisoner is a man well known at this court for exceedingly violent conduct. He is badly crippled, both legs and one arm having been amputated; the sight of one eye is nearly gone, and his head is scarred with old wounds.- The evidence of the Prosecutor, Malin, was to the effect that he was attacked in the passage of a lodging house in Paternoster-court, Spitalfields, where he was about one o'clock in the morning of Sunday, the 21st. His head was cut open by a blow from the prisoners stick, and his pockets were rifled. The police quickly arrived when he raised cries of "Police!" and Constable 6 H.R said that the prisoner attempted to strike him with the stick, and when seized threw him to the ground by twisting one of his wooden legs between the constables. The other officer was kicked at the pit of the stomach, and when the Prisoner was seized, he threw himself on his back and kicked out with his wooden legs. It was found necessary, as has been proved before, to remove the legs, send for the ambulance, and strap the prisoner down before he could be got to the



station. He denied any stealing, and nothing was found on him- Proof of previous convictions for assault were given, and Mr. Bushby committed the Prisoner for trial.

Globe – Thursday 04 February 1897

Thomas Power, 28, hawker, who has been deprived of both of his legs and one arm, and has, as substitutes wooden limbs, pleaded guilty at the County of London sessions yesterday to maliciously damaging a quantity of glass to the value of £16 10s., at the beer house of Mr. Edward John Dearlove, the Horn of Plenty, Crispin-street, Spitalfields, on the 30th of January. He was sentenced to 18 months hard labour.

Eastern Post- Saturday 22 June 1901

FIGHTING WITH HIS STUMPS – Thomas Power, who had no legs and walked on wooden stumps, was charged with assaulting Henry Vine, barman at the “Bank of Friendship,” Harford Street, Mile -end.- On Monday evening Power entered the house in a drunken condition, and in consequence was not served. As he refused to go away the barman went to fetch a constable, and while passing out of the house Power dealt him a violent blow to the neck. He also assaulted him on his return and fought everyone with his stumps. He was most violent all the way to the station.- Mr Mead imposed a penalty of 21s, or in default 14 days hard labour.

Just one month later on 22 July 1901, Thomas Power married Emily Florence Jane Young in Stepney, but the marriage was far from straightforward.

Morning Leader- Friday 20 June 1902

STRANGE BIGAMY STORY. At West Ham yesterday, Emily Florence Jane Beadham, 31 of New St, Stratford, was charged on her own confession with feloniously marrying Thomas Power on 22 July 1901, her husband, Edward Charles Beadham, being then alive. Inspector Budge, of the K division, said that at a quarter past eleven on the 18th of June the prisoner went into West Ham Police Station and said that she wished to give herself up for bigamy. She then made a statement to the effect that she married on the 29th of June, 1891, Edward Charles Beadham at St Judes Church, Commercial Street, London. They resided together three days, when he left her, and she saw no more of him until about 18 months ago, when she came to a house at Ernest St, Stepney. He was then in the uniform of the North Lancashire Regiment. He remained ten minutes and went away again, and she had not seen him since. On 22 July, 1901 she married at Stepney Church Thomas Power, and gave her maiden name of Young. Mr. Gillespie said this was not sufficient evidence to detain her on, and he discharged her. Accused left the court with her “second husband”, a man with wooden legs and only one arm.

It would appear that after this event Thomas Power, alone or otherwise, headed to the Midlands.

Daily Mirror – Monday 30 March 1908

Among the six passengers who sustained injuries through an accident to a cable tramway-car at Birmingham, on Saturday, was a man named Thomas Power, who had two wooden legs and a wooden arm. One of the legs was broken.

Mrs Caroline Maxwell – A Long Dissenting Voice

Chris Magbank

The other day, I took some time out to really think about a few of the puzzling elements of the case. Having held an interest in all aspects of the ‘Autumn of Terror’, I mused to myself that I have held a fascination, on and off, for some forty years now. Strangely, with no disrespect shown to any of the victims or their current families, one might well argue I am also just another victim of the fiend known to history as ‘Jack the Ripper’.

Nevertheless, I would laugh at anyone who would describe me as an expert, at a push maybe an enthusiastic amateur, but there are many facets of the case with which I still struggle hugely. If a straw poll were taken of all persons with an interest in the case, it is more than likely that all would have their own favourite ‘mystery within a mystery’ and as such, perhaps one could argue no true answer can ever be fully established on these specific questions. Given the challenge in obtaining and interpreting hard facts and evidence, one could also argue that modern Ripper studies are even more complex than those facing the challenge of dealing with them directly during 1888. Nevertheless, having dismantled testimony and studied the few remaining pieces of supposed evidence, attempting to link them to modern themes and thinking, one can readily have a go at challenging a few long-held beliefs. Some thought-provoking ideas, perhaps, as usual, from my ever-curious and ready-to-challenge mindset. I also understand that all the below is gleaned directly from press reports and witness testimony – but with little else to employ, they will always help form the basis of any wider discussions, albeit I am fully aware they can easily be manipulated to suit certain criteria and arguments.

Having thought about the case, two elements instantly leap out of the 1888 scene and present themselves as a ‘mystery within a mystery.’ The first one is the conversation alleged to have been undertaken by Catherine Eddowes, held and explained best in this tantalising press snippet from the local *East London Observer*, dated 13th October 1888:

“A report gleaned some curious information from the Casual Ward Superintendent of Mile End, regarding Kate Eddowes, the Mitre Square victim. She was formerly well-known in the casual wards there but had disappeared some considerable time until the Friday preceding her murder. Asking the woman where she had been in the interval, the superintendent was met with the reply that she had been in the country ‘hopping’. ‘But,’ added the woman, ‘I have come back to earn the reward offered for the apprehension of the Whitechapel murderer. I think I know him.’ ‘Mind, he doesn’t murder you too’, replied the superintendent jocularly. ‘Oh, no fear of that’ was the remark made by Kate Eddowes as she left. Within four and twenty hours afterwards, she was a mutilated corpse.”⁴

Now, on pure face value, this appears to be absolute nonsense. Having done an extremely basic piece of research, I note that many authors in their books fail to mention it at all, choosing instead to simply ignore, perhaps preferring a safer footing, to arguably avoid any ridicule. Sugden, in his book, briefly tackles the subject by saying:

⁴ *East London Observer*, 13th October 1888

“This snippet is one of those scraps of evidence that surface occasionally to challenge our conventional view of the Whitechapel killings. However intriguing, as it stands, it is nothing more than a piece of unsupported hearsay.”⁵

Nevertheless, imagine just for a moment that there was some truth in the story. In this instance, Sugden is probably correct in his original 1994 synopsis – one only has an unsupported press report, which could well have been a clever piece of journalistic licence. But what if it was not? Over the intervening one hundred and thirty-seven years, researchers and amateur sleuths have had ample opportunity to delve into these reports and pick at them. The question remains, did ‘tough-cookie’ and ‘street-wise’ Eddowes really know, or *think she knew*, who the killer was? Whatever view is accepted by the reader, it is certainly something to consider, and this type of intriguing, investigative stance is what helps shape the rest of this article.



A contemporary view of Mrs Maxwell and her fateful 'meeting' with Kelly. This was early the following morning, after many believed Kelly had been murdered. Wikipedia.org

The second item for me is *THE* most fascinating of witnesses in the entire 1888 saga, namely Mrs Caroline Maxwell. Quite a statement when one considers witnesses with the calibre of Lechmere, Paul, Mrs Long, Schwartz, and Lawende. To my eye, Mrs Maxwell remains a hugely remarkable person in her own right, a stoic, dependable witness, and her story is difficult to dismiss. She just will not go away...

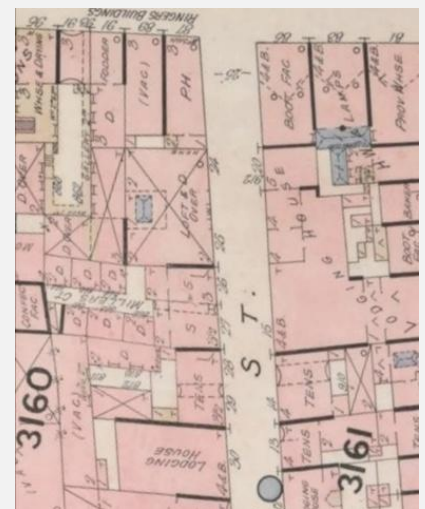
Mrs Caroline Maxwell was the wife of one Henry Maxwell (however, there is no actual evidence they were legally married), who was the lodging house deputy of 14 Dorset Street, Spitalfields during 1888. Her initial statement, possibly written by Abberline in his own writing, was taken on the 9th November 1888, and I quote directly here:

*“I have known deceased woman during the past 4 [“or 5” – deleted] months, she was known as Mary Jane and that since Joe Barnett left her she has obtained her living as an unfortunate. I was on speaking terms with her although I had not seen her for 3 weeks until Friday morning 9th * [here*

there is a marginal note – “about half past 8 o’clock.”] instant, she was then standing at the corner of Miller’s court in Dorset Street. I said to her, what brings you up so early, she said, I have the horrors of drink upon me, as I have been drinking for some days past. I said why don’t you go to Mrs. Ringers (meaning the Public House at the corner of Dorset Street called the Britannia) and have ½ pint of beer. She said she had been there and had it, but I have brought it all up again at the same time she pointed to some vomit in the roadway. I then passed on, and went to Bishopsgate on an errand, and returned to Dorset Street about 9 am I noticed deceased standing outside Ringers public house, she was talking to a man, age I think about 30, height about 5 foot 5 inches, stout, dressed as a Market Porter, I was some distance away and I doubtful whether I could identify him. The deceased wore a dark dress black velvet body, and coloured wrapper round her neck.”⁶

Just three days later, Mrs Maxwell was called as a witness to Shoreditch Town Hall to give her testimony in front of Roderick MacDonald, the Coroner for Middlesex, and his thirteen stolid and stern jurors.

“Caroline Maxwell having been sworn deposed as follows: I [“am” – deleted] live at 14 Dorset street my husband’s name is Henry Maxwell I also knew Joe Barnett, I believe she was an unfortunate girl. I never spoke to her except twice – I took a deal of notice of deceased this evening seeing her standing at the corner of the Court on Friday from 8 to half past I know the time by taking the plates my husband had to care of from the house opposite. I am positive the time was between 8 & half past I am positive I saw the deceased I spoke to her I said Mary what brings you up so early she said Oh! I do feel



Goad map of Dorset Street and number 14, shown in relation to Miller’s Court opposite. Copyright British Library

⁵ *The Complete Jack the Ripper* by Philip Sugden, 1994

⁶ *Will the Real Mary Kelly? By Christopher Scott, 2005*

so bad! Oh Carry I feel so bad! She knew my name – [“she as” – deleted] I asked her to have a drink, she said oh no I have just had a drink of ale and brought it all up, it was in the road I saw it – as she said this she motioned with her head and I concluded she meant she had been to the Britannia at the corner, I kept saying I pitied her feelings – I then went to Bishopsgate as I returned I saw her outside the Britiannia [sic] talking to a man – the time was then about 20 minutes to half an hour later about a quarter to nine – I could not describe the man I did not pass them I went into the my house and I saw them in the distance, I am certain it was deceased, the man was not a tall man – he had on dark clothes and a sort of plaid coat – I could not say what hat he had on – Mary Jane had a dark skirt – velvet body – and maroon shawl & no hat – I have seen deceased in drink but not really drunk –

By a Juror – I did not notice whether deceased had on a high silk hat – if it had been so I would have noticed it I think.”⁷



The original Miller's Court entrance, pictured shortly before demolition. Copyright Leonard Matters, The Mystery of Jack the Ripper, 1929

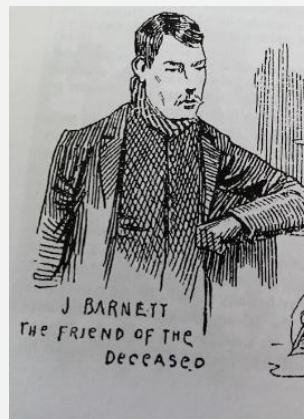
Even the most hostile and ‘anti-Maxwell believer’ will be intrigued to learn that when you quietly compare these two statements, we have at least eight points of direct comparison. Read them again, I will wait...

This one facet of our witness Maxwell is totally engrossing and quite compelling in my humble view. One way in which modern policing operates is to always treat any person initially as a witness and then ask the same questions, usually at a subsequent interview, but with a greater, and planned, subtle variation to questioning – one will then match the answers given across both interviews, to gauge the level of truthfulness or indeed any deviation. I understand we do not possess quite the same situation here in this example, but it is fascinating to see how, for me, Mrs Maxwell appears to pass this major test with ‘flying colours.’

I have little doubt that many will argue that not all the answers are exact matches, and to that end, I entirely agree. In the coroner’s court, doubtless able to speak for herself and more importantly freely, Maxwell is allowed to discuss the sighting - and give fuller answers. But the key is Maxwell does not once deviate from any answer, and often her only ‘mistake’ seems to be that she expands slightly on her answers within the coroner’s court statement. She could perhaps be forgiven for some nerves; she was just an ordinary East End woman, after all.



The inquest at Shoreditch Town Hall. Wikipedia.org



Joe Barnett at the inquest from a contemporary sketch. Wikipedia.org



Dr MacDonal, the coroner. Wikipedia.org

Just to recap then, we have a strong, confident, ‘married’ witness, who has given two statements about three days apart, which largely match and verify each other. On the face of it, Mrs Maxwell does not appear to be a witness led by publicity, or greed, or even a desire to have her ‘five mins of fame’.

⁷ *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook* by Stewart P Evans and Keith Skinner, 2000 – quoted from Ref MJ/SPC NE1888, Box 3, Case Paper 19 (London Metropolitan Archives)

The next example may well be able to substantiate this statement. Despite being warned by Coroner Roderick MacDonald, “*You must be very careful about your evidence, because it is different to other people’s*”⁸. Despite this stance from the coroner, Maxwell was convinced she did not have the wrong date, the wrong person, or the fundamental question that she saw and spoke with woman known as Kelly on that fateful morning. I would suggest being embroiled as a witness in the world’s greatest ‘whodunnit’, even in early November 1888, would have been enough to have focused her mind. It certainly would mine!

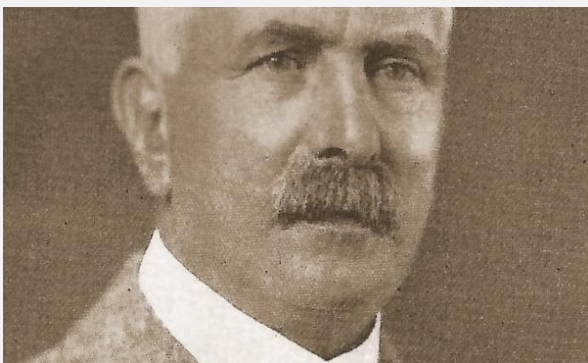
A slightly controversial view from me on this aspect, but this all feels very reminiscent of the 1970s Yorkshire Ripper inquiry, where witnesses were not always taken seriously, especially if the witness was a woman. Have we here, in 1888, a case of men alone and perhaps even a vision of ‘all boys together’ – with a senior H Divisional Police Surgeon stating that the time of death is around 02:00 and thus, case closed - simple. An even stronger allegation might state that when evidence is potentially given to the contrary, was it now a case of closing ranks and not listening to all the evidence presented?

I find it quite staggering that a coroner would make those comments in such a way, in an open court setting. Nevertheless, I concede it could easily be argued either way, and so the fundamental question is, was Coroner MacDonald genuinely querying her evidence and offering some form of support to avoid her appearing foolish, or, for want of a better phrase, was he simply displaying a level of patronising behaviour towards Maxwell?

This is also why I have referred to Mrs Maxwell as married – studying some of the wider underbelly of the case, it does seem to impact, and sadly, in 1888, it would have had some really positive influence. But as alluded to earlier, no record of their marriage can be located from the 1881 or 1891 census. It is feasible they were living together at 14 Dorset Street as a couple, but one would have expected to still see a record of this on a census. However, far from being a ‘bad mark’ against Maxwell, I suspect they weren’t married in a legal sense at all, but she nevertheless understood the concept of security and status that marriage in this situation would ultimately bring. Shrewd thinking, perhaps, from Mrs Maxwell, demonstrating she indeed had something ‘going on upstairs’.

Walter Dew, who was, during 1888, a junior detective on the ground in Whitechapel, sums up this situation nicely, and he is certainly worth quoting directly from his autobiography, some fifty years later:

*“If Mrs Maxwell had been a sensation seeker – one of those women who live for the limelight – it would have been easy to discredit her story. She was not. She seemed a sane and sensible woman, and her reputation was excellent. In one way, at least her version fitted into the facts as known. We know that Marie had been drinking the previous night, and, as this is not a habit of hers, illness the next morning was just what might have been expected.”*⁹



Walter Dew in later life. In 1888 he was a junior detective on the ground at Whitechapel. Wikipedia.org

It is worth adding that at one time, a few years ago, Henry Maxwell was accused of being Jack the Ripper and named as Henry Maxwell Reily. Apparently born in Bengal, India, by 1888 he was called to the Royal Courts of Justice, London, where his wife had apparently filed for a petition for judicial separation against him. Interestingly, as stated earlier, no marriage details can be found on the census listings. The interesting forum report goes on to state that Henry Maxwell died of pneumonia on 24th May 1889. This research was conducted by Kristina Nordqvist in her eBook – *Jack the Ripper Uncovenanted*.

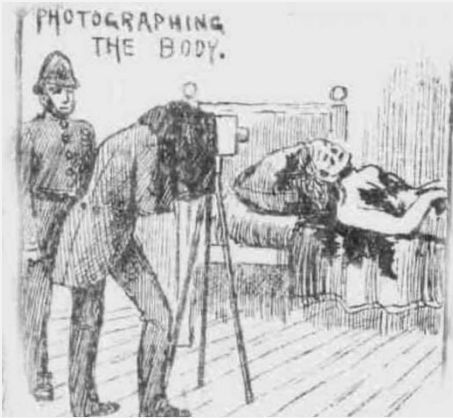
I trust that the reader will now at least agree that Mrs Maxwell cannot simply be pushed away into the long grass, but what of the potentially opposing 1888 police view on Kelly’s time of death?

To start, I wish to quote part of a *Times* press report from 12th November 1888, regarding the Kelly murder scene:

⁸ Daily Telegraph, 13th November 1888

⁹ I Caught Crippen. Memoirs of Ex-Chief Inspector Walter Dew, C.I.D. of Scotland Yard by Walter Dew, 1938

“... Against these statements is the opinion of Dr. George Bagster Phillips, the Divisional Surgeon of H Division, that when he was called to the deceased (at a quarter to 11) she had been dead for some five or six hours. There is no doubt that the body of a person who, to use Dr. Phillip’s own words, was ‘cut to pieces’, would get cold far more quickly than that of one who died simply from the cutting of the throat; and the room would have been very cold, as there were two broken panes of glass in the windows. Again, the body being entirely uncovered would very quickly get cold. It is the opinion of Mr. M’Carthy [McCarthy], the landlord of 26 Dorset-street, that the woman was murdered at a much earlier hour than 8’clock, and that Mrs. Maxwell and the other person must have been mistaken.”



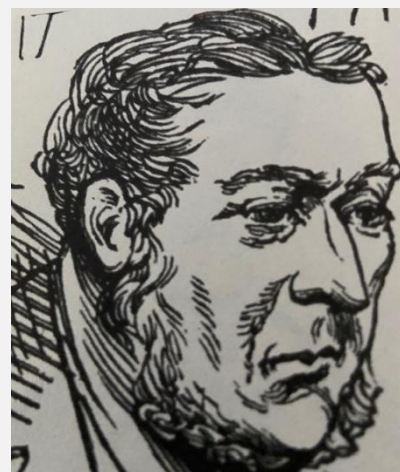
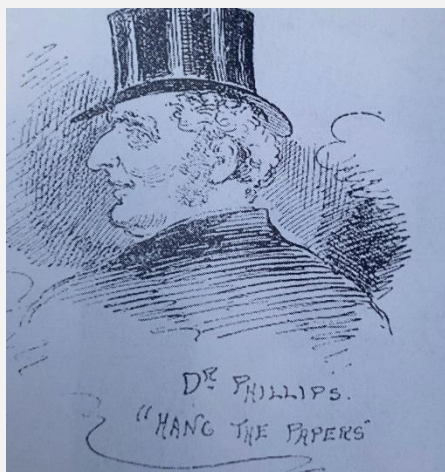
Photographing the body within Miller's Court. From a contemporary newspaper article. Wikipedia.org

So here we have yet more evidence to suggest that the ‘all-encompassing’ doctor, with all the experience in the world, has made his statement and that the case was closed. However, for me, a few caveats must be discussed and set, to try and arrive at a fair, balanced conclusion.

Quoting again from Sugden:

“Miller’s Court was soon bustling with police personnel. Dr George Bagster Phillips, the divisional police surgeon, arrived at 11:15, Abberline was there by 11:30. Both must share some responsibility for the ensuing fiasco. The door of Mary’s room was locked but, incredibly, no attempt was made to force it until 01:30 in the afternoon.”

So, beyond an initial peer into the window, no doctor examined the body until approximately 13:30 (01:30) that afternoon. That fact needs to be ascertained, as many press reports suggest that doctors arrived during the morning, which they indeed did, but none were able to examine the body.



Contemporary sketches of George Bagster Phillips. In 1888 Phillips was H Division’s experienced divisional surgeon. *Jack the Ripper - Scotland Yard Investigates*, Stewart P Evans and Donald Rumbelow, 2010

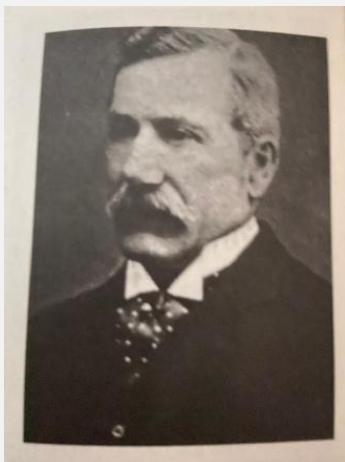
Next is the key element to this police submission. Rigor Mortis. The limited research I have undertaken on this subject informs me of one key factor: on the question of rigor mortis, I am certain that *nothing is certain!*

It would appear that the more research one undertakes, the differing degrees of answers one receives. I hate to generalise, but as an uneducated person on this subject, others may also struggle. Rigor mortis, also known as postmortem rigidity, is the stiffening of muscles after death. It is caused by chemical changes in the muscles due to the depletion of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), a molecule necessary for muscle relaxation. This stiffening typically begins within a few hours after death, progresses, and then gradually dissipates as the body decomposes. Warm temperatures can accelerate the process, whilst conversely, cold temperatures can slow it down. Equally, it does appear that alcohol consumption/presence in the body can speed up rigor mortis, *but not in all cases*. On top of this, some doctors understand that rigor mortis can occur almost instantly upon death, especially in the lips, eye area, and jaw, before the onset in the abdomen and legs.

Other medical professionals are adamant that rigor mortis only begins around two hours after death. Here, a modern four-stage process is widely employed by medical professionals to differentiate the phases and is worth quoting. The first stage is pallor mortis, where the skin pales due to blood pooling. Then, algor mortis, where the body cools over time. The third stage is rigor mortis, where muscles stiffen and contract. The fourth stage is livor mortis, where areas of pooled blood begin to take on a bruised-like discolouration. Despite this, there is still a great degree of difference of opinion within the medical profession, and despite those clearly defined stages, they can differ hugely in timings.

Earlier that autumn, Swanson had already asked Dr Thomas Bond to study the medical notes of the earlier victims. So, by the time of the Mary Kelly murder, he was fully up to speed with the murders, and he arrived on scene at Miller's Court - around 2 pm on that fateful afternoon. He drafted an extensive report the next day, detailing the harrowing murder scene in Miller's Court, and then produced the first potential offender profile in history where he stated:

"In the Dorset Street case the body was lying on the bed at the time of my visit, 2 o'clock, quite naked and mutilated as in the annexed report – Rigor Mortis had set in, but increased during the progress of the examination. From this it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty the exact time that had elapsed since death as the period varies from 6 to 12 hours before rigidity sets in. The body was comparatively cold at 2 o'clock and the remains of a recently taken meal were found in the stomach and intestines."



Dr Thomas Bond FRCS, MB BS (London). Considered by many to have written the first offender profiler report. He was 47 years of age in 1888 and at the peak of his career. Wikipedia.org

A quick perusal of the ever-helpful *Casebook.org* and we discover that on the night (early morning) of the Kelly murder in Whitechapel, it was cold. The temperature dropped to a chilly 3.8°C, that is 38.9°F in old money. Certainly cold enough for a fire to be lit, irrespective of what light it may, or may not, have afforded our murderer. Of course, it could well have been Mary herself who lit it – strangely enough, to keep warm in a cold, stone room, with two panes of glass window missing, regardless of the measly rags stuffed in the holes to try and prevent the cold entering the room. It also rained that night, on and off, and continued throughout the morning, until about 11 am – so definitely a cold, bleak, and miserable scene.

We can also state with some confidence that rigor mortis is impacted by colder temperatures and now have:

- Established beyond a reasonable doubt that Mrs Caroline Maxwell is a good witness. Indeed, if truth be told by 1888 standards, she was an *excellent* witness.
- Mrs Caroline Maxwell has given two statements and reports, one being at an inquest, on oath, and they both stand up to some scrutiny and cross-reference.
- Introduced by me, and *I understand subject to challenge*, but we may have seen some possible chauvinistic behaviour from the coroner when evidence is not in line with expectations, particularly if delivered by a woman.
- Rigor mortis for calculating TOD (time of death) is extremely difficult to gauge, and it is certainly NOT an exact science, even today, and especially not during 1888.
- Another assumption by me here – Doctors Thomas Bond and George Bagster Phillips would have HAD TO BE SEEN to determine an accurate TOD for Kelly, because it was possibly more than their professional careers were worth to instead state, 'we just cannot say.?' In fairness however, Bond does go halfway to saying this in his report.

Nevertheless, the medical information here is just one example, what we also need is another independent perspective. Enter a wonderful update from a Facebook post I added, concerning Divisional Surgeon Phillips, a few weeks before writing this piece. As I felt at the time, it is an intriguing point of history, with few concrete answers. But I did manage to glean one piece of information that may further help sway minds. It was supplied

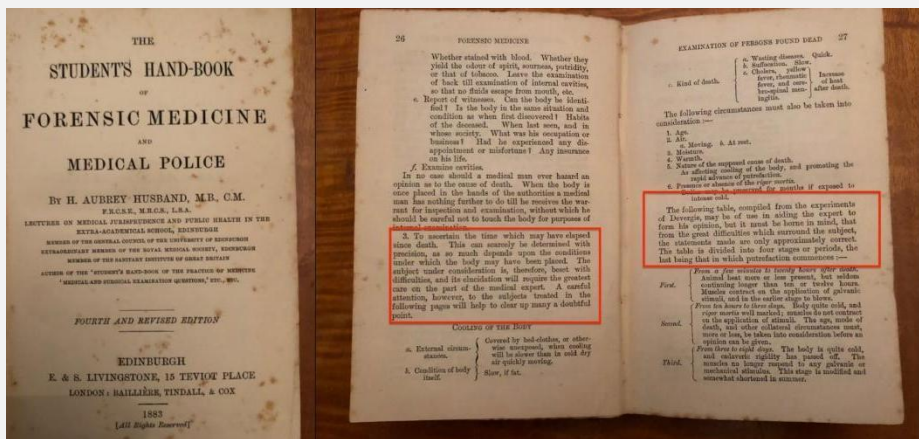
by Dusty Miller, replying to a thread about the rigor mortis question, and with his permission, I recount the document/post section here in full. It is a passage from a Dundee University of Forensic Science lecture notes and states:

“A medical witness who attempts to determine the time of death from temperature estimation in minutes or fractions of hours is exposing himself to a severe challenge to his expertise which may well amount to near ridicule...it is extremely unsafe to use rigor at all in the estimation of time since death.”

Interesting statement there. And this is a modern document, so in 1888, it is certainly not going to be any more advanced; indeed, one could easily argue much less so.

But we have further documentation to study, and on this occasion, directly from 1883, where it may have even been written with some prior knowledge from Bond or Phillips, such was their career standing and overall experience in such matters. Shared again, with permission, the source is an 1883 Students' Handbook of Forensic Medicine and Medical Police.

“To ascertain the time which may have elapsed since death. This can scarcely be determined with precision, as so much depends upon the conditions under which the body may have been placed. The subject under consideration is, therefore, beset with difficulties, and its elucidation will require the greatest care on the part of the medical expert.”



Photograph of the 1883 Forensic Medicine Journal - with kind permission from Dusty Miller

“Rigor Mortis had set in, but increased during the examination...”

If she were murdered at say, 10:00 -10:30 – with rigor mortis setting in at say, around 13:30 – I would hardly have expected our respected doctor duo to have said anything else during their examination...

But one last point on Maxwell's claims. Many will rightly challenge all of the above and state that the body left within Miller's Court was not the woman known as Kelly. She perhaps found the corpse and saw an opportunity to leave her life in the East End, owing rent, and had ideas of starting a new life somewhere else.

Long before fingerprints, DNA, and forensic dental testing, the principal method for body identification was simply facial recognition, and then any distinguishing marks. Now, it is true to state that problems can certainly arise from any identification in this manner and one can quote the somewhat legendary case of Stride's initial botched identification, when Mrs Mary Malcolm, following a dream that her sister Elizabeth Watts had died, viewed Stride's body in the St George in the East mortuary and was adamant it was her sister. Bizarrely, Malcolm confirmed the identification, from all things, a supposed adder bite on her leg – apparently received when Watts was a young child. Nevertheless, this is a good example to demonstrate just how quickly the police 'cottoned on' to the false identification from Malcolm - seeing through her story, as nothing more than a fantasist's tale.

In the case of Kelly's identification, Joe Barnett had said in his police statement that he had lived with Kelly for some eighteen months. Barnett's inquest testimony stated *“I have seen the body of the deceased, and I*

So, could we apply this to a stone-cold room, with window panes missing, raining and very chilly - where a fire has long since died out and a badly mutilated, uncovered body has been left exposed since 10:00 - 10:15 am that same morning, helping to reduce the onset of rigor mortis, until approximately 13:30, where a doctor finally commences a detailed examination and states in his own report subsequently that

identify it by the ear and eyes. I am positive that the deceased was the woman with whom I lived, and that her name was Marie."¹⁰

I turn again to the late, great Christopher Scott here, as the following paragraph is intriguing in his wonderfully entitled book, *Will the Real Mary Kelly?*:

"It may seem odd that Barnett felt the need to say he was positive it was Kelly. However, it must be remembered that the facial disfigurement carried out on the corpse found at Miller's Court was so gross and so extensive as to render any identification less than certain. However, we must remember that Barnett had been Kelly's companion and lover for eighteen months, so if anyone were well placed to recognise her from just one single feature, he would presumably have been best qualified to do so."

But of course, partner Joe Barnett was not the only person who saw Kelly's body after death. There are two more, one well-known and the other perhaps less so. Landlord John McCarthy also quoted in his inquest testimony. *"I knew the deceased as Mary Jane Kelly; I have seen her alive, and dead and have no doubt about her identity."*¹¹ We know that McCarthy was able to initially observe the body at a distance, through the window, and we also know that McCarthy broke down the door with an axe around 13:30 to gain access. Given the small size of the room and the police activity thereafter, it is unlikely a 'civilian' would be allowed immediate access to the room; therefore, we can perhaps conclude he did not have a formal look at the body in the room on that afternoon, whilst doctors and police officials were busy examining. Conversely, his statement does state, *"I have seen the body"* – and thus the obvious inference to draw from this would be that McCarthy went to Shoreditch Mortuary to formally identify her, presumably sometime later on, or the next day.

The less well-known person was George Hutchinson. But George did observe Mary's corpse, and Abberline makes this very point in his report:

*"The final act in his (Hutchinson's) participation was attending the mortuary to view the body. Abberline says in his report that Hutchinson had been asked to do this, and he himself confirms it in his press interview – "I went down to the Shoreditch Mortuary today and recognised the body as being that of the woman Kelly, whom I saw at 2'clock on Friday morning". The purpose of this was obviously not formal identification of the deceased, as the inquest was already over, but to confirm that the woman he was talking about in his statement and the deceased were one and the same."*¹²

There we have it then, three separate and independent persons viewed the body of Kelly after the murder, and all three have identified her as the woman they knew as Kelly. Her partner of eighteen months, her landlord McCarthy, who knew her by sight, and also an independent witness, George Hutchison, who knew her by her name and certainly conversed with her on occasion. It is highly likely that George may have had some form of intimate relationship with her or may even have sought refuge within Miller's Court on occasion. Whatever the truth, it does not really matter too greatly; the established link that the two knew each other well is there. Well enough, of course, for Hutchinson to be asked to attend the mortuary and identify her. One could argue that if Joseph Barnett had been left to identify her solely from her ear or her eyes, then it is feasible that the body in Shoreditch could have been misidentified, but three independent witnesses viewed the remains, and all stated that those remains were of the woman they knew to be Mary Kelly.

Where does this leave us? Well, for me, I believe a clear thought process with Maxwell and the medical evidence has been established, which can challenge and question the long-held medical view that Mary Kelly was murdered between 02:00 and 04:00 on that cold, November morning. It could, of course, still be the case, supporting evidence from those within Miller's Court attests to the noise of the door closing, footsteps, and the cry of 'Oh, Murder!' It could well be that Hutchinson's suspect was genuine and left the premises with Kelly still alive. Moreover, it might now give more credence to another witness who purported to see Kelly alive on that Friday morning. Morris (sometimes spelt Maurice) Lewis claimed to see Mary drinking in the Britannia pub around 10 am on the morning of the murder. His statement suggested he had known Kelly for

¹⁰ *London Evening Standard*, 13th November 1888

¹¹ *The Scotsman*, 13th November 1888

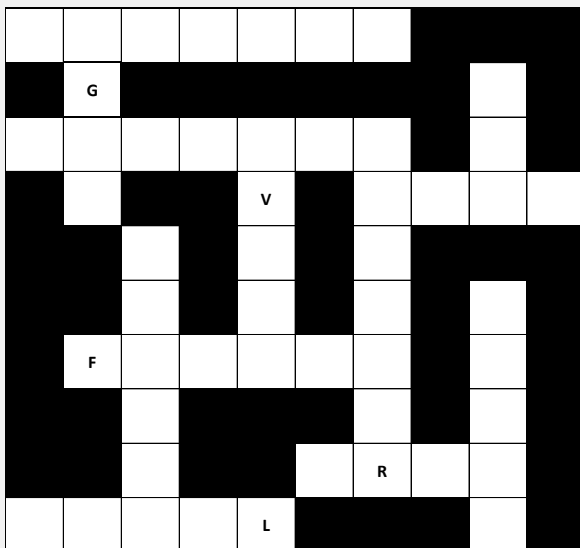
¹² *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook* by Stewart P Evans and Keith Skinner, 2000

some five years, which is odd, as it would be longer than Hutchinson and Barnett, and even suggests he knew Kelly before she lived in the Spitalfields area. But if Lewis had his timings slightly wrong and it were indeed closer to 09:00 than say 10:00, then again, applying what has been gleaned from the article might make one think.

It is still likely that the woman known as Mary Kelly was sadly murdered within Miller's Court sometime between 02:00 and 04:00 on that dreadful morning, now some one hundred and thirty-seven years ago. Nevertheless, I do hope that this article may now suggest that there is also a *reasonable* argument to suggest that she may have been murdered much later that same morning, possibly turning on its head *what we thought we knew* about the entire Kelly case.

Chris Maybank is an amateur social historian based in Hertfordshire, having held a lifetime fascination with Ripper studies and wider Victorian social history.

THE RIPPEROLOGIST-LECHMERE CROSS WORD



Clues:

- Surname of author who wrote *The Mystery of Jack the Ripper* in 1929 (7)
- Surname of the author who wrote *Jack the Ripper* in 1972 (6)
- Surname of the author who wrote *Jack the Ripper: Unmasked* in 2009 (6)
- Surname of the author who wrote *Jack the Ripper ... Person or Persons Unknown?* in 2002 (4)
- Surname of the author who wrote *Jack the Ripper in Fact and Fiction* in 1966 (5)
- Surname of the author who wrote *Jack the Ripper: The Simple Truth* in 1995 (5)
- Surname of the author who co-wrote *The Jack the Ripper A-Z* in 1992 (7)
- Surname of the author who co-wrote *The Complete and Essential Jack the Ripper* in 2013 (7)
- Second surname of the author who wrote *Jack the Ripper: The Definitive Casebook* in 2013 (4)
- Surname of the author who wrote *Death of a Prince: Jack the Ripper and Other Souls* in 2001 (3)
- Surname of the author who co-wrote *Jack the Ripper and the Whitechapel murders* in 2002 (5)
- Surname of the author who wrote *Jack the Ripper: The Truth About The Whitechapel Murders* in 2017 (4)

Answers at the end of this edition

VICTORIAN DOMESTICITY

A Column on Daily Life

By Amanda Lloyd



For this edition we're going to focus on the changing role of the Victorian working-class housewife.

It may be surprising for some people to learn that Victorian women weren't always reliant on their husband's income, and for working class families it was normal to work together to bring in the money.

Before the 19th century, wives played an integral part in the success of cottage industries and farming. Although housekeeping and the raising of children was always the woman's domain, she could also be seen alongside her husband weaving, at the shop front, looking after the farmyard animals and selling the produce she'd made.

Children were expected to do their share too and help where they could, so for many it was very much a family enterprise. It wasn't until the Industrial Revolution that things began to change, slowly at first, but by the 1830s as machines took over labouring jobs people started to flock to the cities with promises of better pay in the factories and mills.

For the first time the roles of men and women separated. Suddenly the wife found herself at home while her husband went off to work. No longer was she part of bringing in the money, instead she was now reliant on what he earned. Wages were much better for men and boys and although unmarried women and girls did work they often earned less than half of what the men did. Simple economics dictated that the women stayed at home and the men and boys went out to earn as much as they could possibly muster.

This shift of power changed men's attitudes, they were the breadwinners, the head of the household, they had more disposable income and controlled the purse strings. A good husband would hand his wages to his wife and she would hand back his beer and tobacco money but often this was not the case. For many women, it was a matter of having to hang around outside their husband's place of work or the local pub on payday in an attempt to get some money before it was all spent on drink.



Fig 28 family-action.org.uk

As a result of this power struggle, increasing amounts of women sought out additional income to provide for themselves and their ever-expanding families. Children came along at an alarming rate and it was not unheard of for a woman to produce a child every year.

Many took in laundry or other work which they could do at home, on top of their own long list of housewifely duties. Housework was extremely labour intensive, floors had to be scrubbed, carpets beaten, food had to be prepared and

Monday was always wash day, Tuesday was for drying the clothes and Wednesday for ironing. Washing, like housework, was hard work. Water had to be fetched from a communal well or a standpipe on the street or backyard. Depending on how fortunate you were, the clothes would be washed in hot or cold soapy water using a scrubbing board or a dolly to



Fig 27 Engraving by Lvasseur and Claessens after A Fragonard after Le Nain. From the Wellcome Collection



Fig 29 Stock Image

beat the clothes clean. Most of the clothes were made out of cotton and all of it needed ironing. It is not surprising that families only changed their clothes once a week!

The use of child labour also had an impact on housewives. It was at its highest around 1850, and as factories expanded so did the demand for small bodies and hands to keep the machines clear. Both boys and girls were employed from the age of five and upwards and with increases to the population, it meant wages were kept low. Conversely, there was a shortage of housing so rents became very expensive and so many families now had to rely on their children for the extra income.

As a consequence, the burden of housework chores, cooking and child rearing fell more and more onto the shoulders of the housewife. No longer were older siblings around to help with the younger ones. Even children were expected to work long days. Ten or twelve hours, six days a week was normal.

The other impact was on gender roles, which were never more strict than during Queen Victoria's reign. The man was the breadwinner, head of the household and across all classes appearances mattered. Many places only employed single or widowed women and girls. The married housewife was expected to run the home and bear children and to all appearances she did, despite the extra sewing and laundry or any other work she could do from home to supplement the family income.

'Home' could mean a small one up and down but most commonly families could only afford to rent one or, at most, two rooms, so large families would live, eat and sleep all together. With such a grim picture of life for the poor housewife and indeed for all the family, things did gradually improve towards the end of the 19th century. Philanthropists, churches and



Fig 4 Stock Image

charities became concerned about child labour and the severe lack of education among the poor. Churches started running schools and charged a small fee but that was even too much for the poorest of families. By 1870 most parishes had a school or a 'ragged' school. Ragged schools had sprung up from around the 1840s and were aimed at children from the lowest backgrounds, who were often turned away from church schools because of their 'ragged' appearance. Unfortunately, many families could not afford the loss of income so many of the children most in need failed to attend.

The government was under pressure to do something about it and finally in 1880 school attendance became compulsory for all five- to ten-year-olds. Their education was split along gender lines, and although all were taught to read, write and learn arithmetic (the three 'R's' as it was colloquially known) boys were taught the sciences, history and geography, whilst the girls learnt to cook, clean and sew in preparation of their role as a housewife.

Whilst in today's terms it would be viewed as highly sexist, it was a start, with young girls now being given the opportunities a formal education gave them. It's interesting to note that Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the first female physician and surgeon in the United Kingdom, qualified during this period, in 1865, having been born at 1 Commercial Road, Whitechapel in 1836. The idea that a female, especially from the working class (her father ran a pawnbrokers at her birth and her mother was the daughter of an innkeeper) could become a member of the medical profession would have been unheard of fifty years earlier, but we see, in the nuanced role women had then, and how it evolved, a glimmer of hope in the otherwise day-to-day drudgery Victorian life gave them.

Amanda Lloyd is the creator of the RBAM Award for Ripperology related non-fiction content. She enjoys researching and is the Admin to several Ripperology related social media groups.

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The Great American Doctor and Anatomical Knowledge – Part 4

Attempted the Life of a Boy

Michael L Hawley

Parts one, two, and three, of this article covered the first two and a half years of young Francis Tumblety's chosen occupation as a deceptive quack doctor, beginning in the spring of 1856 and ending in the fall of 1858 as he practiced in two of the four Canadian Provinces, Upper Canada, or Canada West, and Lower Canada, or Canada East. It was during this time we see Tumblety develop an interest in acquiring anatomical knowledge, surgical skill, and even human organs. The significance of this is it begins a path to the very reasons why Scotland Yard red-flagged Tumblety after having been arrested on suspicion for Whitechapel murders, a target of interest found in Scotland Yard files with the right means, motive, and opportunity.

Tumblety then left Canada for a full year and a half before returning and practicing in St. John, New Brunswick. His time in the US was from January 1859 to July 1860, and he practiced in three major US cities, Buffalo, New York, Detroit, Michigan, and Boston, Massachusetts. Having anatomical knowledge and a desire to acquire human organs is also evident during this 'American interlude' and even having the habit of walking city slums at night, but there is more. The subject of part four is his American interlude, because a new connection to the Whitechapel murders emerges; the first hint of Tumblety having a personality disorder found in many serial killers. Experts explain that these kinds of personality disorders manifest themselves by the age of fifteen or earlier. If so, then this twenty-plus-year old and future Jack the Ripper suspect might show signs of having a personality disorder, and that is what we see.

Tumblety left Toronto and first opened an office in Buffalo, New York, on January 12, 1859. He advertised that he would be in town for four months with the intention of returning to Toronto, "*The doctor will remain in Buffalo from 12th January to 12th April, 1859, when he will return to his office in Toronto, C.W.*"¹ Throughout January up to February 8, 1859, while physically in Buffalo, Tumblety was advertising in multiple newspapers across Canada West, such as the *Hamilton Spectator*, February 8, 1859, mail order for his medicines. Curiously, Tumblety never practiced in Toronto again.

Buffalo was situated on the westernmost point of Western New York bordering with the Province of Upper Canada, *aka*, Canada West (now Ontario, Canada) and is just a few hours train ride to Toronto. Tumblety's Indian herb doctor mentor, R.J. Lyons had recently moved his operation out of western New York south to western Ohio, headquartering in Cleveland. This meant that Tumblety did not encroach upon his mentor's territory when he began practicing in Buffalo.

At the time, Buffalo was nearly twice as large as Toronto with a population of 81,000 residents, so it made excellent business sense. Instead of claiming he was from the neighboring western New York city of Rochester (his hometown), he stated he was from "*Toronto, Canada West.*" In a future court case in New York City in April 1861, he told the court that he left Canada for Buffalo because "*times were hard.*"² The State of New York allowed doctors of all flavors to practice medicine without a license, so Tumblety had the opportunity to work his lucrative quack magic to full effect.

¹ *Buffalo Courier Express*, January 29, 1859

² *New York Evening Express*, April 1, 1861

Just as Tumblety conned patients in the Canadian Provinces, he continued the very same business practices in Buffalo. He would lure them into his office with deceitful cure-all advertising and supposed testimonials, diagnose them with a life-ending or life-altering disease, prescribe an herbal medicine of his creation, then claim the patient was cured after two weeks. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders Fifth Edition Text Revision (DSM-5-TR)*, someone with antisocial personality behavior (APSD) is deceitful, lies repeatedly, uses aliases, and cons for pleasure or personal profit. Further, they often manipulate others for personal gain, lack empathy, and seldom feel remorse for their actions. Tumblety fits every one of these signs. Not only did Tumblety lie repeatedly, claiming he has cured nearly all diseases known to man, including cancer, and his methods of deceitful business practices never changed. In the *Buffalo Courier Express*, January 31, 1859, he proclaims:

"The following Diseases can be cured by Dr. T. in the most obstinate stage of their existence, viz: Diseases of the Lungs, Heart, Liver and Throat. Also, Dropsy, Dyspepsia, Fits, St. Vitus' Dance, Rheumatism, Diseases of the Kidneys and Bladder, and all Diseases arising from Impurity of the Blood, such as Scrofula or King's Evil, Erysipelas, St. Anthony's Fire, Cancers, fever Sores of however long standing. Also, all other Chronic complaints, which have baffled the science and skill of calomel doctors."

\$30 REWARD IF THE INDIAN HERB DOCTOR fails to describe diseases and tell his patients the nature of their complaint or illness without receiving any information from them. No charge for consultation or advice. Office, 181 Fulton street, corner Nassau, 2^d stairs.

OUR MOTTO.

We use such Balms as have no strife,
With Nature or the Laws of Life;
With blood our hands we never stain,
Nor poison men to ease their pain.
Our Father—whom all goodness fills,
Provides the means to cure all ills.
The simple Herbs beneath our feet,
Well used, relieve our pains complete.

A simple Herb, a simple Flower,
Culled from the dewy Lea—
These, these shall speak with touching power
Of change and health to thee.

5,000 certificates can be seen at the Doctor's office.

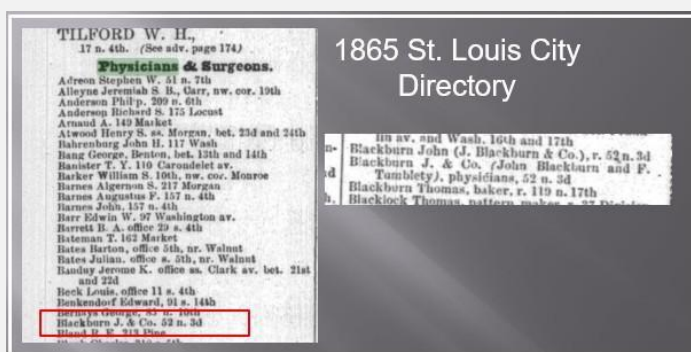
Brooklyn Eagle, October 3, 1863

As discussed in part two, instead of operating the usual Indian herb doctor office in Toronto six months before practicing in Buffalo, he opened a "Medical Institute" and claimed to be the principal for what ostensibly was a private medical school. It was clearly a move to convince the Toronto medical establishment that he was a qualified physician with a medical diploma and deserving of a medical license. The problem was, he never went to medical school, so he did not come to Canada with anatomical knowledge and clinical experience. There is evidence that this medical institute was acting as a true medical school. A very successful Cleveland medical examiner named Dr. Charles P. Jones did indeed claim to have been an 1859 graduate of Tumblety's Toronto Medical Institute.⁴ A medical school would not only require their instructors to have medical and anatomical knowledge and skill at running clinical labs operating on cadavers, but they would also have to lecture. A very credible eyewitness and life-long resident of Buffalo, Police Captain Thomas Cavanaugh, in May 1914 sat alongside ex-Chief of Police David Reynolds, Captain Samuel Notter, ex-Chief Wolfe, Detective Jerry Donovan, and Detective Patrick Mack, and reminisced Civil War stories to a *Buffalo Courier* correspondent.⁵ Their discussion focused primarily upon when John Wilkes Booth was in the city performing at Buffalo's Metropolitan Theater in July 1863. Cavanaugh recalled when Booth palled around with none other than Francis Tumblety:

"Booth made a very singular acquaintance while in Buffalo. In fact quite an intimacy sprang up between him and a Dr. Tumblety -or Tumulty. He drove around selling cure-alls for everything, giving lectures with

Calomel doctors referred to physicians with qualified medical diplomas, since in the mid-19th century they were still prescribing mercury. When Tumblety realized that his reputation was preceding him, he began to omit his name and even use aliases. In 1863, his name vanished from his advertisements in Brooklyn, New York, opting for "The Indian Herb Doctor."³

In the 1865 St. Louis City Directory, his office in the "Physicians and Surgeons" category was "Blackburn, J. & Co.":



³ *Brooklyn Eagle*, December 28, 1863

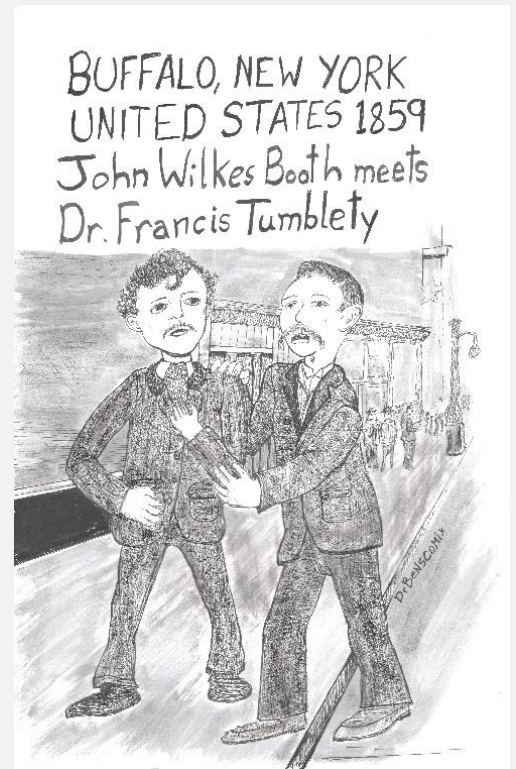
⁴ *Biographical Sketches section of the History of Wyndot County, Ohio*, Chicago: Leggett, Conaway & Co., 1884, p. 709

⁵ *Buffalo Courier*, May 31, 1914

Thespian emphasis. He frequently located himself on the Terrace, where he would draw a big crowd by distributing bags of flour, where he would draw a big crowd by distributing bags of flour. He was particularly susceptible to the allurements of the theatrical profession. He sought Booth and they were seen together treating each other with familiarity.”⁶ [Author emphasis added]

Booth did indeed perform in Buffalo in July 1863, and Cavanaugh likely did see the two together, but 1863 was not when Tumblety opened an office and distributed bags of flour to big crowds. This occurred in January 1859, and Cavanaugh seems to have merely mixed the two Tumblety events up. Still, Cavanaugh was accurate not only about Tumblety distributing flour but he was also correct about Tumblety’s passion for the theater. Cavanaugh stated that he recalled Tumblety giving lectures, and in context he clearly meant medical lectures. Corroborating Tumblety’s interest in lecturing in Buffalo is the following notice he placed in the *Buffalo Courier*, May 4, 1859:

“Departure of Dr. Tumblety. We learn from Dr. Tumblety that he has received a requisition from the citizens of Detroit, and is to leave this city in a few days for a new field of professional labor. The Doctor regrets to leave Buffalo, for it has been profitable for him to be here; and he contemplates returning in the fall, **to lecture** and to resume his practice.” [Author emphasis added]



It was expected in the 19th century for physicians and surgeons to give a medical lecture illustrated with anatomical organs collected by the lecturer. According to Michael Sappol, curator-historian at the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland, in the nineteenth century, “*Membership in the [surgical/medical] profession was consolidated by a common culture of collectorship [of anatomical specimens]...*”⁷ Doctor A. W. Bates, PhD, MD, at the Department of Histopathology in the Royal Free Hospital, London, England, states:

*Anatomy teachers assembled their own collections or “museums” of material with which to illustrate lectures...Ownership of a museum indicated that a teacher was likely to be financially solvent and, in the 1820s, possession of a museum worth more than 500 pounds was suggested as a prerequisite for an anatomy teacher to be recognized by the College of Surgeons.”*⁸

Just one and half years later in July 1861 Colonel Charles Dunham witnessed Tumblety giving a medical lecture in Washington DC to a room full of officers and illustrated the lecture with a huge assortment of human organs.⁹

It was in Buffalo that we first have an eyewitness account of Tumblety’s lifelong nightly prowling habits in city slums; locations much like the Whitechapel District. In the *Buffalo Times*, June 27, 1903, a *Times* reporter stated:

“In this city he was one of the best known habitues of the Tenderloin streets after midnight, and was known as “a night hawk” or “masculine street walker.” For several years following his arrest in London [in 1888], Tumblety resided in Buffalo, where he is said to have continued his nightly observations of the seamy side of life.”

Tenderloin streets was a commonly used phrase in the early 20th century that referred to a redlight district full of crime, prostitution, and corruption; not unlike London’s Whitechapel District. For the rest of Tumblety’s life, he visited cities, so his time in the larger cities of Hamilton, Toronto, Buffalo, and Detroit seemed to have cultivated this passion.

⁶ *Buffalo Courier*, May 31, 1914

⁷ Sappol, “Morbid curiosity”: *The Decline and Fall of the Popular Anatomical Museum. Common-Place, A Cabinet of Curiosities, Volume 4, Number 2, January 2004*

⁸ Bates, A.W., “Indecent and Demoralising Representations”: *Public Anatomy Museums in Mid-Victorian England, Medical History, V. 52 (1): 1-22, Jan 1, 2008.*

⁹ *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 3, 1888

Tumblety left Buffalo, New York, in April 1859, but instead of returning to Toronto he opened an office in Detroit, Michigan. In the April 10, 1859, issue of the *Detroit Free Press*, Tumblety published a notice stating he will “*shortly visit our city...Due notice of his arrival and location will be given.*” Three reasons why he would have selected Detroit was, first, it was not in R.J. Lyons’ territory, second, it was a large city equal in size to Toronto with a multitude of unsuspecting ‘patients,’ and third, Michigan was a location that did not require a license to practice. Curiously, while Tumblety did indeed advertise that his Buffalo office was only going to be in operation for less than six months, he did not go back to Toronto to practice as he professed, but he did continue advertising throughout Canada West. He then stiffed the newspapers out of payment. According to the *Kingston Whig-Standard*, April 5, 1859:

“We look upon Tumblety as a humbug. Lately he and his agent contracted for advertising most extensively in Canada. Having gained his object in having his name widely circulated throughout the country, he repudiated his contract by stating that having lost money in speculating in land, &c., he was unable to fulfil the terms of his contract, consequently paid nothing for advertising. -Brockville Recorder”

According to the *DSM-5-TR*, this actually conforms to yet another element of someone with ASPB, specifically, a failure to honor monetary obligations. This occurrence by itself may have nothing to do with ASPB, but a pattern of this throughout Tumblety’s life -especially if there is also evidence of a lack of remorse-may very well be evidence. In sworn testimony in 1904, young Joseph Mitchell from New Orleans stated he was approached by Tumblety in May/June 1902 and asked to be his errand boy for \$30 a month, which is over \$1,100 today.¹⁰ Mitchell agreed, quit his menial job, and worked for him for four months. Within that time, Tumblety was mugged and hit over the head with a lead pipe, causing a large open wound on his head. Mitchell cared for him day and night and even brought food from his family’s home. Throughout this time, Tumblety promised him he would soon pay him and even leave him \$20,000 (\$540,000 today) in his will. When Tumblety regained his health, he sneaked out of the city without telling Mitchell. He NEVER paid Mitchell for the four months and Mitchell was not in his will.

In the *Detroit Free Press*, May 15, 1859, Tumblety announced his arrival:

“Arrival – Dr. Tumblety, Indian Herb Doctor from Toronto, Canada, has arrived, and has taken rooms Nos. 5 and 6 in the Fireman’s Hall, Jefferson avenue. The recommendations the Doctor brings are perfectly satisfactory.”

Tumblety continued to deceive and claim he came from Toronto. In the *Detroit Free Press*, May 14, 1859, an “*F. Tumbley, MD Canada*” was named in the Hotel Arrivals section for the Biddle House, although, in the May 1, 1859, edition of the same paper, a letter was waiting for an F. Tumblety at the post office.

Tumblety left Detroit early, on or about July 31, 1859, just two and a half months after he had established himself. The *Detroit Free Press*, May 21, 1859, showed that his original intention was to stay six months, “*We are happy to hear that Dr. will remain with us six months...*” Why did he leave so quickly? Detroit could be referred to as a Toronto-sized city but without the requirement of a medical license to practice his quack doctor scams. The following eyewitness might have the answer and even stated “*...when ugly stories began to leak about him he would suddenly leave.*”

In November 1888, John Hurson told a *Los Angeles Tribune* reporter that he recalled seeing Tumblety in Detroit:

*“Well, sir, I first met him in 1874 in Detroit. He originally came from Toronto, Canada... He was a medicine fakir; he would open an office, advertise extensively... My business? I was with a circus then, took me about the country all the time, and I met him in Detroit, New Orleans and Memphis... He [Tumblety] was a hard case – you wouldn’t print all I could tell you about him, it is too vile... His tastes were indescribably low, and his **habits bestial beyond description**. It was generally supposed that he or it was a double sexed monstrosity... While it may be developed that he is not ‘Jack the Ripper,’ it is easy to imagine that such a depraved wretch, might find a hellish sort of pleasure in committing the peculiar atrocities which have excited all London.”* Mr. Hurson related one instance in Detroit, where it became

¹⁰ Circuit Court Archives, City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, Case Number 31430, Series A., 1904 – 1908.

known that *Tumblety had attempted the life of a boy, under indescribable circumstances, and is inclined to believe that he is indeed the dreaded "Jack the Ripper."*¹¹ [Author emphasis added]

Hurson related one instance in Detroit, where it became known that Tumblety had attempted the life of a boy, under indescribable circumstances, and is inclined to believe that he is indeed the dreaded "Jack the Ripper."

Los Angeles Tribune, November 29, 1888

Tumblety's habits being bestial, or beast-like, beyond description, since beyond description means indescribable. If true, then getting what he wanted may result in the death of a person.

Hurson was reported by the *LA Tribune* to claim he met Tumblety in Detroit in 1874. Why discuss Hurson's recollections when this article deals with Tumblety in 1859 and 1860? Hurson likely meant the year 1859. The only time Tumblety opened an office in Detroit - and advertised extensively in the newspapers - was from May 1859 to July 1859. Further, Hurson stated Tumblety came from Toronto, and it was at this time that Tumblety's advertisements stated this very thing; "*Tumblety, Indian Herb Doctor from Toronto.*" Also, between 1873 and 1875, Tumblety was not even in the US, having opened an office in Liverpool, England.

Hurson's recollections sound eerily familiar with what Richard Norris testified under oath on May 12, 1905, presided by Judge Gabriel Fernandez Jr. Norris was an interest of Tumblety in New Orleans beginning in 1881 and testified that Tumblety sexually molested him. He already admitted in court that he used to work as a male prostitute for extra money and testified that before Tumblety sodomized him he put a long knife to his throat and threatened his life if he did not cooperate.¹² It makes sense that Hurson recalled details of his "*bestial,*" or beast-like, treatment towards young men. Synonyms for the word bestial are brutal, savage, or violent. This type of behavior would certainly fit with someone having antisocial personality behavior with such sexual abuse and showing absolutely no remorse.

Before dismissing John Hurson's account as mere hearsay, it was not public knowledge that Tumblety had an intersex condition with both male and female features, or what Hurson called 'it' a double sexed monstrosity. The 19th century term used for this condition was a hermaphrodite, as in the case with Richard Norris testifying in court to his physical features. Lastly, recall that Hurson stated he worked for a circus that took him around the country and claimed he met Tumblety in Detroit, Memphis, and New Orleans. He may have been employed by the famous Antonio and

**ANTONIO & WILDER'S
GREAT WORLD
CIRCUS!**



Star Show of the United States!
This Company is selected from the best performers of Europe and America. Prominent among the Features of this Magnificent Establishment will be found

THE ANTONIO BROTHERS!

Amusements.

**ANTONIO & WILDER'S
GREAT WORLD CIRCUS!**
THE GRAND TABERNACLE OF AMUSEMENTS.

The only Company that will be in Michigan this season, will exhibit at Detroit, on Williams' Reserve, above

**TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND THURSDAY,
AUGUST 2nd, 3rd, AND 4th, 1859.**
Afternoon and evening, at 2½ and 7½ o'clock P. M. Admission—Box, 50 cents; Pit, 25 cents; children to boxes, HALF PRICE ONLY.

This is the most complete establishment of the season, combining with the world-renowned

**DIABLO FAMILY,
GUILLAMO, LORENZO, AUGUSTUS AND
ALPHONSO ANTONIO,
EQUESTRIANS, ACROBATS, GYMNASTS,
CLOWNS, PANTOMIMISTS, CORPS
DE BALLET,
PREMIERE EQUESTRIENNES,**
Performing and Ring Horses,
And ensemble never before concentrated in any traveling exhibition, producing at every representation a brilliant range of entertainments equally rapid, exciting, and *recherché*, including the BEAUTIFUL TRICK HORSE, AMERICAN EAGLE, the best educated steed in America, exhibited by MAF. J. SHOWLES, and thrilling and dazzling performance of MR. J. SHOWLES AS THE FIRE KING, an act which beggars description, which is equally DARING, GRAND AND TERRIFIC, AND WILL BE PERFORMED EVERY NIGHT.

This vast establishment will make a tour of Michigan, visiting every city and town of consequence.

Andy SPRINGER, Agent.

Wilder's Great World Circus, which was performing in Detroit at the John R. Williams Reserve from August 2 to August 4, 1859, when Tumblety was still in Detroit. He left Detroit sometime in mid - to late - August for Boston placing his first newspaper advertisement in the *Boston Evening Transcript* on August 23, 1859. Tumblety's Detroit office was in rooms 5 and 6 at the Fireman's Hall, which was located in downtown Detroit near the Detroit River at the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Randolph Street. Due north on Randolph Street just over a quarter of a mile and also in downtown Detroit was the John R. Williams Reserve and Antonio and Wilder's Circus. It was a traveling circus that did indeed perform in both New Orleans, Louisiana, and Memphis Tennessee.

¹¹ *Los Angeles Tribune, November 29, 1888*
¹² Circuit Court Archives, Op. Cit.

When Antonio and Wilder's Circus performed in Detroit, the 16-year-old daughter of a local farmer named Lafontaine was abducted by whom authorities initially believed was a circus hand. She successfully escaped and told authorities that the man met her, befriended her, and told her he worked for the circus and offered her excitement of travel. He then introduced her to a group of friendly women who tried to groom her in the art of seduction and sex. Once she realized what they were grooming her to do, she escaped. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, August 6, 1859, the abductor, named Hamm Norman, was not an employee of the circus but "*the proprietor of a side show*" who followed the circus. Antonio and Wilder wanted to make clear that prostitution rings following a traveling circus was abhorrent and that their circus was moral and upright. Detectives stated that Norman fled to Canada.

Tumblety's pastime was to walk city streets at night in red light districts infested with prostitution and a 19th century traveling circus seems to have been red light district on wheels. Even though Antonio and Wilder wanted the public to believe their circus was safe to perform in local communities, their circus hands had other ideas. After Detroit, Antonio and Wilder's Circus traveled west to Lansing, Michigan, and performed on Sunday, August 28. An editorial in the *Lansing State Journal*, August 30, 1859, complained about the circus hands rowdy after-hours behavior:

"Certain of the hands and canvas-men visited a disreputable house on the east side of the river, and there fell by the ears among themselves. One fellow followed up another with an axe, threatening to kill him... Later in the night, a citizen of this place was met by three of the circus hands and mauled and beaten severely."

When the same circus made its way to Grand Haven, Michigan, citizens discovered the same after-hours debauchery. According to the *Grand Haven News*, September 14, 1859:

"...the circus of Antonio & Wilder arrived, agreeable to the public notice, on Monday last; and with it came a great and a crowded day for Grand Haven... The performance was accompanied by a usual amount of drunkenness, profanity and boisterous hallooing in our streets, during the evening."

The unpublished big evening event was for locals to pay to see the elephant's large genitals. This type of traveling redlight district would have been tailor-made for a man like Tumblety seeking out the company of young men and young male prostitutes.

Tumblety's next office was in Boston, Massachusetts, opening in late August 1859 until July 1860. Over 50,000 Irish immigrants lived in Boston by 1850. Boston was a massive city of over 177,000 residents, which was twice the population of Buffalo and almost four times the population of Toronto. His thirst for evening walks in the streets would have been easily quenched. In fact, an eyewitness to Tumblety's time in Boston in 1859/1860 in the *Boston Globe*, November 21, 1888:

*"I should say he was about 30 years old when I knew him. **He liked the slums**, notwithstanding the fact that he always had plenty of money, and could have entered, if he had been inclined, into good society."* [Author emphasis added]

This decades-long interest occurred even nearer to the time of the Whitechapel murders. Richard Norris testified:

*"It seems to me he had peculiar habits, **every night going through all the dark streets**, walking like a Street Walker. **He would take the darkest streets, and the darkest spots at night**, and at one and two o'clock in the morning he would walk up Camp street, **and all the dark streets and dark corners**. I used to watch him very close because I did not know what kind of fellow he was."* [Author emphasis added]

Camp Street was the location of the Irish slums in New Orleans, and the corner of Camp Street and Poydras was the St. Charles Theatre.¹³ Dr. John B. Brooks, a physician at Hot Springs, Arkansas, corroborates Norris' sworn testimony. Brooks stated under oath a very similar statement about Tumblety:

¹³ Irish Culture in New Orleans, *New Orleans and Company*. <<https://www.neworleans.com/things-to-do/multicultural/cultures/irish/>>

“...and when he was walking around in the night he would take *the dark side of the streets, the dark streets*, but when I saw him at night on these occasions of course I would not stop to speak with him.”¹⁴ [Author emphasis added]

A.R. Smith, proprietor of the Hotel Navarre, Hot Springs. Served one term as mayor, 1882 to 1882, and knew Tumblety then. He stated under oath:

“I would see him on the streets frequently. As I say, he was a public character on the streets, and you would always find him on the streets just at nightfall. He spent a great deal of time on the streets.” [Author emphasis added]¹⁵

Tumblety left Boston in June 1860 for St. John, New Brunswick, which is the subject of part five. It is likely not a coincidence that the highly publicized visit from the Prince of Wales was scheduled to arrive in St. John on August 3, 1860. As will be shown, the pattern of deceptive business practices and abhorrent personal behaviors to both young men and women continues.

Special thanks to Joe Chetcuti for his outstanding editorial input.

Michael L Hawley is the author of Dr. Francis Tumblety & the Railway Ripper (2023), Jack the Ripper Suspect Dr. Francis Tumblety (2018), and The Ripper's Haunts (2016) and has published over twenty research articles on the Whitechapel murders mystery in Ripperologist, Whitechapel Society Journal, and The New Independent Review. He is coauthor with true crime expert Alan R. Warren on the nonfiction book Jack the Ripper: The Interviews (2020), and is a participating author of Who Was Jack the Ripper? (2019). He is also a cohost on NBC Radio's House of Mystery with Allen R. Warren.

...Weird Coincidences...

...Annie Chapman died in the early hours of the 8th September 1888. When the 'Pinchin Street torso' was discovered on the 10th September 1889, it was believed by Donald Swanson (based on his interpretation of medical reports) that she died on the 8th September 1889...

...Catherine Eddowes gave her name as 'nothing' at Bishopsgate Police Station, several hours later, part of her apron was found under the Goulston Street Graffito where it stated "the juwes are the people who will not be blamed for nothing'...

...Frederick Seband Hempleman, who owned the fish manure factory adjacent to where the Rainham torso was found in 1887 also served as the foreman on the inquest jury...

¹⁴ Circuit Court Archives, Op. Cit.

¹⁵ Circuit Court Archives, Op. Cit.

Willy Clarkson: The Wigmaker of Wellington Street

P. William Grimm

*"And let me say...that disguise is a difficult art. It is an art that enters more effectually into real life – its romance and tragedy – than most people would be disposed to believe."*¹

-Willy Clarkson

The Whitechapel Murders of 1888 have long been attributed to a phantom killer dubbed 'Jack the Ripper' by the headline savvy newspapers of the day. This supposed serial killer is most often portrayed as an out-of-control sexual deviant, a Dr. Jekyll / Mr. Hyde-like monster barely able to control himself. This article posits a different premise: that these killings were a calculated pattern purposefully executed to protect the ongoing criminal activities of an underground villain with an impenetrable veneer of faux upper-class credibility.



The F.O.S. Portrait Gallery, "Ally Sloper's Half Holiday", 8 Aug. 1891, p. 236.

The Case of the Purloined Rouge

The date was October 4, 1888, and Willy Clarkson, the royal wigmaker for Queen Victoria, was angry and hurt, or at least he professed to be so. He was the victim of theft, after all, and he demanded justice for the wrongs committed against him. Inventory had apparently gone missing from Clarkson's upscale wig and costume shop on Wellington Street in the heart of Soho, London. Clarkson was pointing the finger at three very specific female store workers, the youngest just 14 years old².

The entire female population in the streets of the East End huddled together to keep warm and safe - terrified of the deadly stalker known as 'Jack the Ripper', a nickname embraced by the newspapers, culled from a letter the culprit may or may not have written³. Willy Clarkson had other things on his mind. From all outward appearances, he sought stark and immediate retribution against the thieves that had wronged him; or, at least, he wanted control over them. Tawdry headlines of alleyway knife murders be damned.

In a very real way, Clarkson spared no expense to accomplish his goal. He hired a well-known and expensive private prosecutor, the renowned Arthur Newton⁴, already known as the "*Marlborough Street Solicitor*"; as well as personally retaining Detective Constable Henry Collins of E Division to arrest and give testimony against the accused⁵. Like some Dickensian villain dressed in a bow tie and top hat⁶, with the Victorian cliché of a moustache curled evilly at the corners adorning his upper lip, the presence of Clarkson loomed large over the criminal proceedings. This vengeance-filled side of Clarkson was in stark contrast to his public persona - extroverted and affable, welcoming of all sorts and sizes into his massive and fanciful wig and costume studio.

¹ *The Art of Disguise*, Willy Clarkson, London Theatres Costume Magazine, 1896.

² The husband of one of the young women was also arrested, accused of participating in the alleged scheme. "Employees at Clarkson's," *The Echo*, 8 Oct. 1888, p. 4; "The Robbery From a Theatrical Wig Maker," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 14 Oct. 1888, p. 12.

³ "The Complete History of Jack the Ripper," Sugden, Phillip (Constable & Robinson 2002 e-book), pp. 517-525.

⁴ Private prosecutions were common in the late nineteenth centuries, with many crimes prosecuted only through arrangement and payment by the victim.

⁵ <https://openyls.law.yale.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/6598b1b4-4308-457e-92bf-5e4633cad76c/content>

⁶ "Bow Street," *Morning Advertiser*, 9 Oct. 1888, p. 6.

⁶ "The F.O.S. Portrait Gallery," *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday*, 8 Aug. 1891, p. 236.

Victorian Andy Warhol

In 1888, Willy Clarkson was 27-years-old and the darling of the West End. To a certain extent, he had become a minor British icon. The young second-generation wigmaker, in January of that year, Clarkson served as the wigmaker for a Royal Performance of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, as part of the year's Jubilee celebrations, which very much tickled the fancy of the Royals and their staff. To demonstrate how deeply the Royal Family appreciated his craftsmanship, Clarkson earned a meeting with the Queen herself and was bestowed with the royal patent, rendering him the Royal Perruquier and Costumier to Her Majesty and the Royal Family⁷.

Clarkson's wigs, costumes, and stage props filled the stages of all the elaborate theatres lining Shaftesbury Avenue, the center of Soho's grand theatre district. The business had been started by Clarkson's father in the 1830s, and by 1888, the younger Clarkson had grown the shop's clientele immensely. Counted within its numbers stage royalty including Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, William Terris – who today could be fairly compared to the likes of Leonardo DiCaprio and Scarlett Johansson – and an endless array of highly acclaimed productions, including a variety of Shakespeare's greatest plays, Henry Irving's production of *Faust*, and countless other highly acclaimed plays. His name peppered West End show posters and newspaper adverts, proudly proclaiming "*Wigs by Clarkson*"⁸. Clarkson's autograph book contained countless scribbles of famous stars and royalty, showing the depth and breadth of his close familiarity with the theatre scene of the day.⁹

Willy Clarkson was like a Victorian Andy Warhol in a way: shocking and flamboyant who knew everybody.¹⁰ His studio was the center of the leisurely pursuit of the grandest fancy-dress balls and stage presentations; the swells and their gals competing ruthlessly to be the finest and outlandishly dressed at the fancy-dress balls that were used as score cards to calculate the social value of their young, rich, and status-seeking attendees.

Clarkson's name became so ubiquitous in the theatrical scene and West End theatrical programs, that his name became part of the slang used by avid-theatre goer Winston Churchill, who developed a habit of scrawling 'Wigs by Clarkson' on any draft correspondence¹¹. Indeed, Churchill's final approval of the joint communique issued along with President Franklin D. Roosevelt at Casablanca following the surrender of Germany was transmitted to his secretary with those simple words: "*Wigs by Clarkson*"¹². Clarkson's sway on British culture was that strong.



Clarkson's house on Wardour Street



Clarkson in 1893

By the end of 1888, Clarkson was invited to Balmoral, where he costumed and wiggged the Royal Family, including Prince Albert Henry, Princess Louisa, and Princess Beatrice, for an even more elaborate *tableaux vivant*, or living art, featuring various members of the Royal Family in poses from historic paintings and scenes, for the benefit of Queen Victoria. Her Majesty enjoyed the unique performances immensely¹³.

With this growing and impressive resume, Willy Clarkson was no modest man. He craved publicity and with his shock of hair and goatee, burly chest and broad shoulders, yet just five feet five inches tall, Clarkson must have struck quite an intriguing physical profile. The papers clamoring to run stories about him, his

7 "Royal Revels", *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 18 Jan. 1888, p.4, "The Society Papers", *North Bucks Times*, 19 Jan., 1888.

8 Willy Clarkson Advertisement, *The Music Hall*, 2 March 1889, p.45; https://collections.vam.ac.uk/search/?page=1&page_size=15&q=willy+clarkson

9 <https://mrsdaffodildigresses.wordpress.com/tag/willy-clarkson/>

10 Willy Clarkson's Mystery Fortune, *Daily Express*, 16 Oct. 1934, p. 6.

11 Stetler, Cita, *Working With Winston: The Unsung Women Behind Britain's Greatest Statesmen*, (Pegasus Books), p. 104

12 Gilbert, Martin, *Winston S. Churchill: Finest Hour 1939–1941, Vol. VII*, (1983), p. 308.

13 <https://www.rct.uk/collection/exhibitions/george-washington-wilson-queen-victorias-photographer-in-scotland/university/balmoral-tableaux-vivants-charles-edward>

name pervasive in their theatre advertisement and review pages, as though people would attend theatre shows just to see the new and exciting wigs and costumes provided by him. Fancy-dress balls were all the rage at the time and he provided the intricate costumes and wigs throughout the West End, especially in Covent Garden, where his studio was located. It was described as a complete spectacle to behold:

*"Enter the shop, and you find a dozen girls supplying a score of histrions, amateur and professional, with the wherewithal to suppress and supplement, to reveal and conceal Nature. Press forward to Mr. Clarkson's private apartment and there you find him, perhaps putting the completing curl to a costly confection of hair for the last new Juliet; perhaps giving the final touch to the nose of Lecoq, the detective, about to set forth, disguised cap-a-pied, upon the track of an escaped criminal – so wide is the range of his customers...The full strength of the establishment is now two hundred and upwards...[In the studio] are vast drawers labeled most mysteriously "Dark Girls", "Fair Girls" – What a Blue Beard's chamber is this! ...On the other side of the Wellington Street studio, there is an establishment devoted to the storage of costumes, while within a stone's throw are factories for the manufacture of wigs – deft-fingered work mostly carried on by girls...Hundreds of conventional designs are always kept in stock. In semi-sepulchral rooms lie coffined princes, labelled kings and courtiers, Crusaders, Christy minstrels, croziers bishops and crutched beggars...Stowed away in cellars are ghastly rows of [masks] gaping away the hours till King Pantomime wakes them to work – grinning fiends and crying babies...celebrities of all sorts, and animals from every clime. The Blondin donkey fraternizes with a life-like crocodile; the British lion lies down amid Bo-Peep's lambs."*¹⁴

A Bohemian for His Times

The London nightlife belonged to Willy Clarkson; and Willy Clarkson belonged to the London nightlife. The Covent Garden area where he resided was the epicenter of Bohemian culture, the streets sprawling with the hipsters of the day, or as Clarkson's biographer described it:



Clarkson's Studio

*"Bohemians of both sexes; flocks of chorus girls from the many musical comedies running in London, "confidence men". card-sharpers, crooks of every description, prize-fighters, jockeys and C.I.D. men from Scotland Yard...The Bohemians with whom Willy Clarkson mingled were almost entirely belonging to the theatrical ranks of Bohemia, although the wig-maker, both professionally and otherwise, knew the crowds of jockeys, prize-fighters, and others who came and went as their stars rose in the London Skies, before they waned and faded out entirely."*¹⁵

Thus, in addition to his status as a Royalty-adjacent tradesman, Clarkson was a true man about town with actual street credibility. He was not shy of advertising this social status, ensuring that all of the most popular newspapers included both advertisements for, and stories about, his growing wig-making and costuming empire. As early as 1883, when he was just 22, he advertised his store, claiming he employed over 150 well-trained assistants, ready to travel around England and further, all inquiries considered¹⁶. This continued relentlessly well into the early twentieth century. And in these adverts, Clarkson was quite proud to announce all his most famous clients and friends. Clarkson had a host of famous clients and friends which included some of the most renowned stage names of the day, including William Terriss, Ellen Terry, and, from a very young age, Marie Lloyd¹⁷. One of his self-proclaimed claims to fame was that he introduced a young Marie Lloyd to Sarah Bernhardt, the latter who provided an autograph to the former to mark the occasion¹⁸. He had a lifelong friendship with both of the famous women, attending Marie Lloyd's funeral after her premature death in 1922¹⁹.

¹⁴ "Mr. Clarkson at Home", *The Era*, 4 Nov. 1893, p. 11.

¹⁵ Greenwall, Harry, *The Strange Life of Willy Clarkson*, John Long Ltd. Publisher (1936), p. 66

¹⁶ Clarkson Advertisement, *The Stage*, 9 Mar. 1883, p. 20.

¹⁷ "Talk of the Day", *The Evening News*, 19 Sept. 1940, p. 2.

¹⁸ Greenwall, p. 122.

¹⁹ <https://www.alamy.com/funeral-of-marie-lloyd-the-music-hall-star-at-golders-green-mr-willie-clarkson-the-famous-theatrical-costumier-12-october-1922-image623687572.html>.

A Wig, a Needle, and Some Thread

As dedicated as Clarkson was to carrying himself as a chic bohemian, his roots were firmly entrenched in the working class. A wigmaker and costumier was, after all, a mere tradesman, even if that trade was for the benefit of the Royal Family, or the royalty of the stage. As mentioned, Clarkson was a second-generation wigmaker, whose father opened the House of Clarkson in the 1830s on Russell Street, across from the police station on Bow Street. Rather than give his child toys, the younger Clarkson claims he had nothing but a wig, with thread and a needle²⁰. The elder Clarkson served a wide range of theatrical customers across England in a working-class, tradesman's existence, sharing the market with a small group of other well-respected costumiers and wig-makers, which included Samuel May, John Lane, and Charles Fox²¹.

Jennie from Bethnal Green



Jennie Glover

As a young man, Willy Clarkson had a love interest of sorts, a young Ms. Jennie Glover, who would become his fiancée for a period of time²². Jennie Glover was born Jane Elizabeth Bowen, but was informally adopted by her uncle, Albert Glover, who was married to the sister of Jennie's mother²³. Her biological father, William Bowen, was a chairmaker who lived at 14 White Street, Bethnal Green, when Jennie was born in 1860. By 1871, the Bowen family had moved down the road to 50 White Street, but Jennie, aged 10, was no longer living with them. Instead, she was staying with Uncle Albert, who lived in Walthamstow and maintained a printing shop on Hamsell Street in the Cripplegate area²⁴. Albert had been involved in printing for his entire life, starting as early as 14, polishing lithographic plates, likely as an apprentice, before commencing his trade as a lithographic printer no later than the age of 24 and likely much earlier²⁵.

It is unclear why Jennie left her family's house on White Street at such a young age, when all of her siblings remained for years, but it roughly aligns with when a young Clarkson was sent to boarding school in Chelsea before being sent to Paris shortly afterwards²⁶.

By 1891, William Bowen had moved his family to 3 Pollard Row, not far from his previous White Street address. Both were in Bethnal Green, but Jennie was, of course, no longer part of the family. Still, two of Bowen's children (Jennie's biological brothers) were printers and bookbinders, following in the footsteps of their Uncle Albert, who also maintained a close relationship with Willy Clarkson²⁷.

While the youthful romance between Willy and Jennie eventually ended, they remained close friends. In 1891, Jennie married Lt. Walter Arthur Cole²⁸, a famous ventriloquist who performed in many of the same East End and West End theatres Clarkson provided wigs, costumes, and stage props for. In addition he also provided scenery for at least one Royal production.²⁹

Lieutenant Cole, whose father was a surgeon³⁰, incorporated life-sized, mechanically-operated ventriloquist puppets into his stage show, representing men and women, animals, talking houses and more. He received rave reviews throughout England, creating performances that were elaborate and over-stated in a very Victorian way³¹.

20 Greenwall, at p. 16

21 Coates, David James, *The Development of Amateur Theatre in Britain in the Long Nineteenth Century 1789-1914* (University of Warwick 2017), pp. 244-252.; *Theatre Advertisement, Northern Daily Times*, 24 Jan., 1859, p. 8; *Theatre Advertisement, The Stage*, 9 Mar. 1883, p. 20

22 Superintendent Registrar's District, Bethnal Green, 1860 Births, Jane Elizabeth Bowen; Superintendent Registrar's District, Wandsworth, 1896 Births; 1871 Bowen Census; 1881 Glover Census; 1881 Bowen Census; *Marriages, The Walthamstow and Leyton Guardian*, 29 Aug., 1891, p. 8.

23 Id

24 Id.; *Advertisement, Epsom Journal*, 6 May, 1890, p. 4

25 1851 64 Maidenhead Ct., Glover Census; 1861 North Terrace Glover Census

26 1861 Clarkson Census (Hammersmith, Chelsea)

27 1891 Bowen Family Census

28 *Marriages, The Walthamstow and Leyton Guardian*, 29 Aug. 1891, p. 8; *The Music Hall*, Aug. 29, 1891, p. 6.

29 Osbourne House Theatre Programme, January 27-31, 1894

30 *Marriage Certificate of Walter Cole and Emily Wilson*, 8 Dec., 1868.

31 <https://www.layersoflondon.org/map/records/lieutenant-walter-cole-ventriloquist-portland-lodge-holland-road-1885-1890>

Born in 1845³², Lt. Cole was over 15 years older than Jennie and Willy and was already a widower. Appearances suggest he served more as a father figure than as a husband and colleague. Clarkson and Cole provided wigs and scenery together for an amateur drama performed at Osborne House featuring Princess Louisa and attended by Queen Victoria herself³³. Clearly the bond between them appeared to be a close one.

When Cole married Jennie in 1891, Clarkson provided lavish gifts to the newlyweds, and his name was splashed in the papers, being identified as both the ‘partner’ and the ‘manager’ of Jennie’s father, Uncle Albert³⁴. This writer wonders what business a wigmaker like Clarkson could have managing for Albert Glover, a lithographic printer. Perhaps, he made posters for stage shows. Maybe he used the lithographic plates and his skills in manipulating them for something else.

Regardless, Clarkson and Jennie remained close at least through to her wedding in 1891 and likely longer. The records do not reflect whether Jennie’s biological father attended the wedding, though records confirm he lived in the area at the time³⁵. Clarkson moved on with his life, fully investing himself in growing the family wig-making business.

Clarkson followed closely in his father’s footsteps, retaining many of the same relationships his father had built the generation before him. Those connections included the police, whose Bow Street Station was merely feet away from the elder Clarkson’s first wig shop on Russell Street. According to the younger Clarkson, his relationship with the police was one of deep trust and even included providing them with disguises for undercover detective work³⁶.



A Cherubic Cad

By outward appearances, Willy Clarkson was an affable and fresh-faced character, the cheeky raconteur who always found himself the center of attention, likely at his own urging. He hardly seems the type to throw young women into jail for the theft of a small amount of goods, let alone construct a plan of brutal violence against a group of them. Nevertheless, his fresh, cherubic mug and cockney charm belied another side to him, one where he surrounded himself with the vile, the nefarious, and the most notorious villains of the time.

William Cooper Hobbs

Perhaps the most impactful and dangerous of Clarkson’s rogue gallery of associates was William Cooper Hobbs, who first crossed Clarkson’s path in 1886, when he joined the law firm housed in the building next to Clarkson’s as a solicitor’s clerk³⁷. William Cooper Hobbs was such a wicked man that even Aleister Crowley despised him, casting an evil spell on him³⁸.

It is likely Crowley wasn’t the only person who wanted to curse Hobbs, who made a very prosperous living navigating the complicated landscape of early 20th century British libel laws, asserting false claims in a very successful shake-down scheme, which targeted the wealthy and the vulnerable³⁹.



Lt. Cole and his ventriloquist dummies



William Cooper Hobbs

³² See *Census of 1871 (13 Lambeth Road)*

³³ *Osbourne House Theatre Programme, January 27-31, 1894*

³⁴ *Marriage of the King of Ventriloquists and Ms. J.E. Glover, The Walthamstow and Leyton Guardian, 29 Aug. 1891, p. 6, The Music Hall, 29 Aug. 1891, p. 6; The Walthamstow & Leyton Guardian, 29 Aug. 1891, p. 3*

³⁵ *Glover Census, 1891.*

³⁶ See fn. 18; *Willy Clarkson’s Mystery Fortune, Daily Express, 16 Oct. 1934, p. 6.*

³⁷ *Hobbs Denies Forging Clarkson Will”, Daily Herald, 25 Mar. 1938, p. 7.*

³⁸ *Thumbs Up! A pentagram – a pentacle to win the war, Aleister Crowley (Order Templi Ordo 1941), p. 14*

³⁹ *Bechhofer Roberts, C.E., The Mr. A Case, The Old Bailey Trial Series, (Jarrolds 1930s), p. 36.*

Described as the ‘Mr. Big’ of crime in London, Hobbs had a long history of con-games, working with card sharps and other members of the criminal class⁴⁰. Engaging in such issues his entire life, with two different prison sentences under his belt – one for forgery and one for blackmail – Hobbs was a bad guy.

Flames of Soho

The two comrades conspired in many devious plans. Specifically, they appeared to have a particular affinity for lighting buildings on fire. Allegedly, there were at least thirteen instances of Clarkson’s buildings being burnt down, which the insurers later determined were caused by arson, dating from 1895 to his death in 1934⁴¹.

Since at least his first meeting with William Cooper Hobbs, and likely much earlier, Clarkson surrounded himself with a wide array of characters that engaged in dubious businesses, including unethical money lending, gambling, blackmail, prostitution, violence, and more⁴². Clarkson and Hobbs – whether they were friends, business partners, co-conspirators, or something else – spent decades together, plotting various schemes, lasting, as we will see, until Clarkson’s death.

A subsequent inquest into some of these crimes, after Clarkson’s death, would find that Clarkson was a willing participant, and the police claimed that if he had still been alive when this decades-long pattern of arson was discovered, there would be no doubt he would have been arrested⁴³. In fact, a police investigator testified that when he went to question Clarkson on certain questionable fires, he found him celebrating with champagne⁴⁴.

The Butcher, the Grasshopper, the Conman, and the Maharajah Heir

Let us flash forward a few decades for a moment and consider some of the practices in which Clarkson and his underground partner William Cooper Hobbs engaged in their long and sordid business arrangement. This part of Willy Clarkson’s story begins in London’s Albert Hall, in a smoky box seat, perched above the frenetic pleasure that swept the dance floor of the 1919 Victory Ball which celebrated the first anniversary of the Armistice.⁴⁵ It ended weeks later in a Paris hotel, with two illicit lovers caught *in flagrante delicto* by the woman’s cuckolded husband. But even that scandalous and darkly poetic revelation was not what it seemed and was certainly not the end of this Georgian thriller tale, but rather just a disguised beginning.

On that first fateful night in November 1919, socialite Maud Robinson – a woman of independent means who lived on the income from a successful ‘grasshopper ointment’ business her father left her - was at the ball with her good friend Lillian Bevan. The two drank champagne and relished their fancy-dress; Maud Robinson in a grasshopper outfit to advertise her business and Ms. Bevan in an equally fancy but unrecorded outfit also.⁴⁶



Maud Robinson – 1919
Armistice Ball



Sir Hari Singh

As fate or devious scheming would have it, Ms. Robinson and Bevan were sitting at this joyous affair next to the box of an elegant and flamboyant man of extraordinary wealth, one Sir Hari Singh, the heir to the Maharajah of Kashmir and his attaché, Captain Arthur.⁴⁷ It is an understatement to say that Mr. Singh’s life would never be the same after that night. The group soon started chatting, and the evening turned into a long one, with Lillian Robinson pairing with Mr. Singh, and Lillian Bevan with Captain Arthur. This would result in a series of engagements, both in London and in

⁴⁰ Jeffrey, Barbara, *Chancers: Scandal, Blackmail, and the Enigma Code* (Amberley 2019) pp.9, 33-34

⁴¹ McLaren, Angus, *Smoke & Mirrors: Willy Clarkson and the Role of Disguises in Inter-War England*, *Journal of Social History*, University of Victoria, Volume 40, Issue 3, Spring 2007, p. 603.

⁴² Bechhofer Roberts, 10-11.

⁴³ Willie Clarkson Was Facing Arrest: Wine Party As His Shop Was Burning, *Daily Express*, 17 Mar. 1937, p.1.

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ Bechhofer Roberts, C.E., *The Mr. A Case (The Old Bailey Trial Series)*, Jarrolds Publisher’s, p. 10.

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Id.*

Paris, with Mr. Singh urging the two to join him in Kashmir, and that he would spoil them endlessly.⁴⁸

The two couples subsequently spent an intimate Christmas holiday in Paris, enjoying a romantic fling at the ritzy St. James & Albany Hotel, but it ended in disaster when, on Boxing Day, December 26, 1919, the husband of Maud Robinson burst into the room she shared with Singh, catching them in the act and angrily declaring: “*Now I’ve got you!*” A confrontation ensued and eventually the man left, with Maud and Lillian rushing back to London, and the future Maharajah and his attaché returning immediately to Kashmir.⁴⁹



Montagu Newton

But all was not as it seemed, as the man who burst into the room was not actually Maud’s husband, Charlie ‘the Butcher’ Robinson. Rather, it was yet another notorious character of the time, Montagu Newton, a disreputable con artist who spent a lifetime proudly engaged in the business of deceit for gain.⁵⁰

It was he who first brought the opportunity to trick Hari Singh to William Cooper Hobbs, whom he had known for years in regard to other fraudulent schemes.⁵¹ The two met at the studio of Willy Clarkson, who had moved his wig and costume studio from Wellington Street to the fashionable Wardour Street, snuggled comfortably between Shaftsbury Avenue and Leicester Square, at the heart of the theatre district. When he arrived, Hobbs and Clarkson were busy dealing with a fire.⁵²

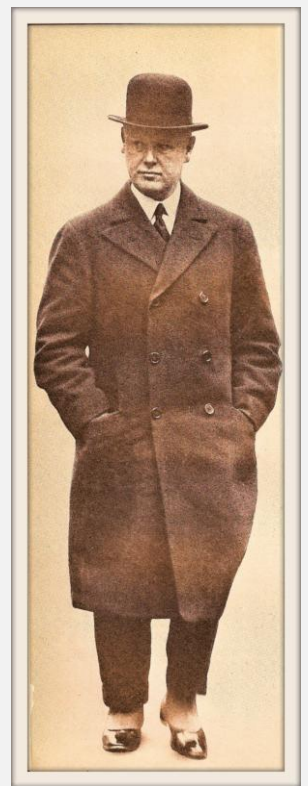
The scheme devised in front of the burning House of Clarkson was a simple one: Montagu Newton knew Ms. Robinson, who thought they could arrange a rendezvous with Singh and stage a confrontation, threatening to expose Mr. Singh if he did not pay them money. What’s more, Maud’s husband Charlie Robinson, was in on it, with their relationship appearing to be one more of convenience than love or affection.⁵³

It was decided that Newton would pose as Mr. Robinson because Charlie’s ruddy features and working-class appearance would never convince Mr. Singh that he was the husband of Maud. The scheme was quite successful and Mr. Singh immediately paid Mr. Robinson £300,000, in the form of two checks. One was cashed before Mr. Singh spoke to his advisors, who had the second check cancelled.

The plot would have been a success were it not for a dispute regarding the splitting of the yield from the scam, with Mr. Robinson learning years later that he had received significantly less than an equal share of the earnings. Somewhat astoundingly, Mr. Robinson sued the bank that cashed the check, which resulted in criminal proceedings against Mr. Hobbs, who was detained after attempting to flee to Paris.⁵⁴

Upon his detention, he was found to have £1,300 in cash on him, which he assigned to none other than Willy Clarkson, purportedly because Hobbs owed it to him.⁵⁵ Why was this? Hobbs’ choice to transfer this money to Clarkson strongly suggests one of two realities. Hobbs trusted Clarkson with his ill-gotten gains was because either the two were partners in a nefarious and decades-long underground criminal relationship, to which Clarkson had a claim to the funds anyways,⁵⁶ or Clarkson was an ‘effeminate weakling’ of Jewish heritage who Cobbs had been blackmailing for decades for his rumored sexual orientation.⁵⁷

This writer suggests the available evidence strongly favors the former option, that Clarkson and Hobbs worked together in their blackmail and extortion ring with Clarkson having been a behind-the-scenes participant, the credible and legitimate front for a devious and illegitimate business.



Charles ‘the butcher’
Robinson

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ *Id.* at p. 11.

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.* at p. 244.

⁵³ *Id.* 12-13.

⁵⁴ 13-14.

⁵⁵ *Wigmaker and Hobbs*, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 21 April, 1925, p. 5.

⁵⁶ *Morton, James*, *Gangland Soho* (Piatkus Books 2008) at pp. 86-87.

⁵⁷ *Bechhoffers Roberts* at p. 36.



MR. AND MRS. "WILLIE" CLARKSON
In attractive costumes. Mr. Clarkson is wearing a very valuable osprey, which was much admired by all the ladies present. Mr. Clarkson is, of course, the famous wigmaker of Wardour Street

Clarkson's profile does not particularly match that of a man having been blackmailed. If he was being blackmailed for his sexual orientation, it would have been a shallow secret to hold, indeed. The stories he repeatedly told, as well as his quite confident flamboyance, suggest he was not too fearful of being labeled 'effeminate'. Indeed, in 1914, he posed for a photograph with a companion who was identified as his wife; but Clarkson was never married, and upon closer inspection, it appears his wife is likely a man in 'drag'.⁵⁸ Indeed, it has been suggested that Clarkson himself took advantage of his position to blackmail gay men, entrapping them in a public lavatory near his residence in Dansey Place, purportedly referred to as 'Clarkson's Cottages'.⁵⁹

As for having been Jewish, it is reported he spoke Yiddish around his shop, including in front of workers and clients, and it was generally understood he was of Jewish descent.⁶⁰ He knew the police well and claimed to have often provided disguises for them.⁶¹ Perhaps his close relationship with the law gave him comfort and a form of security. He does not seem to have been hiding any big secrets from possible blackmailers with any great determination.

A Side of Beef and a Straight Edge Razor

There is another indication hidden in the transcripts of the Mr. A case that suggests Clarkson was a willing participant in the Case of Mr. A⁶², as the press would later dub it, and not a cowering victim of a blackmailing scheme. During the trial, it came out that Montagu Newton purchased two sterling silver matchboxes at a prestigious silversmith firm in London. Each one had a unique engraving; one was the image of a side of beef; the other was the image of a straight-edge razor. In testimony, Montagu claimed he purchased them as gifts to celebrate the success of the scheme. Not surprisingly, the side of beef, Montagu testified, was for Charlie 'the Butcher' Robinson, who was well known for his reputation as a tough guy and former butcher.⁶³

The recipient of the second matchbox – that with the image of a straight-edge razor – is not so clear. Montagu claimed he had it made for Maud Robinson in a scandalous reference, whispered to the judge, and jotted down in a note for the jury only, to the 'Oriental' method of feminine grooming that the Maharajah's heir preferred, and in which Maud allegedly practiced in order to please him. She denied both the practice and the receipt of the matchbox, and the court even brought in 'experts' to testify that this type of grooming was indeed common in the 'Orient', but Maud maintained it was not hers.

Thus, we have another set of two possibilities to consider: (1) that Montagu Newton's story is true, and that he learned of Maud Robinson's 'Oriental' grooming habits and considered this the appropriate representation of her role in the grift to engrave on valuable silver; or (2) that Maud Robinson's story is true, and that she never received the matchbox inscribed with the straight edge razor.

This writer finds it more likely than not that it is Maud Robinson's denial of this matter that is truthful, and not the rather obscene meaning attributed to it by Montagu Newton. This writer asserts it is far too vulgar a gesture for a false gentleman like Montagu to make. It does not align with the dynamic, upper-class persona that the rogue conman Montagu so purposefully and tediously sought to convey in his every move, word, and detail.

If it is the case that Maud Robinson is the truthful one then we must question who the straight edge matchbox was actually intended for? It seems quite likely that the first matchbox was indeed intended for Charlie Robinson, both by trade and by ominous reputation; but the straight edge razor was a symbol that a

⁵⁸ "Artists' Revels: Prove a Great Success at Covent Garden Last Week", *The Tatler*, March 18, 1914 p. 301; Photo Credit: *Tatler*.

⁵⁹ Morton, at pp. 86-87.

⁶⁰ *Greenwall*, p. 13; *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail*, 12 Oct. 1934, p. 12.

⁶¹ "Mr. Clarkson at Home", *The Era*, 4 Nov. 1893, p. 11; *Greenwall*, p. 148.

⁶² The presumed Maharajah Singh was seen by the police to be such a powerful and influential nation leader, they issued a decree to the press that he could only be referred to as "Mr. A". He was eventually identified, though the scandal seemed to resonate more in the U.K. than in Singh's own country. "The Veil Lifted on the Mystery of Mr. A.", *Nottingham Journal*, 4 Dec. 1924, p. 1.

⁶³ *Bechhoff Roberts*, p. 25; *Jeffrey*, p. 32.

costumier and wigmaker like Clarkson would appreciate. This trade required him to use a razor in his day-to-day business, shaving faces and heads to allow wigs and costumes to fit properly; and perhaps he was also good with a razor in some sordid business that he undertook in the evenings as well.

Over a hundred years later, it remains unclear precisely who conned whom in this Georgian tale of intrigue, the Case of Mr. A., and for this article's purpose, the full truth behind the story is largely irrelevant. This much we know is true: William Cooper Hobbs, with at least some participation from Clarkson, engaged in fraud and deceit to blackmail and extort a wealthy man through manipulating him into a compromising position with a woman. We will see that this appears to be a pattern of the two compatriots.

William Cooper Hobbs was, amongst Clarkson's circle of conmen who disguised themselves within the legal system, one of the worst examples of exploiting the judiciary in the most sinister of ways. But Hobbs may not have been *the* worst, and there are good reasons to believe that honor could have belonged to the solicitor that Hobbs shared with Clarkson, Arthur Newton, the Marlborough Street Solicitor.

The Marlborough Street Solicitor

In July 1889, Detective Inspector Frederick Abberline executed a search warrant on a brownstone on Cleveland Street after receiving evidence that a brothel was being operated from there. The raid resulted in the arrest of two male prostitutes, one of whom quickly named military figures, politicians and well-known aristocrats, including Lord Somerset, who was in charge of the stables of the Prince Albert Victor at the time. Immediately concerned about his reputation – and potentially the reputation of Prince Albert Victor – Lord Somerset retained the best solicitor he could find, Arthur Newton.⁶⁴

Newton, the same solicitor Willy Clarkson had hired to prosecute the young women who supposedly stole make-up from him a year earlier⁶⁵ was a well-connected and powerful man who had earned himself the moniker of the 'Marlborough Street Solicitor' following a short article and caricature (see right) in *Vanity Fair*.

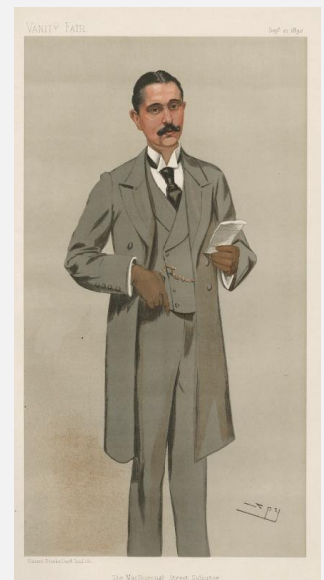
As early as 1887 he was representing wealthy men accused of sex crimes, including an assault on a thirteen-year-old girl, and did not hesitate to cross-examine the witnesses, shaming and humiliating them in an effort to win an acquittal for his rich clients.⁶⁶

Lord Somerset was not the only client that Newton was retained by in relation to the Cleveland Street Scandal, there were others, some named and some unnamed. There were rumors too that to curry favor with the judiciary and to arrange cozy deals for his wealthy clients, he made an innuendo that Prince Albert Victor had visited the brothel.⁶⁷

By January 1890 – just over a year after he represented Clarkson in his prosecution of the young women in his store – Newton was in jail himself. He was accused, and eventually convicted, of assisting certain clients to escape justice for the Cleveland Street Scandal. He assisted their travel abroad, to Paris, a journey that Clarkson knew well, to a town he knew just as well.⁶⁸ If a coincidence, it is one of a long line of increasingly unlikely coincidences.

Mrs. Jeffries

Arthur Newton had a strong and growing reputation for representing individuals involved in the sex trade, on either side of the transaction. In 1887, there was a raid on another brothel, this one owned and operated by a 68-year-old woman named Mary Jeffries. Years earlier in 1876, Mrs. Jeffries had secured a twenty-year lease



Arthur Newton

⁶⁴ Root, Neil, *The Cleveland Street Scandal*, (History Press 2025) pp. 23-24, 51-53.

⁶⁵ "Bow Street", *Morning Advertiser*, 9 Oct. 1888, p. 6.

⁶⁶ "The Charge of Indecent Assault Against a Schoolmaster", *Croydon Times*, 14 Sept. 1887; "The Extraordinary Assault on an Actress", *Echo* (London), 5 Aug. 1887, p. 3. "Assault on the Police", *Weekly Dispatch* (London) 23 Jan. 1887) p. 11.

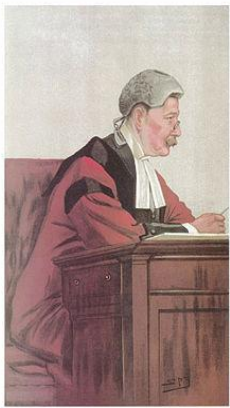
⁶⁷ *The Cleveland Street Scandal*, Montgomery Hyde, H., (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan 1976) 55-58.

⁶⁸ Hyde, pp. 74-77.

at 15 White Street, about half a mile from Willy Clarkson's studio.⁶⁹ It was a relatively quiet residence for over a decade, with Mrs. Jeffries regularly letting out extra rooms to young women, both at this location and at a location in Brompton Square. In 1887, however, a new woman moved in, and by all accounts, maintained a very stern demeanor, both to her fellow residents and gentlemen callers who would frequent the residency.⁷⁰ On at least one occasion, a man was seen running from the property, screaming out "*Murder!*" and "*Don't kill me!*" Neighbors began to complain, and soon enough, the jig was up.⁷¹

As a result, the police executed a search warrant and arrested 68-year-old 'Ma' Jeffries and one of her tenants, 24-year-old Elizabeth Hobbs.⁷² Curiously the nefarious William Cooper Hobbs had a sister named Elizabeth, who was around that age in 1887.⁷³ Although police and census records are not known for their precise accuracy, it is difficult to imagine these are different women given Elizabeth Hobbs retained Arthur Newton, the same solicitor used by Willy Clarkson, the partner of William Cooper Hobbs.⁷⁴

The surprising fact here is Arthur Newton did not represent Mary Jeffries, the alleged wealthy owner and operator of the brothel, but rather Elizabeth Hobbs, who, from outward appearances, was simply another of Mary Jeffries' tenants/working girls.⁷⁵ Newton, as the solicitor in charge of the overall defence case, retained well-regarded barristers to represent the interests of Mary Jeffries: the highly esteemed Cambridge-trained barrister Edward Marshall Hall and, perhaps more impressively, Forrest Fulton, a Member of Parliament at the time and an extremely well-respected barrister.⁷⁶ Yet, Newton chose Elizabeth Hobbs as his own client, not the wealthier, more powerful, and higher-profile Mary Jeffries. Why?



Sir Forrest Fulton

The brothel case made headlines, with a surprise ending; Mary Jeffries was sentenced to six months' hard labor, but Elizabeth Hobbs, the woman who supposedly bullied and bossed the brothel since her arrival several months earlier, walked free, as the crowd gathered in the courtroom gave her departure a round of applause.⁷⁷ While Mrs. Jeffries had been convicted once before of running a brothel, the marked difference between Jeffries and Hobbs suggests that the better representation went to Arthur Newton. Sometimes in the law, it is more important who you know than what you know.

After her stint in jail, Mary Jeffries returned to her home on Church Street, but there is no record that she was involved in the sex trade anymore. She died four years later.⁷⁸

This writer suggests this raid was a set-up, with the intention of inserting Elizabeth Hobbs into the place of Mrs. Jeffries, bullying her way into the business, and claiming the brothel clientele. From the available evidence, it appears she succeeded. When later asked about his sister, William Cooper Hobbs stated, mysteriously, that she was "*provided for by other people*".⁷⁹ What this writer suggests is, this is a coy reference to her involvement in a prostitution business.

A Cheeky Constable

As mentioned earlier, Willy Clarkson hired not only Arthur Newton to assist him in prosecuting the young store workers in October 1888, but he also hired Detective Constable Henry Collins to arrest and provide evidence against the women. Collins, it turns out, had a colorful history himself.

In April 1888, Collins, of E Division, claimed he was monitoring the area outside the Adelphi Theatre and observed an individual, William Thomas Baker, supposedly loitering around the area pressing close to various ladies congregating in front of the theatre, who were waiting for a play to start. Apparently sighted by the ladies, Thomas eased himself away from the crowd, according to DC Collins, and walked along the Strand to

⁶⁹ *The Prosecution of Mrs. Jeffries*, *The Echo*, 5 Oct. 1887, p. 3.

⁷⁰ *The Jeffries Case*, *Westminster & Pimlico News*, 8 Oct. 1887, p. 5.

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² *Id.*

⁷³ *Hobbs Chelsea Census*, 1871

⁷⁴ *The Jeffries Case*, *Westminster & Pimlico News*, 8 Oct. 1887, p. 5.

⁷⁵ *Id.*

⁷⁶ "*The Jeffries Case*", *East Kent Gazette*, 26 Nov. 1887, p. 2; *The Great Defender*, Marjoribanks (Victor Gollancz 129), pp. 71-72.

⁷⁷ *The Jeffries Case*, *Westminster & Pimlico News*, 8 Oct. 1887, p. 5.; *The Jeffries Case*, *Westminster & Pimlico News*, 15 Oct. 1887, p. 5.

⁷⁸ *Register of Burials in the West of London and Westminster Cemetery*, Earl's Court, Old Brompton, 25 March 1891

⁷⁹ "*Hobbs Denies Forging Clarkson's Will*", *Daily Herald*, 25 Mar. 1938, p. 7.

the Lyceum Theatre, followed by Collins. He claims to have observed Baker slip his hand into the purse of a lady who was entering the theatre so he proceeded to arrest him for pickpocketing.⁸⁰

Thomas denied his guilt and was brought to Bow Street for adjudication. After appearing in front of a magistrate, the accused presented his employer of 12 years, who gave testimony as to Mr. Baker's good character. His employer explained that Baker had handled petty cash and his finances for many years, with no discrepancies whatsoever. Additionally, while DC Collins' had another detective testify to corroborate his evidence, their stories did not match, and the second defendant soon wavered on his own account.

The magistrate made the unusual step of not just finding the accused not guilty but expressly stating that Baker was innocent. He did not directly accuse DC Collins of perjury or lying, but there was a thin insinuation of such. The *Pall Mall Gazette* however felt no need for such niceties, literally calling DC Collins a "*liar*" and accusing the magistrate of being the "*Policemen's Friend*," suggesting that the court had been too lenient on a police officer, who was possibly trying to set up an innocent man for pickpocketing charges, which if true, was likely an effort to shake the man down for money.⁸¹

A Dressmaker on Regent Street

Taken in the context of the times, it is not surprising that the *Pall Mall Gazette* had such harsh words about Constable Collins. Just ten months earlier, the headlines were filled with a similar story: another set up of an innocent person on trumped-up charges. This time it was a woman, accused of soliciting prostitution on Regent Street, near Oxford Circus,⁸² a stone's throw from the heart of the West End's theatre district. According to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, DC Collins had just unsuccessfully attempted to frame a reputable man in front of a theatre for pickpocketing.

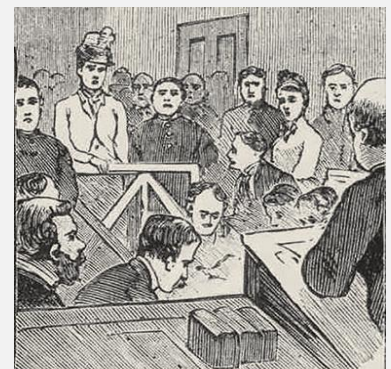


Illustrated Police News - July 16, 1887

On June 28, 1887, at around 10:00 pm, Police Constable Bowden Endacott was patrolling the area around Regent Street when he observed a 23-year-old dressmaker named Elizabeth Cass walking down Regent Street towards Oxford Circle. He followed the woman and testified that a gentleman approached him, complaining that Cass had stopped him (presumably for solicitation purposes) and PC Endacott proceeded to arrest her.

He claimed he had seen the woman several times in the area in the recent past, and that there was another woman she was walking with at the time. The gentleman who supposedly alerted PC Endacott to this solicitation was never identified and no other witnesses corroborated his story. Moreover, as in the case of Mr. Baker, the falsely accused pickpocket, Elizabeth Cass had Mary Bowman on her side, her employer who bailed her out and appeared in court the next day to vigorously vouch for her live-in employee. Indeed, Bowman claimed Cass had worked for her as a live-in at her residence at 19 Southampton Row for an extended period as a dressmaker, had the highest character, and had not left the house at night for several weeks, and certainly not on the evenings that PC Endacott claimed to have previously seen her. Because there was insufficient evidence, and evidence to rebut PC Endacott's story, the Magistrate dismissed the claim against Cass. He did so, however, issue a caution, suggesting that Cass actually was guilty, and that Bowman was covering for her.⁸³

Unluckily for the magistrate and PC Endacott, Mary Bowman was no wilting flower. She immediately lodged a complaint against both the magistrate and the police officer, claiming they were crooked and that PC Endacott perjured himself. During this period, the police and the public had a rough relationship, and the case quickly made headlines.⁸⁴ The case even made its way to the



Illustrated Police News - July 16, 1887

⁸⁰ *Detectives at Fault*, *London Evening Standard*, 23 Apr. 1888, p. 1; "*The Policemen's Friend*", *Pall Mall Budget*, 26 Apr. 1888, p. 6.

⁸¹ *Id.*

⁸² "*The Regent Street Arrest*", *Weekly Times & Echo* (London), 6 Nov. 1887, p. 10.

⁸³ *Experiences of the Victim*, *Pall Mall Budget*, 7 July 1887, p. 9.

⁸⁴ *The Cass Case: Prosecution of Endacott*, *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette*, 17 Aug. 1887; *Contra, Jack the Ripper, the Policeman, Rod Beattie*, (Pen and Sword Books, Ltd. 2022), generally.

attention of the Home Secretary, who ordered none other than Sir Charles Warren to undertake an inquiry. Sir Charles stated he did not see evidence to support a finding of wilful perjury against PC Endacott but thought it warranted being sent to the Public Prosecutors for investigation. Bowman complained that both the arrest and the caution besmirched Elizabeth Cass, and the implications would destroy her reputation and prevent her from ever finding respectable work, with the implication that this was the precise intent of PC Endacott. While PC Endacott was ultimately found not guilty of perjury, the public was not so convinced, and the general sentiment seemed to be that it was a frame-up.⁸⁵

It should be noted that the residence of Ms. Bowman the dressmaker and her employee/tenant Elizabeth Cass at 19 Southampton Row was less than half a mile from Willy Clarkson's studio. While there is no direct connection between Clarkson and Cass's arrest, the fact that she was a dressmaker, and in such close geographic proximity to Clarkson, whose endlessly busy studio often contracted out some of their costume material to outside seamstresses, gives some pause.

Patti, Margaret, and Winifred

This brings the discussion full circle back to the prosecution of the three young store workers at Clarkson's studio. Their names were Patti Belotti, age 22, Margaret Collins, age 16, and Winifred Bray, just 14 years of age.⁸⁶ When compared to the case of Elizabeth Cass, the similarities and contrasts are stark. In both circumstances, young girls were arrested on thin pretexts by Police Constables from E Division, near to Clarkson's studio. Elizabeth Cass was saved from jail and ruin only by the testimony of her well-respected and determined employer.⁸⁷ Similarly, in the Mary Jeffries matter, Elizabeth Hobbs was saved from jail with the help of a savvy and well-connected solicitor, Arthur Newton.

In contrast, in Wellington Street, when the three young girls were hauled off to jail, there was no employee to vouch for them. Their employer Willy Clarkson was their accuser. Their prosecutor was the same savvy and well-connected solicitor who had defended and protected Elizabeth Hobbs less than a year earlier, Arthur Newton. No one would stand forward to protect them or give them a voice. Freed on bail but subject to recall if Clarkson decided to press charges against them, the young girls were more vulnerable than ever, with no likelihood of a respectable livelihood in their future. Their fates were sealed.⁸⁸

If William Thomas Baker, the man arrested a few months earlier by DC Collins for alleged pickpocketing, had not been such a stellar employee who earned the support of his employer of many years, perhaps his fate would have gone a similar way.

Additionally, it is unusual that Arthur Newton accepted the assignment to prosecute these three women for what amounts to little more than petty theft. By that point, as stated above, he had represented wealthy individuals in high-stakes sex crimes, represented one of England's most notorious madams, and was powerful enough to be able to retain a Member of Parliament and a highly respected solicitor to assist him in his case. Why would such a man take a client just to prosecute a few young girls for stealing a small amount of stock? Yes, Clarkson was famous and associated with the Royal Family, but the case was an extremely small one. Why would Clarkson need Arthur Newton, unless it was to have the crooked solicitor assist him in coercing these women into accepting bad plea deals, that left Patti's husband in jail for a year, and left the women vulnerable to Clarkson's demands, lest they face charges themselves. This author asserts it was simply another setup, and a successful one at that.

Propounding a Theory

By the early fall of 1888, the two worlds of Willy Clarkson were approaching one another's universes at a frantic speed and were perilously close to crashing into one another. As the well-respected face of what appears to have been a hybrid of legitimate and illegitimate businesses, the newly appointed Royal Perruquier to Queen Victoria and the Royal Family could not afford for these radically different universes to collide.

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ "Employees at Clarkson's", *The Echo*, 8 Oct. 1888, p. 4. "The Robbery From a Theatrical Wig Maker", *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 14 Oct. 1888, p. 12. *The three young women had been arrested along with Salvatore Belotti, the husband of Patti. Id.*

⁸⁷ *Id.*

⁸⁸ *Id.*

With the above in mind and set forth in more detail below, this writer puts forward the theory of Willy Clarkson as the perpetrator of the Whitechapel Murders as follows:

1. Willy Clarkson was a blackmailer, using women, whom he knew through his studio and from music halls, as information gatherers.
2. In 1888, as his profile grew, now the perruquier to the Royal Family, and with a growing clientele of the most well-known stage actors in London, Clarkson decided he needed to purge his existing network of information gatherers.
3. He did so in a theatrical manner, to disguise his actions and deflect any attention from him, cloaked in an over-the-top and performative affect.
4. And subsequently replaced them with a new set of vulnerable young women as information gatherers, whom he entrapped and extorted into service.

The writer suggests this theory is supported by the available evidence as follows.

Access to the Vulnerable and Naive

There is little doubt that Clarkson had easy access to young, vulnerable women to exploit to become part of his blackmail ring through at least two avenues. First, his wig shop was a hive of working-class and impoverished women and girls (and men and boys, for that matter), who were always one day's pay away from sleeping rough in the cold London air. In 1888, he had over two hundred workers in his studio, many of them girls with basic seamstress skills.⁸⁹

There is, to date, no proof that any of the 'Canonical Five' worked at Clarkson's studio, though that is not particularly surprising. There are no employment logs or sign-in sheets for these day workers, at least none that have been located. Clarkson was known to have employed indentured servants to train as wigmakers, with evidence of at least one such agreement in existence,⁹⁰ but the vast majority of Clarkson's wig-making, costume-making, and stage prop making appears to have been conducted by day workers, unnamed and lightly paid, working long hours, longer than permitted by law, which resulted in Clarkson being fined for violating labor laws.⁹¹

Of the little we know about the 'Canonical Five's' last years, we know several had basic seamstress skills, a very common set of skills in the lower working and poverty classes.⁹² We know at least three worked for various periods of time as domestic servants, allegedly some for families of Jewish heritage, and that one may have spoken some Yiddish, a language Clarkson was known to speak.⁹³ Clarkson appears to have hired young women with little or no experience to work in his shop, some as young as 14 years of age. He also attended all sorts of affairs and gatherings in which domestic servants would be in abundance, tending to the pampered guests every need.



Clarkson was most at home at the theatre, and the endless parties that inevitably followed each show. Although Clarkson regularly took weekends in the lovely seaside town of Hastings, almost all of his evenings in London consisted of theatre, theatre after-parties, and working at his shop.⁹⁴ He received an endless array of letters and telegrams, demanding his immediate attention to fix a wig or a costume, for a show that night, or the following night. While Clarkson had over a hundred messengers to deliver his wares throughout London, or even England, and sometimes France and America, there were some actors who insisted that Clarkson, himself, tend to them at whatever theatre in which they might be working, on the continent, in the UK, but particularly in London.⁹⁵ London was his playground.

⁸⁹ *The Wigmaker of Wellington Street*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 Aug. 1888, p. 5-6.

⁹⁰ <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Backstage/ClarksonWigs.htm>

⁹¹ *Sunday Work For the Pantomime*, *Morning Advertiser*, 27 Jan. 1898, p. 3.

⁹² Rubenhold, Hallie, *The Five* (HMH Publishing 2019), pp. 73, 211, <https://www.exploretheroadwithdonnamarie.com/jack-the-ripper-take-a-gruesome-journey-into-the-macabre/>

⁹³ Begg, Paul, *The Complete Jack the Ripper, A-Z*, 1147 (2015 e-book); Rubenhold, Hallie, *The Five* (HMH Publishing 2019), p. 282. Greenwall, p. 13.

⁹⁴ Holt-White, W., *Long Live the King – of Wigs!*, *The Sphere*, 19 Sept. 1931; *Hastings and St. Leonard Observer*, 2 Dec. 1933, Greenwall, p. 14; *Sussex Express*, 19 Oct. 1934, p. 12.

⁹⁵ "Mr. Clarkson at Home", *The Era*, 4 Nov. 1893, p. 11.

And, of course, there were the ubiquitous working girls outside of the theatres, who dutifully walked amongst the theatre goers and restaurant attendees and pub dwellers, always looking for their next client, or at least their next handout, or even opportunity to pickpocket.⁹⁶ While it seems most likely that Elizabeth Cass was falsely accused of solicitation, it also cannot be disputed that this livelihood was a pervasive element of the culture during this period.⁹⁷ While the West End professional prostitutes were materially different in character from the East End working girls, in relation to music halls, at least, the line between them was very fluid during this period.

*“Dollywopps, or amateurs, who exchanged their services in exchanged for an evening at these more fashionable halls and an oyster supper; could be found amongst the professionals who were notorious for displaying their charms and soliciting attention along the music hall promenades”.*⁹⁸

As someone who frequently traversed the roads between the West End and East End, working with both professional and amateur productions, both filled with ambitious, naïve, and often poor actresses, Clarkson would have had exposure to these women throughout his life. The same holds true for Clarkson’s wig studio, which attracted day workers of all sorts. Without the unlikely discovery of work logs or employment records, it is impossible to say whether any of the Whitechapel victims spent time assisting as seamstresses or dressmakers there. Even when visiting Balmoral to entertain the Queen, Clarkson spent time with tradesmen like himself, making a point to invite a humble yet well-connected worker to attend the theatre with him.⁹⁹ With this in mind, it is difficult to avoid the possibility that Clarkson’s path crossed with one or more of the Canonical Five sufficiently to form relationships of trust, and more importantly, exploitation.



The French Connection

As stated, there are currently no lines directly connecting Clarkson with any of the Canonical Five. There is evidence, however, that Clarkson’s path perhaps inched quite close to Mary Jane Kelly. It is often said that Mary Jane Kelly, or perhaps Marie Jeanette Kelly, had both an affinity for the French, and traveled there at least once, with an unnamed gentleman who apparently promised her some unnamed opportunity for some better life; or perhaps some better version of her current life.¹⁰⁰ It is claimed that she found the trip unsatisfactory, supposedly stating that she didn’t “*like the part*”.¹⁰¹

And so, we consider the inevitable question: could Willy Clarkson have been this unnamed gentleman who took Mary Jane Kelly to France for two weeks, for a ‘part’ she did not like? There’s no denying Willy Clarkson’s deep, life-long connections to France, and Paris in particular.¹⁰² His father sent him to France at an early age to be educated in the French art of hair styling and to learn the language. The younger Clarkson accomplished both tasks, although his biographer claims he spoke French with a thick cockney accent.¹⁰³

Clarkson tells stories of traveling to and from Paris, both for work and for pleasure. These stories include accounts of Sandra Bernhardt repeatedly summoning Clarkson to Paris for a new wig and to bring her a new pet.¹⁰⁴ His biographer dedicates an entire chapter of his book to Clarkson’s adventures in Paris.

Clarkson’s role as an intermediary between the British and French stage communities was so entrenched, he was conscripted to teach English to the young French actresses in the Paris stage productions he wigged, which was surely of assistance in a variety of circumstances.¹⁰⁵ It also seems to logically flow from this fact

⁹⁶ <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/music-hall-and-variety-theatre?srlid=AfmBOorIDTNx5fiH8CnUGoIn95pSISJt1mJkpyzWdTRxesXQon8TYZNZ#slideshow=15664669&slide=0>
⁹⁷ Id.

⁹⁸ King, Laura J., “Matrons, Maidens and Magdelenes: Women’s Patronage of Nineteenth Century London Music Halls”, (1993) p. 95

⁹⁹ <https://donaldpfox.blogspot.com/2021/11/john-michie-1853-1934-head-forester.html>

¹⁰⁰ Begg, Paul, “Jack the Ripper: The Facts”, (Chrysalis Publishing 2004) p. 238.).

¹⁰¹ https://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s881112.html

¹⁰² Greenwall, pp. 128-130

¹⁰³ Id. at p. 14.

¹⁰⁴ Sarah Bernhardt’s Dog, Lloyd’s Weekly News, 14 June, 1903, p. 13; Sarah Bernhardt Wants a Wig, Dundee Evening Telegraph, 2 Nov. 1920, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ “Mr. Willie Clarkson Teaches English”, Daily Express, 30 Jan. 1907, p. 1

that he likely assisted the English women with their French when he brought them with him to fill acting parts in Paris, which he surely did.

This writer would be remiss, too, if he did not point out Clarkson's relationship with Marie Lloyd, which is undeniable, with Lloyd going so far as to include a reference to Clarkson in one of her playful music hall tunes, which included the lyrics, sung by a character who was a prostitute, "*bedecked with make-up and a wig from Clarkson's, the theatrical supplier*".¹⁰⁶ It was a long-held relationship, Clarkson knowing her from when she was quite young, to the point where he attended her funeral following her untimely death.



Marie Lloyd

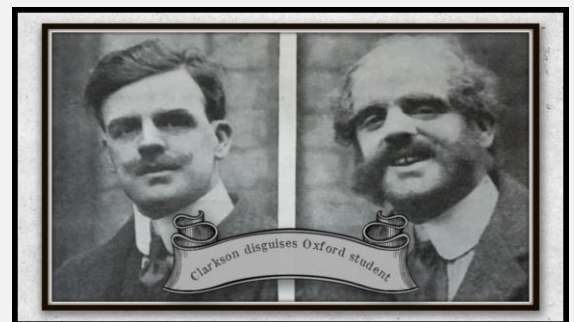
While the connection between Marie Lloyd and Mary Jane Kelly is tenuously proven at best, relying on the statements of her partner Joseph Barnett, one cannot discount the possibility that at one of the notorious parties Marie Lloyd threw where friends and colleagues of both the upper and lower class attended. If so, Willy Clarkson would have had the opportunity to befriend Mary Jane Kelly.¹⁰⁷

Finally, assuming for purposes of this analysis that Mary Jane Kelly told the truth about her reasons for leaving France after two weeks, who would be better suited than Clarkson to offer the young woman a 'part' that turned out to be something other than expected? This was not an unusual or novel tactic of businesspeople who were, in essence, human traffickers – providing English women to wealthy French men and vice versa.¹⁰⁸ We have seen potential connections between Clarkson and the infamous madam, Mary Jeffries, a year earlier in 1887. Decades later, in the Case of Mr. A in 1919, we see Clarkson with connections to a diabolical blackmail scheme that literally entailed transporting an Englishwoman to Paris to entrap a wealthy man. If Clarkson were responsible for the Whitechapel Murders, the voyage from London to Paris with young women to engage in exploitation of the sex trade would fit his seeming *modus operandi* quite precisely.

While taken alone, this is still not enough to be considered substantial proof of Clarkson's guilt, taken in the larger mosaic of evidence, this writer asserts these circumstances begin to tip the likelihood of being the culprit slowly closer towards Clarkson.

The Art of Disguise

Willy Clarkson was the king of costumes and a master of the art of disguise. He was proud of his proclivity for close-up disguise, in particular, joyfully recounting the various pranks and hoaxes he contributed to.¹⁰⁹ He made it very clear that he was not simply a wigmaker and costumier, and that indeed, this prowess was a central part of his business.¹¹⁰ He was able to hide black eyes and even disguise the female body as that of a man. He arranged for pranks and hoaxes of which he took immense pride, making a point of fooling people at close range.¹¹¹



In 1910, Clarkson's services were utilized to pull off a prank that made the headlines, and to a certain extent the history books. It involved five young men who entered his shop and wished to dress as royalty, which they claimed was for a fancy-dress party. Clarkson apparently saw through their ruse but agreed to help. Together, along with a female friend of theirs, they put together an elaborate, and by today's standards racist, hoax, in which they portrayed the Royal Family of Abyssinia, complete with black face and a made-up language that included words like 'bunga bunga'.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ 104. McClaren, at p. 605.

¹⁰⁷ Begg, Paul, "Jack the Ripper The Facts", (Chrysalis 2015) p. 276-277.

¹⁰⁸ <https://dumas.ccsd.cnrs.fr/dumas-00935249v1/document>, pp. 30-35;

<https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=8854&context=allgraduate-thesesdissertations>, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ The Art of Disguise, by Willy Clarkson; Greenwall, pp. 30-35./

¹¹⁰ Id.

¹¹¹ Id.

¹¹² <https://www.historyisnowmagazine.com/blog/2025/1/9/virginia-woolf-and-the-dreadnought-hoax-of-1910>



Virginia Woolf and friends, perpetrating the 'Dreadnaught Hoax' in Clarkson disguise

With this rather crude but complex plan, in which Clarkson visited them at their flat, carefully applying their dark makeup and over-stated costumes, the group ventured to the H.M.S. Dreadnought, a battleship operated by the Royal Navy. The plot worked perfectly, and a whole cast of renowned society types were fooled into being photographed with them and generally hosting the motley crew. When the hoax was finally unraveled, it made headlines, and the Royal Navy was greatly embarrassed. Clarkson had facilitated a brilliant con, with close-up makeup and disguises that fooled them all. Prior to her becoming famous and indeed iconic, the woman who participated was the novelist Virginia Woolf, who would talk about the prank

decades later with great fondness.¹¹³ Clarkson had succeeded in raising his level of disguise prowess to another level.

Clarkson knew how to move quickly with his disguises. R. Henderson Bland was a famed stage actor who would go on to star in the 1912 epic film, *From the Manger to the Cross*.¹¹⁴ Henderson Bland was also a major fan of Willy Clarkson. In his biography, Henderson Bland recounts one of his earliest stage performances, and as he was running around backstage, preparing for his cue, he ran into a nervous, small man, who inspected him quickly and declared his wig and costume were completely amiss.¹¹⁵ Henderson Bland, star-struck, suddenly recognized the twitchy, odd little man as Clarkson himself. Within a moment, Clarkson poked and prodded him, before declaring him stage ready. It only took a moment. That is what Henderson Bland remembered most about Clarkson: how quickly he arranged a wig and a costume, fast and with professional precision.¹¹⁶

In August 1888, just before the Whitechapel Murders commenced, Clarkson spoke of assisting the police with disguises for their undercover work. This is not particularly surprising, as he had a long and healthy relationship with them. But it does speak to how well Clarkson was able to master disguise. Even the police trusted him to do the job.¹¹⁷

Was Clarkson Spotted?

It is reasonable to suspect that Clarkson might use his substantial skills in disguise, should he actually be the perpetrator of the Whitechapel Murders. There were a variety of claimed sightings of the killer in the months in which the murders of Canonical Five occurred. Many of these were contradictory of one another in physical description, dress, and affectation of the suspect, and several have tenuous roots in credibility, both now and when considered by the police, press, and public at the time.



MR. CLARKSON MAKING UP A GERMAN.

Clarkson was a proud and diligent master of the art of disguise, and if he was responsible for these killings, there is a possibility, and perhaps even a probability, that Clarkson would have implemented disguise tactics to evade detection.

As we consider possible sightings, we briefly recall that Clarkson, in 1888, was a man about 5 feet five inches tall, described as broad shouldered with a barreled chest, a young-looking face, likely with some level of handle-bar moustache and goatee, though he was known to wear both toupees, false beards and coloring of his hair in various situations.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ *Id.* "Magical Memories of Willy Clarkson", *The People*, 14 Oct. 1934, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ <https://moviessilently.com/2017/06/18/from-the-manger-to-the-cross-1912-a-silent-film-review/>

¹¹⁵ Henderson Bland, R., *Actor, Soldier and Poet* (Heath Cranton Limited, London, 1939), pp. 89-91.

¹¹⁶ *Id.*

¹¹⁷ "The Wigmaker of Wellington Street", *Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 Aug. 1888, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ "The Wigmaker of Wellington Street", *Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 Aug. 1888, p. 5.; *Greenwall* at pp. 30-35.

George Hutchinson

George Hutchinson's account of his supposed sighting of the murderer, has long been subject to skepticism for its precision, even though Inspector Abberline, who interrogated Hutchinson personally, found the story to be truthful.¹¹⁹

Hutchinson describes the suspect as follows:

*"Age about 34 or 35. Height 5ft 6, complexion pale, dark eyes and eyelashes slight moustache, curled up each end, and hair dark, very surly looking dress long dark coat, collar and cuffs trimmed astrakhan [sic]. And a dark jacket under. Light waistcoat dark trousers [and a] dark felt hat turned down in the middle. Button boots and gaiters with white buttons. Wore a very thick gold chain and a white linen collar. Black tie with horseshoe pin. Respectable appearance walked very sharp. Jewish appearance. Can be identified."*¹²⁰



While there are no known pictures of Clarkson in 1888, there is a picture of him from 1893 (see left), with a turned-up moustache, black coat, and tie and pin that resembles a horseshoe.¹²¹ It is a style from which Clarkson never really deviated. In the *Vanity Fair* caricature of Clarkson, he is wearing a thick gold chain and his favorite pin¹²² and the writer Genevieve Parkurst remembered:

*"His taste in ties is unique. There is enough material in one of them to make an up-to-date party gown, while in the center is set precise and precious, an enameled flower-pin with a sparkling brilliant – the gift he assures you with great reverence, of Queen Victoria".*¹²³

This was noticed by another journalist who commented:

*"He wears a scarfpin bestowed upon him by the late Queen Victoria, and from his watch-chain hangs a pendant, the gift of Sarah Bernhardt."*¹²⁴

Yet another writer took note of Clarkson's distinct look:

*"On a pleasing and expansive background of necktie played a diamond surrounded with pearls, presented...to Mr. Clarkson by the Queen, in token of her appreciation of his various services."*¹²⁵

It doesn't matter whether these were really given to Clarkson by Queen Victoria or Sarah Bernhardt, or made from the engagement ring his fiancée returned to him. What matters is that there is ample evidence that Clarkson wore a distinct pin, tie, and watch-chain that closely matched the one described by Hutchinson.

Clarkson was a few years younger than Hutchinson describes the suspect at the time of the murders, 27 years old, but was said to be 5ft 5 inches, quite close to the described 5 ft 6 inches. There are period pictures of Clarkson with a dark felt hat turned down in the middle. Only the viewing of a photograph of Clarkson will allow for a person to consider whether a working-class man in 1888 would have considered him to have a 'Jewish appearance'. Notably, the outfit that Clarkson wore in 1893 looks as though it might literally include an astrakhan-trimmed collar.¹²⁶ If not, it is nevertheless easy to accept that an astrakhan-trimmed collar would be Clarkson's precise style. As for the dark felt hat, turned down in the middle, Clarkson had been photographed in a hat that matches that precise description, albeit over two decades later (though his style doesn't seem to vary much throughout his life).¹²⁷ In any event, as the literal owner of a costume studio, procuring whatever changes of disguise he wanted was second nature.

¹¹⁹ Begg, pp. 282-85; but see Begg 281 (noting that Mary Ann Cox described a shabbily dressed man, and a thick carrot moustache, somewhat different than what is described by George Hutchinson and Sarah Lewis, who described the man as "respectably dressed".)

¹²⁰ <https://forum.casebook.org/forum/ripper-discussions/witnesses/8775-victims-seen-with-suspects-just-before-death/page3?view=stream#post446321>

¹²¹ "Clarkson at Home", *The Sketch*, 16 Aug. 1893, p. 17.

¹²² Greenwall at p. 12; "Clarkson at Home", *The Sketch*, 16 Aug. 1893, p. 17.

¹²³ Pictorial Review, *The Chronicles of a Wigmaker*, Pt. 2., April 1926, p. 20.

¹²⁴ "The Art of Disguise", *Weekly Journal* (Hartlepool), 5 Feb., 1904, p. 9.

¹²⁵ "Clarkson at Home", *The Sketch*, 16 Aug. 1893, p. 17.

¹²⁶ *Id.*

¹²⁷ "Artists' Revels: Prove a Great Success at Covent Garden Last Week", *The Tatler*, March 18, 1914 p. 301.

Hutchinson's story has been discredited by some both because of its specificity, and because of the idea of such an elegantly dressed man could walk through the worst part of the East End late at night without being accosted by thieves or questioned by police searching for clues in the Whitechapel Murders. This criticism seems a bit misplaced because Hutchinson was keenly aware of and looking for Jack the Ripper, and he noticed the man seemed out of place. Moreover, Clarkson spent his entire life in this neighborhood, day and night, catering to the theatres that lined the streets of the area, such as the Royal Cambridge Hall on Commercial Street, the London Music Hall on Shoreditch High Street, and Wilton and the Royal Pavilion Theatre on Baker's Row.¹²⁸ He would know the streets well, whether dark or light, and know how to keep himself safe. If stopped by the police, he could simply explain he was rushing to a theatre to help a distressed actor with their wig. In a very real way, Willy Clarkson's best disguise would be himself.

This writer believes Clarkson likely used disguises to avoid detection in the earlier killings but suggests that on the occasion of Mary Jane Kelly's last evening, Clarkson dressed as himself. There seems to have been some sort of tie between Kelly and her killer, and this writer suggests it was the French connection described above. For the Mary Jane Kelly killing, Willy Clarkson's disguise was simply to be the flamboyant wigmaker, Willy Clarkson, hiding in plain sight. That is the Willy Clarkson that Mary Jane Kelly would know and that, this writer asserts, is who George Hutchinson saw.

Israel Schwartz

There are a great many researchers of the Whitechapel Murders who give credence to the story of Israel Schwartz, and many are convinced he is the one eyewitness who most likely saw Elizabeth Stride with her murderer; the police at the time appeared to believe that Schwartz saw the culprit minutes before the killing. Israel Schwartz' story is well-known and will not be repeated in full here.¹²⁹ Instead, we will limit the discussion to his description of the person the police suspected at the time was the murderer:

*"age about 30 ht. 5 ft. 5 in. comp. fair hair dark, small brown moustache, full face, broad-shouldered, dress, dark jacket and trousers, black cap with peak".*¹³⁰

It is a fairly non-descriptive observation, but taken as a whole, it matches the 28-year-old Clarkson, who was also 5 ft 5 inches tall, with a fair complexion and dark hair, with a moustache, full-faced, and broad-shouldered.¹³¹ The described dress is unfortunately too generic and could be anyone's. Nevertheless, of the many purported sightings, the one that the police seemed to believe was most likely an actual sighting of the murderer, generally matches Clarkson's physical description.

Navigating the East End in the Dark

Willy Clarkson lived at 45 Wellington Street during the time of the Whitechapel Murders. Separately, we have discussed his near-familial connections via the Bowens – the family of his business partner Albert Glover, and his former sweetheart, Jennie Glover - at 14 White Street or 3 Pollard Street, both in Bethnal Green.¹³² These two locations and Clarkson's wig studio are almost perfectly equidistant to Mitre Square, and both are well under half a mile from Hanbury Street. Both White Street and Pollard Street are a stone's throw from Commercial Street. The same holds true for Derby Yard. In Clarkson's case, by placing his victims within this constrained area, in between two known safe areas for Clarkson, both just slightly out of the center of where the police action would be, Clarkson had two different options to retreat once the killings were completed. As Clarkson knew these streets very well, growing up in the area, having his fiancée's family living nearby, and being called for by actors and actresses throughout the area, Clarkson would have known the nooks and crannies of the paths between Wellington Street and White Street like the back of his hand.



¹²⁸ <https://forum.casebook.org/forum/ripper-discussions/scene-of-the-crimes/2048-toffs-in-spitalfields/page15?view=stream>

¹²⁹ Begg at p. 150-158

¹³⁰ Begg, at p. 153.

¹³¹ Greenwall, p.13-14. "Clarkson at Home", *The Sketch*, 16 Aug. 1893, p. 17

¹³² See fn. 18.

An additional consideration in this regard is Clarkson's Bohemian lifestyle and sleeping patterns. Clarkson not only knew this area well, he also knew it at nighttime, having spent his professional years gallivanting from his studio to theatres to pubs and back again, all throughout the West End and East End.¹³³ He is said to have frequented pubs and theatres in which the fiendish and the criminal roamed.¹³⁴ He knew this area, right between his home and the childhood home of his childhood sweetheart, and as an adult grew to know it well at night. His comfort level in this area, at this time of night, would have been high.



Clarkson as a police officer

As discussed above, Clarkson was an expert in disguise, both close-up disguise and quick-change disguise. He could easily look like, for example, a grenadier at one moment; and quickly turn into a policeman in another. He was even chastised publicly once for creating policeman costumes that were so realistic they became a security concern.¹³⁵ And if for some reason, a police constable stopped him and recognized him as the famous wigmaker, it would be no big deal. Clarkson was an eccentric theatrical personality, and could easily explain away his presence as delivering an emergency wig replacement at a local theatre or finishing up a long after-party at a local pub. If he were stopped in disguise and his disguise was revealed, he could claim he was simply coming back from a late-night fancy-dress party. After all, he was in that business. No one would suspect him, even if he was literally caught with blood on his hands.

Clarkson did not seem to be shy about using his theatrical profession to cloak his nefarious business enterprises. In 1919, Clarkson was detained by the border patrol in Paris attempting to bring incendiary devices into Paris.¹³⁶ For a man who was in the midst of a long streak of business fires - ultimately burning down almost all of his surplus stock in a series of fires that were later deemed arson - it seems like quite a damning circumstance. Clarkson laughed it away, however, claiming the devices were simply used in the theatre to create primitive lighting effects. They weren't bombs or meant for destruction at all, Clarkson claimed. They were, however, literally capable of blowing up.¹³⁷ The incident made the newspapers, but he was let go without even a caution. Were these devices merely stage props that Clarkson was carrying from London to Paris; or were these devices intended to incite arson at some target or another in France?

With careful analysis of Clarkson's seemingly criminal proclivities, it is quite reasonable to suspect the latter. He was let go without further questions, the result of his well-known name. Being a prominent figure in the theatrical business in the Victorian era sometimes opened doors that would otherwise be shut, even in Paris.

For Willy Clarkson, those doors were open for most of his life, all over Europe especially Paris. And back in England, he was making headlines, too.

The Wigmaker of Wellington Street

On August 4, 1888, the *Pall Mall Gazette* published a feature story on Willy Clarkson, describing his success and detailing his royal connections and generally celebrating him as "*The Wigmaker of Wellington Street*".¹³⁸ Two nights later, Martha Tabram was suffocated and killed, her dead body stabbed mercilessly. It is quite a coincidence that the two events occurred so close in time; and one could fairly speculate that, if Clarkson did do these things, perhaps Martha Tabram tried to leverage the information in the *Pall Mall Gazette* to extract more money for her informant services. That was the final straw, and this was the incident that triggered Clarkson to take steps to wipe out his informant ring and start again. This is conjecture of the highest order and can easily be explained away as a coincidence of course, but the timing is curious indeed.

As we recall the Case of Mr. A, thirty years later, Clarkson and Hobbs appeared to have been continuing to engage in just such a practice: trafficking a woman from England to Paris to entrap the man in a compromising

¹³³ Greenwall, p.

¹³⁴ Greenwall, p.

¹³⁵ "A Realistic Policeman", *Kinematograph Weekly*, 1 July, 1926, p. 37 Photo Credit: *Kinematograph Weekly*.

¹³⁶ "Taken for an Anarchist", *Morning Leader*, 25 Mar. 1907, p. 5.

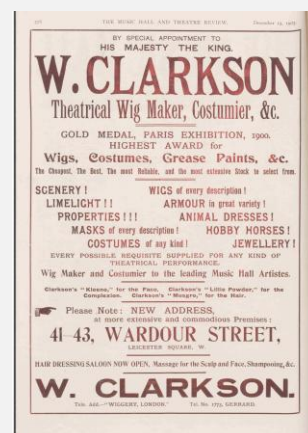
¹³⁷ *Id.*

¹³⁸ "The Wig-Maker of Wellington Street", *Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 Aug. 1888, p. 5.

position, for financial gain. Done with such precision, it strongly suggests that this was not the first time this scheme had been executed. This writer suggests that Clarkson and Hobbs utilized this subterfuge with the women in their informant ring; whether the information was obtained by eavesdropping as a domestic servant; or catching a man in a compromising position and shaking him down; or catching a man at 'Clarkson's Cottage's', the point was to obtain control and exploit that control for monetary gain. Exactly as they did in the 1919 Case of Mr. A.

The Soiled Apron, the Goulston Street Graffito & the Berner Street Wig

An apron was discovered on Goulston Street on September 30, 1888, the night of the 'double event', and a phrase of graffito was noted near the apron. The apron was inspected and investigated by the police before eventually being lost to the passage of time and, perhaps, the angry bombs of World War II. Notably it was inspected at the time, and it was identified as seemingly being soiled with blood, and what may have been fecal matter.¹³⁹ This writer, however, asserts that it was not fecal matter at all, but rather grease paint, an unpleasant-smelling but common form of theatrical make-up that Clarkson sold as his own. He claimed that British grease paint was much better than German grease paint, where it originated.¹⁴⁰ It falls completely in line with Clarkson's expertise and the use of disguise. This writer asserts that Clarkson cut a piece of Catherine Eddowes' apron to wipe make-up off and accidentally dropped it on Goulston Street as he was removing the grease paint.



This brings us to another critical piece of alleged evidence: the 'Berner Street Wig'. Clarkson repeatedly claimed over the years that a man's wig that he manufactured at his studio had been found on Berner Street near the body of Elizabeth Stride.¹⁴¹ If such a wig existed, it could be an intriguing clue that has been ignored or denied for over a hundred years.

In Clarkson's own words in 1926, he wrote:

"I should not be surprised even if 'Jack the Ripper' had been a patron of mine. After one of his murders a wig which that had been purchased from us was found in the neighborhood of the crime. As I had not looked after him personally and as the wig was of a sort which we always keep in stock we had no way of identifying the purchase".¹⁴²

Clarkson would later elaborate on this wig, stating to his biographer that the police had come to him one morning and asked him to identify it. He was positive it was one of his own but could not identify the purchaser, as it was a common wig, many of which had been sold. Always curious, Clarkson asked the police why the purchaser was so important. According to his biographer:

"The detective said that this particular wig had been found at the corner of a yard off Berner Street, Whitechapel, and in the yard itself was the body of a woman, the fourth victim of Jack the Ripper had been found. The wig must have been an important clue, but like so many clues it led nowhere...It is probable that the murderer hastily threw away the wig, perhaps believing he had been seen".¹⁴³

There is currently no evidence other than Clarkson's words that the 'Berner Street Wig' existed. In weighing its credibility, however, it is instructive to consider the motivations of the leaders of the police investigation, particularly Superintendent Thomas Arnold and Sir Charles Warren, and how they reacted to and handled the evidence that night. Specifically, we must refer to the well-known story of the Goulston Street Graffito. In summary, whilst investigating the area to find the suspect, or clues about the killings, two police constables came across a phrase scrawled in neat print across an archway near the body. The graffito said, more or less, *"The Juwes are the men who will not be blamed for nothing"*.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Begg, *The Facts*, p. 159 (e-book)

¹⁴⁰ Willy Clarkson Advertisement, *The Referee*, 6 Sept. 1914 p. 8.

¹⁴¹ "Chronicles of a Wig Maker", part 1, *Pictorial Review*, April 1926, p. 18; "Magical Memories of Willy Clarkson", *The People*, 14 Oct. 1934, p. 2; <https://allthatsinteresting.com/willy-clarkson-jack-the-ripper>; Greenwall, at pp. 149-150.

¹⁴² "Chronicles of a Wig Maker", part 2, *Pictorial Review*, May 1926, p. 122.

¹⁴³ Greenwall, at pp. 148-149.

¹⁴⁴ Begg, *The Facts*, p. 160 (e-book); There is some debate about the precise wording of the graffito, but it is not relevant to this discussion.



Superintendent Arnold

Superintendent Arnold inspected the writing and made the immediate decision to have it washed away. He was aware of recent flare-ups of antisemitism, and the police force was sensitive to aggravating the public and potentially causing attacks on people with Jewish heritage.¹⁴⁵ Knowing that it would be a controversial decision to wipe away evidence, when in a short period of time, the light would be sufficient to photograph it, Arnold waited for Sir Charles Warren to arrive at the scene, to give final approval. Despite this, he ordered one of his men to stand by with a wet sponge, ready to remove the graffito as soon as Sir Warren arrived, so confident was he in his decision.¹⁴⁶

And that is precisely what occurred. Sir Warren arrived around 5:00 a.m. and did not hesitate. The graffito must be removed immediately, he demanded, to alleviate any bad acts arising out of ill-will towards the Jewish people should the murders that were terrorizing the neighborhood be linked in some way to a Jew.¹⁴⁷ While there were some voices of protest, there appears to be a consensus among recent historians that these dissents may have been more of a personal conflict than of a genuine disagreement as to Sir Warren's concerns.¹⁴⁸ The protests were short-lived, and the graffito was washed away without having been photographed; a decision that would haunt the lives of all involved.

Turning back to the Elizabeth Stride crime scene, we will now consider the likely mindset of Detective Inspector Edmund Reid, who was the highest-ranking officer in attendance, and thus tasked with directing the investigation and issuing various orders to the lesser-ranking officers.¹⁴⁹

Detective Inspector Reid received a telegram informing him of the death, and he rushed to the scene on Berner Street. There he found a variety of police officers and doctors, and, still in her prone position, the deceased woman whom he would later learn to be Elizabeth Stride.¹⁵⁰ Superintendent Arnold arrived at some point as well. Both knew the trademark of the killer, and, like everyone else there, they separately concluded this could be another killing in the Whitechapel Murders. Reid ordered a full search of the area by the police, which included inspecting every house and nearby streets in detail and interviewing every witness they could find.¹⁵¹ He quickly traveled to the coroner's residence and informed him of the incident, and then returned to Berner Street to check on the status of the search. He and his team were meticulously in their approach.¹⁵²



Detective Inspector Edmund Reid

This writer suggests that it is at this time that the 'Berner Street Wig' was found. If this is the case, it surely would have been brought to Detective Inspector Reid's attention immediately. It is not mentioned in any of



Clarkson wig, post 1904

Detective Inspector Reid's extensive testimony or notes on the case. If it did exist, why would it not have been mentioned? This is a fair question that suggests no such wig existed, and the claim was just a tall tale by raconteur Clarkson. But does it, though?

If the 'Berner Street Wig' was real, it likely contained an inner label with the Clarkson's brand on it.¹⁵³ Like Sir Charles Warren and Superintendent Arnold on Goulston Street, Inspector Reid must have known that there was a risk of enraging anti-Semitic sentiment in the environment of these killings. As mentioned above, Clarkson's Jewish heritage was no great secret, and it is likely Inspector Reid, who was familiar with the entire region and its inhabitants, would have been aware of it. It likely would not have occurred to him that Clarkson had anything to do with it, not

¹⁴⁵ Begg, *The Facts*, p. 160 (e-book)

¹⁴⁶ *Id*

¹⁴⁷ *Id*, p. 161

¹⁴⁸ *Id*

¹⁴⁹ *The Man Who Hunted Jack the Ripper*, Nicholas Connell & Stewart Evans (Rupert Books 2000), pp. 53-56.

¹⁵⁰ *The Man Who Hunted Jack the Ripper*, Nicholas Connell & Stewart Evans (Rupert Books 2000), pp. 53-56.

¹⁵¹ *Id*.

¹⁵² *Id*.

¹⁵³ Photograph of a different Clarkson wig held by writer. Definitely NOT the Berner Street Wig.

only because he knew Clarkson's wigs were massively popular and well-used in music halls everywhere but also because Clarkson simply did not match Reid's opinion of the criminal profile of what the killer was like. Detective Reid noted in a later interview the following:

*"My opinion is that the perpetrator of the crimes was a man who was in the habit of using a certain public-house, and of remaining there until closing time. Leaving with the rest of the customers, with what soldiers call 'a touch of delirium triangle,' he would leave with one of the women. My belief is that he would in some dark corner attack her with the knife and cut her up. Having satisfied his maniacal blood-lust he would go away home, and the next day know nothing about it."*¹⁵⁴

Inspecting the wig at the crime scene, if such a wig existed, there's no reason to believe Inspector Reid's instincts and reactions would have been any different than those of Sir Charles Warren or Superintendent Arnold, investigate but do not publicly broadcast evidence that could inflame public sentiment against the people of Jewish heritage. They made the extraordinary decision to destroy evidence rather than have it on public display when daylight broke.

A decision by Inspector Reid to send two police constables to Clarkson's studio to see if an identification could be made, rather than announcing it to the media or making a grand pronouncement, aligns with the thinking of Sir Charles Warren and Superintendent Arnold at the time. Plus, it also aligns with Clarkson's story. Once it was determined that Clarkson could not identify the wig, like any other dead-end piece of evidence – with no proof there was even a connection to the killing of Elizabeth Stride, other than its proximity to her body – there was no reason to raise it at the inquest; and this writer asserts it was likely consigned to the evidence boxes, doomed to be forgotten, lost, misplaced or destroyed, like so much other evidence in the case.

As to the substance of the infamous graffito, it is possible that Clarkson, who was likely Jewish, might have written it perhaps as some kind of confusing distraction. To this writer's mind, it is unlikely and, in any event, not particularly relevant. The critical part to consider regarding the graffito is the immediate response by Sir Charles Warren and Superintendent Arnold; and the possibility that Inspector Reid had the same instincts.

There have been historians who study the Whitechapel Murders who have dismissed the 'Berner Street Wig', considering it nothing more than a made-up story by a known raconteur who told similar tall tales about disguising other high-profile criminals, such as the infamous Dr. Crippen. True, Clarkson did tell such tall tales, something of which his biographer was very cognizant, who states in the biography that he attempted to filter out the tall tales in his re-telling of Clarkson's life.¹⁵⁵ When it comes to Dr. Crippen, at least, the tall tales are quite likely true.

A Failed Attempt to Flee

In the case of Dr. Crippen, who was accused of killing his wife, there is more than a ring of truth in what Clarkson has claimed.¹⁵⁶ And when considered with the undisputed fact that Dr. Crippen was represented by solicitor Arthur Newton at that time – the same Arthur Newton that Clarkson knew so well and worked with – the tale seems much more sensible.¹⁵⁷

Dr. Crippen attempted to escape the UK via Antwerp, Belgium, to Canada wearing a disguise, with his mistress, a typist disguised as a boy.¹⁵⁸ As a client of Arthur Newton, where else would Crippen go to get a costume from other than the House of Clarkson? Clarkson, after all, counted among his many specialties the ability to disguise a woman as a man.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, he was the long-time wigmaker and costume maker for the famous Vesta Tilley, whose long stint in a



Dr. Crippen being arrested in disguise.

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.casebook.org/dissertations/spe3.html>

¹⁵⁵ Greenwall, p. 12.

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/the-modern-manhunt-began-with-an-arrest-by-wireless-telegraph>

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp64790/vesta-tilley-matilda-alice-nee-powles-lady-de-frece>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.mylondon.news/news/nostalgia/secret-life-mistress-who-dressed-22598658>

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.shutterstock.com/editorial/image-editorial/%27if-only-willie-clarkson-had-helped-miss-7665153ds>

successful music hall career was dressing as a man, to the delight of crowds throughout England.¹⁶⁰ In this regard, Clarkson's claim to disguise Dr. Crippen and his mistress is plausible. Clarkson openly advertised that he was not just in the business of wiggery and costuming, but literally in the highly successful business of close-up disguise. It would be the most sensible and practical option for Newton, who had known Clarkson since at least 1888, to take his client to Clarkson for this disguise.

With this in mind, if Clarkson's statements regarding Dr. Crippen are accurate and reliable, why would not Clarkson's repeated and consistent statements regarding the 'Berner Street Wig' be provided at least some presumption of accuracy? Note the only reason for rebuttal is that there is no record of it in the police archives, especially with the fact that so much evidence in this case has been lost to the passage of time and the brutal fist of war.

Tableaux Vivant at Balmoral



Tableaux Vivant, Balmoral 1888

Almost two months passed between the 'double event' that resulted in the deaths of Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes and the next Whitechapel Murder, that of Mary Jane Kelly. Between September 30, 1888 and November 9, 1888, there were no killings attributed to Jack the Ripper. There has been much discussion about why there was this delay. This writer has a suggestion.

On the weekend of October 5, 1888, Queen Victoria attended a series of performances known as *tableaux vivants* at Balmoral, Scotland.¹⁶¹ A *tableaux vivant*, translated literally as 'living art' is a form of performance art in which real individuals replicate historical scenes, iconic paintings of master artists, or similar, familiar scenes. These particular *tableaux vivants* featured members of the Royal Family and the Royal staff as the art, and it must have been quite a stunning spectacle of a performance.¹⁶² The costumes and wigs were provided by Clarkson as the Royal Wigmaker and Costumier.¹⁶³ According to the Royal Collection Trust, Queen Victoria herself sometimes assisted with costume choices.¹⁶⁴

These performances were quite similar to those that Clarkson wigged and costumed earlier that year, which so impressed Queen Victoria and the Royal Family that he earned his royal patent. Clarkson was invited back to wig and costume the Royal Family at Balmoral in October – an encore performance in a way – and it must have been of the utmost importance to him. From the existing photographs and Queen Victoria's scrawled comments in her journal, it appears Clarkson rose to the occasion yet again.

Thus, if we are to consider Clarkson as a suspect in the Whitechapel Murders, it should be suggested that the reason the killing spree paused at the end of September is that Clarkson simply was not in town. By October 5, 1888, and perhaps a couple of days earlier to prepare and travel, Clarkson was in Scotland. His absence from London aligns completely with the pause in the Whitechapel Murders.

The 'Jack the Ripper' Letters

The nickname assigned to the specter of a killer responsible for the Whitechapel Murders arose from one of a series of taunting letters received by the police, claiming responsibility for the killings, with tones that largely seem unhinged. As with most things related to the Whitechapel Murders, there is uncertainty and decades of debate about the authenticity of each of these writings. The writings are seemingly different in each letter and the tone of each letter seems different. Furthermore, they are written on different papers with different ink. Many researchers consider all of them to be hoaxes, and certainly that was the opinion of most members of the police at the time.

¹⁶⁰ "Kings I have Created", Willy Clarkson, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 13 Sept. 1929, p. 6.

¹⁶¹ <https://www.rct.uk/collection/search#/37/collection/2980004/balmoral-tableaux-vivants-st-elizabeth>

¹⁶² *Id.*

¹⁶³ <https://www.rct.uk/collection/exhibitions/george-washington-wilson-queen-victorias-photographer-in-scotland/university/balmoral-tableaux-vivants-charles-edward>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.rct.uk/collection/search#/37/collection/2980004/balmoral-tableaux-vivants-st-elizabeth>

The first two letters deemed potentially genuine were both written in red and signed with the moniker, ‘Jack the Ripper’, which was flashy enough to capture the attention of the media, and soon the imagination of the public.¹⁶⁵ Another contained a portion of a kidney, which may or may not have been human and may or may not have been cut from the body of Catherine Eddowes.¹⁶⁶

This writer asserts there is truth in the lies and facts in the deception with Clarkson’s partner Albert Glover, as a life-long printer, and Hobbs, as a life-long criminal; exploiting their skills to utilize them as an infrastructure for yet another of his disguises and great deceptions.

The Jack the Ripper letters, this writer asserts, or at least some of them, were written by Clarkson, perhaps with the assistance of Glover and Hobbs, to create confusion and establish a profile for the killer to be an insane madman long past the point of rationalism.

If we recall, after Clarkson’s death, Hobbs was arrested and convicted of forging Clarkson’s will by using chemicals and invisible ink. Clarkson’s partner Albert Glover was a lithographic printer, who would have the knowledge and the access to all sorts of processes and inks to make each letter look distinct and authentic. Clarkson spent a lifetime in the theatre, watching countless plays and speaking in countless different voices. It would be second nature for him to conjure up different characters through language, ink, and paper.

Moreover, it has been pointed out by historian and *YouTube* commentator Richard Jones that the sender of at least two of the letters, the ‘Dear Boss’ and ‘Saucy Jack’ letters, addressed both correspondence to the Central News Agency, and not directly to one of the well-known newspapers of the time.¹⁶⁷ By this logic, the sender was familiar with the way that Victorian news stories were distributed and syndicated at the time.

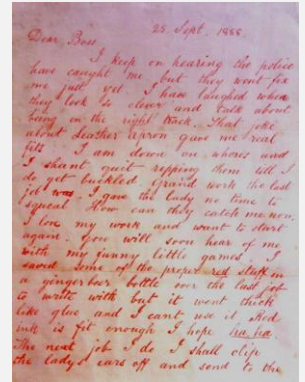
Clarkson, who had for years routinely advertised in many major newspapers, and, in August, 1888 – just weeks before these letters were sent – had a major story about him published in multiple periodicals. He knew perfectly well how the news system worked.¹⁶⁸ Clarkson would have known that the Central News Agency was his best target to spread the disinformation and confusion with the ‘Dear Boss’ letters. With his theatrical instincts and proud disguise-maker prowess, creating a smoke screen of deception through false letters sent seemingly from a madman would have been a scheme completely within Clarkson’s skill set.

The Seaside Home Identification

In 1981, a copy of a 1910 book written by Dr. Robert Anderson, containing what is claimed to be the handwritten marginalia of Inspector Donald Swanson, was found by Swanson’s relative.¹⁶⁹ In those scribbled notes, Inspector Swanson, who was of course intimately involved in the 1888 investigation, writes as follows.

“I merely add that the only person who had ever had a good view of the murder unhesitatingly identified the suspect the instant he was confronted with him; but he refused to give evidence against him...because the suspect was also a Jew and also because his evidence would convict the suspect, and witness would be the means of murderer being hanged which he did not wish to be left on his mind...And after this identification which suspect knew, no other murder of this kind took place in London...after the suspect had been identified at the Seaside Home where he had been sent by us with difficulty in order to subject him to identification, and he knew he was identified. On suspect's return to his brother's house in Whitechapel he was watched by police (City CID) by day & night. In a very short time the suspect with his hands tied behind his back, he was sent to Stepney Workhouse and then to Colney Hatch and died shortly afterwards - Kosminski was the suspect – DSS”¹⁷⁰

It has been speculated by many for decades that the ‘Seaside Home’ referenced by Swanson was a Police Seaside Convalescent Home in Hove.¹⁷¹ But the police seaside home seems to be a somewhat unlikely



¹⁶⁵ By Jack the Ripper - National Archives MEPO 3/142, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=249916>

¹⁶⁶ *Id.*

¹⁶⁷ “Yours Truly Jack the Ripper – The Dear Boss Letter”, *The Jack the Ripper Tour YouTube Channel*, 30 May 2021.

¹⁶⁸ “The Wigmaker of Wellington Street”, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 Aug. 1888; *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 6 Aug. 1888; *Pall Mall Budget*, 9 Aug., 1888.

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.scribd.com/document/641836421/Ripperologist-128>

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.scribd.com/document/641836421/Ripperologist-128>

¹⁷¹ <https://www.casebook.org/dissertations/dst-andr.html>

candidate for Swanson's identification trip. First, it didn't open its doors until at least 18 months after the last of the Canonical Five had met her sad and violent fate. Swanson links the two, stating that after the identification and incarceration of the unnamed suspect, the killings stopped. But, by that time, there was a relative consensus that the killings had stopped a long time earlier, with the death of Mary Jane Kelly.

Second, the home was intended for ailing, retired policemen to take their rest in an effort to recover from various chronic diseases, such as tuberculosis. It was not a place for the public or for difficult patients, but rather, was small and insular, consisting of a single structure that housed around sixteen residents when it opened in 1891. It also housed children.¹⁷²

Additionally, there is no articulated connection between its location in Brighton/Hove and London, where the prisoner was presumably located. Of course, it is always possible that for some reason the suspect was located in Brighton and brought to the home out of convenience, but that would likely have required the supposed eyewitness to travel down from London. The trip from London to Brighton is not a particularly long or inconvenient one, the seaside town being a popular locale for Victorian-era staycations. However, it seems perhaps more likely that, even if a suspect was located in Brighton for killings in London, the suspect would be brought to London for the identification, not the eyewitness traveling to Brighton.

This writer suggests a more likely location for Swanson's so-called Seaside Home identification was in East Sussex, at the Hertfordshire Seaside Convalescent Home ('Herts Seaside Home'), close to the sea on the Silchester Road in St. Leonard's, in the district of Hastings.¹⁷³ The Herts Seaside Home was opened in 1876 consisting of two houses of modest size, and by 1888, due to popular demand, it acquired a larger property not far away. It had constructed an additional, two-story structure that could initially house 45 patients.¹⁷⁴ Herts Seaside Home is thus an attractive candidate for the Seaside Home identification.



Hertfordshire Seaside Convalescent Home

Perhaps more importantly, it was open at the time of the Whitechapel Murders and thus allows for a time frame of the identification to be much closer, or perhaps right at the conclusion of, the Whitechapel Murders, which would make Swanson's statement that the killings ceased after the identification more sensible.

Additionally, the significantly larger size of Herts Seaside Home seems to make it a more practical choice than the Police Seaside Home at Hove, which was quite small and focused exclusively on quiet, elderly, ill retired policemen as patients. The larger, public Herts Seaside Home would have facilities more suitable for treating a patient "*with difficulty*", as the suspect at the Seaside Home identification was described. With three separate buildings at two different locations, housing all sorts of chronically ill patients sponsored by groups and individuals for their own reasons, it would provide more discreet and secure options to temporarily house a difficult patient.

In the context of this article, the possibility that Swanson's identification took place at the Herts Seaside Home is intriguing because it is a stone's throw from Hastings Pier, where Willy Clarkson spent his weekends throughout his life.¹⁷⁵ Indeed, Richard King published his memories of Clarkson after his death, recounting the many times over the years he would see Clarkson lounging in Hastings with renowned stage actor Jimmy Glover.¹⁷⁶ When the Lyceum Theatre switched up its yearly fancy-dress competition representing countries to costumes representing regions of England instead, Clarkson chose Hastings as the costume he designed.¹⁷⁷

This writer suggests it is much more reasonable that the suspect Swanson references was arrested in London at a time when Clarkson was taking a holiday in Hastings. So that there was no delay in making an

¹⁷² <https://www.mybrightonandhove.org.uk/topics/public-services/police/police-4>

¹⁷³ <https://www.1066online.co.uk/hastings-history/st-leonards/herts-convalescent-home/>

¹⁷⁴ *Id.*

¹⁷⁵ Greenwall, p. 117.

¹⁷⁶ "With Silent Friends", *The Tatler*, 5 Feb. 1936, p. 248.

¹⁷⁷ See fn. 91.

identification, the police could have simply brought the suspect to be witnessed by Clarkson, who the police at the time may have thought had seen or even met the suspect when the ‘Berner Street Wig’ was ‘purchased’ at his wig-shop. This would have been a perfect opportunity for Clarkson, the master of disguise and deception, to permanently deflect attention from him. Compared to Israel Schwartz, the other likely candidate for the witness who identified the suspect at the Seaside Home, Clarkson seems to be a reasonable witness. It makes no sense why Schwartz, in London, would have been brought to the Police Seaside Home, when it would have been easier to bring the suspect to London, particularly as it was a difficult prisoner.

For Clarkson, who apparently denied his likely Jewish heritage steadfastly his whole life, this would be a moment for him to lean into it. If he could convince the police that this was the man, but his religion prohibited him from testifying against him – because the public spectacle of a court appearance would be likely be considered a bridge too far, an inch too close to the crimes – this would remove any risk of a continued intense police hunt without having to be publicly connected to the crimes. After all, if Clarkson really was responsible for the Whitechapel Murders, it was best to stay anonymous. This writer suggests that this is exactly what occurred at the Seaside Home identification, and Clarkson succeeded, yet again, in concealing himself in plain sight, while finding an easy patsy to pass the crimes off on.

A Fancy Court Jester or a Cold-Blooded Killer



In his later years, Willy Clarkson gladly played the court jester, sometimes literally.¹⁷⁸ All accounts concur that by the early 1900s, Willy Clarkson had grown quite physically large, with his shock of hair pushed up high on his head; his moustache extensively curled at the sides, and, along with his prominent goatee, framed by his now chubby cheeks, Clarkson was described as more than a bit ‘effeminate’, and seemingly very flamboyant in dress.¹⁷⁹

On initial consideration, even if Clarkson is assumed to be a criminal, an arsonist, a fraud, and a forger, it is understandable for one not to connect him to the type with the character and callousness required to commit the heinous Whitechapel Murders. On additional consideration, however, perhaps that perception is less well-founded than one might think.

There is some disagreement in current discussions as to whether the perpetrator would have required medical expertise to nearly dissect several of the women who fell victim to his blade. This writer could point to various connections between Clarkson and the medical field: (1) Clarkson’s biographer claimed that his grandfather was a barber-surgeon¹⁸⁰; (2) he maintained a close, almost familial relationship with Lt. Walter Cole, whose father was a surgeon¹⁸¹; and (3) as a barber himself, he would have had some basic knowledge of anatomy.

But there is another characteristic that, to this writer’s mind, makes him most capable of conducting these gruesome and inhumane killings: his participation in the Victorian art of taxidermy.

Willy Clarkson and Animals

In his book about Clarkson’s life, his biographer Harry Greenwall notes the following, rather curious characteristic of the wigmaker:

*“Because some of his most famous women customers had pet dogs, Clarkson used to pretend an affection for animals, but in reality he was rather cruel to all animals except fish.”*¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ “Magical Memories of Willy Clarkson”, *The People*, 14 Oct. 1934, p. 2.

¹⁷⁹ *Bechhofer Roberts, The Mr. A. Case at p. 36; Willie Clarkson, Some Personal Recollections, The Era*, 17 Oct. 1934, p. 2; *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 4 July 1931, p. 8.

¹⁸⁰ *Greenwall*, at p. 15.

¹⁸¹ *See fn. 27.*

¹⁸² *Greenwall*, at p. 20.

Unfortunately, Clarkson's biographer does not elaborate on why or how he reached this intriguing conclusion, but within the context of what we do know about Clarkson and the era in which he lived, there may be a reasonable explanation for his perspective.

Taxidermy was part of the high-end fashion circle, with Queen Victoria leading the way, commissioning a display of furrier and taxidermy as far back as 1851.¹⁸³ Costume makers began to consistently insert taxidermy animals into their outfits, with glamorous women from the finest circles embellishing themselves with hats made of cats, bats, and more; cat tails would dangle from the back of gowns.¹⁸⁴



Clarkson head piece with taxidermy frog

Clarkson himself appears to have included the art of taxidermy in his costume and stage prop practice. As early as 1888, Clarkson was advertising cats and likely other animals in stuffed condition, seemingly both to incorporate into fancy dress, but also as collectibles themselves, with stuffed, dead animals twisted into human-like poses, a gruesome process known as taxidermy anthropomorphic vivant.¹⁸⁵ The art of taxidermy was very much in fashion during this period. Even one of Clarkson's designed gowns featured a taxidermy frog in the head dress, and others incorporated living fish as well as both stuffed and living birds, and some head dresses were made out of an entire taxidermied cat.¹⁸⁶

Clarkson had, at the very least, a personal connection to taxidermy. He had his own dog, Wiggy, stuffed and placed under a coffee table in his upstairs living room.¹⁸⁷ Indeed, in a photograph in the British National Portrait Gallery collection, Clarkson poses with his wigs but also his favorite osprey feathers,¹⁸⁸ a common feature amongst taxidermy aficionados.¹⁸⁹ His studio entrance was guarded by stuffed dogs and a stuffed stork.¹⁹⁰



Clarkson tells at least two anecdotes that suggest he was an amateur taxidermist. First, he recounts the story of the time a woman came into his studio in tears, having lost her beloved dog, and it was in such a state that it could not be stuffed. Instead, Clarkson created a model that he claimed looked just like the woman's deceased dog.¹⁹¹ Did Clarkson create this model from scratch, or was it taxidermy, using a similar-looking dog to stuff? Second, he remembers the time a man came to him in desperation, worried that thieves would break into his shop. Undeterred, Clarkson created the man a large, stuffed dog complete with a staged kennel and teeth locked in a snarl to protect him.¹⁹² Again, did Clarkson make this from scratch or was it taxidermy? With so many stray dogs roaming the streets of the East End¹⁹³, it would certainly be cheaper to find a similar-looking dog on the streets, than to pay the price to create an artificial one, particularly in a time when taxidermy was so well-regarded, even by the Queen.¹⁹⁴ After his death, the auction of Clarkson's goods included a large selection of dolls that were said to have been specialized.¹⁹⁵ Given the times, it is a fair conclusion that these were taxidermy dolls.

Clarkson was, at least, taxidermy-adjacent, and would have had familiarity with the methods of a taxidermist. As a master of disguise and a costumier, who was apparently cruel to animals (according to his biographer), he certainly would have had an intellectual curiosity as to how the process worked and was also

¹⁸³ <https://www.rct.uk/collection/2800052/the-great-exhibition-1851-display-of-fur-and-taxidermy>

¹⁸⁴ <https://desperate-living.com/2021/10/15/the-bizarre-and-disturbing-world-of-victorian-taxidermy-hats/>

¹⁸⁵ <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/anthropomorphic-taxidermy-how-dead-rodents-became-the-darlings-of-the-victorian-elite>

¹⁸⁶ J. Malcolm Fraser, *Bird-Cages and Court Toadies: Some Triumphs of Fancy Dress*, 1896

¹⁸⁷ Pictorial Review, "Chronicles of a Wigmaker, Pt. 2", Pictorial Review April 1926, p. 20.

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw68826/Willy-Clarkson?search=sp&sText=willy+clarkson&rNo=4> Photo credit: National Portrait Gallery.

¹⁸⁹ <https://museumofthehighlands.org/project/taxidermy-osprey>

¹⁹⁰ Long Live the King – of Wigs, *The Sphere*, 19 Sept. 1931, p. 412. (see fn. 91).

¹⁹¹ See Fn. 186.

¹⁹² Clarkson, Willy, "The Anecdotes of a Wigmaker", *Liverpool Weekly Mercury*, 18 June, 1910, p. 16

¹⁹³ <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/how-the-dog-found-a-place-in-the-family-home-from-the-victorian-age-to-ours#:~:text=The%20description%20'home'%2C%20suggests,a%20conditional%20kind%20of%20love.&text=Inset%20images:%20At%20Home%20and,permision%20of%20the%20British%20Library.>

¹⁹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁹⁵ "Willy Clarkson's Business May Be Over: His Souvenirs", *The Evening News*, 17 Dec. 1934, p. 3.

a sufficient businessman and confident designer that he would have believed that he could create the models better, and at a lesser cost. If this were a skill of his, it would have been especially useful for someone who was looking to turn an ordinary crime scene into an epic and timeless horror scene, one for which a dandy wigmaker like Clarkson could never be capable.

Corsets, Tight-Lacing, and Internal Organs



*Sketch of Fancy Dress
Costume from Clarkson's
Studio*

Corsets and disguise were a common couple in Victorian England. Fashion, of course, is the apex of corset appeal. Corsets were used by both the working class and the upper class, for a variety of reasons. They were incorporated into many of Clarkson's designs, as surviving drawings of his costumes show; clearly a critical element of a Clarkson costume.¹⁹⁶

But the intrigue here is how they were used to disguise, and this played upon both the working class and the upper class. A pregnancy for a factory worker could mean the loss of her job. A pregnancy for an upper-class woman could result in the loss of essential social interactions and bring shame to a family. To avoid or at least delay these difficult facets of Victorian pregnancy, women turned to corsets.¹⁹⁷

Clarkson, as both a costume designer and a master of disguise, both occupations of which he always described himself, was well involved in the corset, and otherwise hiding and masquerading the female body behind various constraints and illusions. Not only did Clarkson costume the famed Vesta Tilley, whose stage persona was of a woman dressed like a man; but there were articles depicting and demonstrating his ability to disguise a woman as a man.¹⁹⁸

So too did Clarkson constrain women for pure fashion purposes. There is no doubt that Clarkson used corsets in his costumes.¹⁹⁹ There are plenty of photos of them amongst his patrons, from the notorious Lily Langtry²⁰⁰ to the royal family themselves.²⁰¹

In 1888, however, a fierce debate raged between the fashion industry and the rapidly developing medical community.²⁰² How much physical damage were corsets tightly laced around a woman's midriff, causing? Each side asserted its very strong views and very publicly.²⁰³ The medical community was extremely concerned that tight lacing a waist corset to extreme lengths affected organs, particularly the kidneys.²⁰⁴ In September 1888, the popular press discussed both the benefits and detriments of tight lacing with critics of the garment asserting that the corset caused pressure on the abdomen that could lead to, among other things, congestion of the uterine organs.²⁰⁵



Vesta Tilley

Thus, a costume-maker like Clarkson, who at this exact point in time was making costumes not just for the stage but also fancy-dress balls for aristocrats and royalty, must have been aware of this debate. It was the talk of the high-brow town, and Clarkson was using corsets in nearly all of his costumes. Reading the papers and engaging in the gossip of the day, this writer asserts Clarkson would have become intimately familiar with the placement and vulnerabilities of women's internal organs.²⁰⁶ Combined with possible abilities as a taxidermist, and perhaps his skills with a razor, a general understanding of the placement and location of woman's internal organs was also at Clarkson's disposal.

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.rct.uk/collection/search#/55/collection/2980005/balmoral-tableau-vivants-the-novice>; <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw250226/Lillie-Langtry-as-Marie-Antoinette-in-The-Royal-Necklace>; Photo Credit: Sketch from Clarkson Studio, early 20th century, from this writer's collection

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.mdhistory.org/victorian-image-of-pregnancy-through-corsetry/>

¹⁹⁸ <https://www.mediastorehouse.com/mary-evans-prints-online/disguise-oneself-boy-4450599.html>

¹⁹⁹ <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1193991/wilhelm-pantomime-designs-drawing-wilhelm/>

²⁰⁰ <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw250226/Lillie-Langtry-as-Marie-Antoinette-in-The-Royal-Necklace>

²⁰¹ <https://uk.pinterest.com/pin/princess-alix-of-hesse-as-a-novice-nun-in-the-balmoral-tableaux-vivants-1888--158189005649392348/>

²⁰² <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/library-and-publications/library/blog/effects-of-the-corset/>

²⁰³ "Danger From Tight Lacing", *Derry Journal*, 26 Aug., 1892, p. 8.

²⁰⁴ *Id.*

²⁰⁵ "Is Tight Lacing Beneficial? Professor Roy's Opinion", 14 Sept. 1888, p. 7.

²⁰⁶ Seleshanko, Kristina, *Bound & Determined, a Visual History of Corsets, 1850-1960*, (Dover Publications 2012), generally;

<https://www.mdhistory.org/victorian-image-of-pregnancy-through-corsetry>; <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/library-and-publications/library/blog/effects-of-the-corset/>

The Competition

But could Willy Clarkson really be ‘Jack the Ripper’? Fraud and forgery are one thing. Brutal killings and creating grotesque crime scenes are quite another. But, to Clarkson, who employed hundreds of lower-class men and women over the years, both in his studio shop and at music halls, the lower-class were considered expendable business assets, like fabric, human hair, and, perhaps, even friendships. It seems no one in Clarkson’s life was very safe.

Charles Fox - In 1893, Willy Clarkson’s old friend, Charles Fox, was at the prime of his career. He had been hired to provide the costumes for Henry Irving’s new production of *Lyon’s Mail*, which had just begun a run at Irving’s cutting-edge, world-renowned theatre, the Lyceum.²⁰⁷ The production was a wild popular and critical success, featuring some of the most famous names of the stage, including not only Henry Irving but William Terriss, Amy Coleridge, and more.²⁰⁸

Like Clarkson, Charles Fox was a second-generation theatrical tradesman, a costumier. Thirty-five years old, with a wife and a young child, Fox seemed to have it all. And he was a wealthy man, with over £3,000 in his bank accounts, more than enough to cover any of his apparent business and personal liabilities.²⁰⁹

On 12 May 1893, Fox attended the Lyceum Theatre, supposedly to conduct some business. Around 11:00 pm, Fox left the theatre and made his way to Hyde Park, near Stanhope Gate, around two miles away. There, he shot himself in the chest and ended his life, found dead by a restaurant waiter under a tree. To the police, it was an open and shut matter, a clear-cut case of suicide, with Fox leaving behind an unfinished and unsigned suicide note as confirmation. There was nothing to investigate and the sad death soon faded into obscurity, along with any legacy Fox may have hoped to leave. His wife and only child were now left to fend for themselves, and only the tragedy of suicide was left behind.²¹⁰

Or was it? With their typical, cheeky affection for Victorian voyeurism, the newspapers published Fox’s supposed suicide note, which reads in full as follows:

*“I am afraid I only told you a little of my troubles last night. I have been worse than foolish, and God only knows how I shall get along. If I am sold up there will not be enough to everyone. I am glad I did not borrow that £1,000 from you, for I owe you enough already. It is only now that I see my true position. The prospects are very disheartening, and I am broken-hearted. All my speculations have been failures.”*²¹¹

It is hard to read this note as a farewell letter or statement of immediate suicidal intent. It sounds more like someone writing, but not completing, a letter requesting forbearance of a debt, or perhaps, not to be too dramatic, a delay in paying a ‘vig.’ And, whilst it certainly is possible and not necessarily uncommon for a man to commit suicide by shooting himself in the chest, one would expect a self-inflicted fatal shot to more typically be to the head, where it is more likely to cause death. Of course, it could have been suicide as the inquest found but this note is no proof. From this writer’s perspective this shows no intent to self-harm. No other proof is offered. Rather, the note indicates that Fox owes a debt, seemingly over £1,000, yet he had £3,000 in his account.²¹² This suggests something nefarious and not simply despair over legitimate business concerns.

When interviewed by the press, Fox’s father, a retired hairdresser by this point, did not believe it was suicide and pleaded with the press to believe it was ‘death by misadventure’, to wit, the gun went off accidentally.²¹³ Fox’s father added that his son was not particularly concerned about finances in general, but rather he expressed a fear of a lawsuit that had recently been threatened against him, the basis for which is not stated.

²⁰⁷ “The Suicide of Mr. C.H. Fox – A Pathetic Letter”, *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 16 May 1893, p. 2.

²⁰⁸ Wearing, J.P., *The London Stage 1890-19899: A Calendar of Productions, Performers & Personnel*, (Bloomsbury Publishing 1976), p. 162; “Lyceum Theatre, *Echo* (London), 24 Apr. 1893, p. 1.

²⁰⁹ See fn. 207.

²¹⁰ *Id.*

²¹¹ *Id.*

²¹² *Id.*

²¹³ “Funeral of Mr. Charles H. Fox”, *St. Pancras Gazette*, 20 May, 1893, p. 5.

²¹⁴ No mention of such a lawsuit is made in the inquest, but such a usurious-sounding agreement sounds markedly similar to the way in which Clarkson and Cobbs conducted themselves.

Involved or not in his death, the House of Clarkson sent a lovely wreath to Mr. Fox's funeral.²¹⁵ Also, as a result of the incident, it had one less competitor in the small and competitive business of theatrical costuming and wiggery.

If the demise of Charles Fox were an isolated incident, one would have to write it off as another sad Victorian tale; another senseless loss, like so many of the era. But let's continue to consider Willy Clarkson's close circle of friends and see if this is such an isolated incident amongst people who crossed paths with Clarkson, or whether instead, a pattern might be detectable.

Samuel May - Let us consider the circumstances of Sam May, Clarkson's other good friend, who was also a second-generation wigmaker and costumer, a family with whom Clarkson and Clarkson's father had done so much business over the years. But the voyage of the May family was a difficult one whose tragedies, coincidentally or not, favored Clarkson's business interests.

In November of 1876, Mr. May was at the top of his game, competing with the elder William Clarkson, to meet the needs and expectations of both professional and amateur theatrical clientele.²¹⁶ Unfortunately, he passed away the following year under unknown circumstances, leaving the business and the brand name to his wife, Ellen.²¹⁷ Oddly, just a few months before his death, three of his workers also died as a result of poisoning, purportedly as a result of an uncleaned pot of beer.²¹⁸ The next year, the Samuel May business, still reeling from the loss of the patriarch of the business, suffered another massive setback. For reasons unknown, a fire erupted in their store, sparing the police station next door but causing massive damage to May's store.²¹⁹ Increasingly, it became difficult for the business to move forward, but it did its best.

In April 1895, however, less than 18 months after Charles Fox died under mysterious circumstances that seemed to be financial in nature, Ellen and the 'Samuel May' business experienced devastating and unexpected losses. The result likely due to circumstances that are beginning to seem familiar; the costumer's studio suffered a massive fire destroying nearly all of its stock.²²⁰ The fire was peculiar, as it was one of a string of eight fires of a similar nature that occurred within 48 hours of each other all within the Metropolitan area, along with an additional four false alarms.²²¹ The origin was not known for any of the fires, and the newspapers reported them as though they were related.²²²

After this, Ms. May struggled to make the business survive, but along with her sons she continued to operate it. To do so, however, she was required to borrow money from an unnamed moneylender at usurious rates. The business chased profit for years, but it eventually fell apart, with Ms. May being forced to enter into bankruptcy in 1895, labelled by the newspapers as a "*Theatrical Costumer Failure*", a humiliating and financially devastating fate. She also indicated that her cash liquidity was limited because she had been forced to purchase a large amount of wigs, borrowing money at usurious rates, to stay competitive with her theatrical wig and costume competitors.²²³ Similar to Mr. Fox, Ms. May had sufficient liquid funds to pay her debt, but because of these unknown debts with high interest, she was nevertheless unable to meet her obligations.²²⁴

While Ms. May managed to keep her business afloat after the insolvency, the Samuel May costume studio experienced yet another devastating fire in 1900, being engulfed in flames yet again, shuttering the business

²¹⁴ *Id.*

²¹⁵ *Id.*

²¹⁶ Coates, David James, *The Development of Amateur Theatre in Britain in the Long Nineteenth Century 1789-1914* (University of Warwick 2017), pp. 244-252 (also available at <https://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/id/eprint/108672/>)

²¹⁷ *Wills and Requests, The Witney Express*, 15 Mar., 1887

²¹⁸ "Extraordinary Case of Poisoning", *Midland Examiner & Wolverhampton Times*, 29 Apr. 1876, p. 5.

²¹⁹ *Liverpool Weekly Courier*, 12. Jan., 1878, p. 3.

²²⁰ See fn. 20.

²²¹ "Fires in London", *The Glove*, 7 Jan., 1878, p. 3.

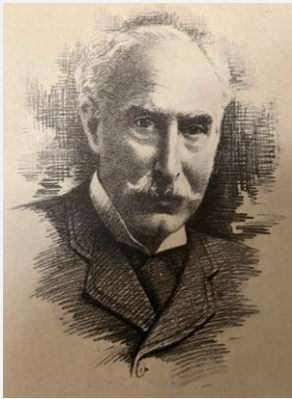
²²² "Theatrical Costumer's Failure", *London Evening Standard*, 10 Sept. 1895, p. 1.

²²³ *Id.*

²²⁴ *Id.*

for a period.²²⁵ The business stayed resilient, and her adult sons continued the business as an ongoing concern for many years.²²⁶

How many coincidences does it take before a convincing pattern is revealed? Let us consider another one.



John Nathan

John Nathan – Costumier John Nathan was costuming the theatrical elite before the young Willy Clarkson was born, working on productions with the elder Clarkson throughout England, as well as costuming royalty like Clarkson did, in particular the Prince of Wales.²²⁷

Along with his good fortune, Nathan experienced some obstacles that, in context, seem peculiarly similar to the fates of others who crossed paths with the House of Clarkson. And they relate to one common element: fire.

Nathan's studio suffered a fiery fate on a Friday night in November 1911. Around ten pm, flames were noted shooting through the roof of Nathan's establishment. Crowds quickly gathered numbering in the hundreds, to watch the building burn in the chilly Fall evening. There was much concern over intricate costumes that had been brought in just that day for the upcoming Lord Mayor's show,²²⁸ Luckily, there was no damage to those costumes, but a good portion of the premises, and the stock contained within it, burned or was water-damaged beyond repair.²²⁹ No cause for the fire was determined.²³⁰

Twenty years later, in January 1934, Mr. Nathan suffered another unfortunate encounter with fire, as the ground floor of his studio across from the Royal London Hospital, suddenly caught fire, smoke bellowing into the air as his stock, yet again, burned away.²³¹

Two fire incidents separated by decades are, in themselves, no evidence that could point to Clarkson's culpability. However, considering his competitive relationship with Fox, May, and Nathan, coupled with Clarkson's apparent complicity in a series of fires on his own premises – apparently at least 13, according to his sister²³² – it is difficult to ignore the various pieces that make up a puzzle with an image increasingly coming into focus.

The Three Store Workers – That, again, brings us full circle to the young girls working in Clarkson's store who were facing criminal charges that could lead to incarceration and certain disgrace, dooming them to a fate in Victorian England almost too tragic to bear. These were not just some hypothetical street urchins, but real women. Yet, Clarkson paid no attention to their plight, forcing the husband of one of them into jail for a year, and consigning the young women to an unknown and unsafe future, both in the long and short term. Clarkson seems to have been a villainous and vicious man. His cruelty was tangible.

As the picture becomes more complete – usurious money lending, arson, blackmail, prostitution, death, destruction – it becomes more difficult to chalk all of this up to chance and circumstance.

In the End

In the end, Willy Clarkson died in his living quarters above his large, swanky studio on Wardour Street, without any of his secrets coming to light. He had moved from Wellington Street in 1905, snuggled cozily between Shaftesbury Avenue and Leicester Square, the heart of the theatre district. It was October, 1934, and Clarkson was found by his maid, face down near his bed with a vicious wound to his head.²³³ The doctors



²²⁵ "Fire in Catherine Street", *Echo* (London), 24 Mar. 1900, p. 3.

²²⁶ *The Era*, 22 Apr. 1911, p. 2.

²²⁷ Coates, pp. 244-245; *The Era*, 22 Apr. 1911, p. 2.; see also *Costumes by Nathan, Nathan, Archer*, (Newnes 1960), generally.

²²⁸ "Big West-End Fire", *Morning Leader*, 4 Nov. 1911, p. 1.

²²⁹ "Fire at Theatrical Costumiers", *Daily News*, 4 Nov. 1911, p. 7.

²³⁰ *Id.*

²³¹ "People Run to Hospital – Fire Engines there, but the Fire is Not", *Evening News*, (London), 13 January, 1934, p. 1.

²³² "Willie Clarkson's Sister Vows to Clear His Name", *Daily Express*, 16 Mar. 1937, p. 11.

²³³ Greenwall, p. 11. Mr. W. Clarkson Death Found Due to Natural Causes, *Hull Daily Mail*, 15 Oct. 1934, p. 1. Photo Credit: Greenwall, Harry, *Strange Life of Willy Clarkson*.

quickly decided it was a heart attack followed by a fall. They considered it a natural death, thus conducting no autopsy.

Clarkson's biographer wasn't so sure, stating that missing from Clarkson's rooms was £250 and his diamond pin²³⁴; the same pin that Queen Victoria either did or did not give to him as a sign of artistic admiration; the same pin that Jennie Glover either did or did not give to him after their engagement broke off; the same pin that George Hutchinson either did or did not accurately identify at the crime scene of Mary Jane Kelly. It is not reported elsewhere, but if true, it lends another intriguing element to an already compelling story that seems almost too much like a melodrama of the times to be true.

The funeral of Willy Clarkson, wigmaker, was a fancy affair, indeed. All of the most famous stars of the stage attended, as did a variety of aristocrats and aging socialites. The design was fancy and glamorous, with an ebony stick and headdress, replete with osprey feathers and sparkling brilliants on top of the coffin. A large white flower arrangement made to look like a massive wig, decorated the steps of the altar.²³⁵ Clarkson could not have designed a better tribute himself.

Despite the regal fanfare of his funeral, within a year the police had determined that Clarkson was a fraud and a forger, an arsonist or worse. They soundly declared that if he were alive, he would have been quickly jailed for alleged misdeeds.²³⁶ His sister defended his innocence, tearfully lamenting that her family name had been destroyed and insisted her brother was innocent, despite the 13 fires that the police and arson investigators had concluded were attributable to Clarkson and his cohort, William Cooper Hobbs.²³⁷

There was even greater controversy after it was discovered that Hobbs, who was apparently named as the executor of the estate, used bleached paper, invisible ink, and other chemicals to falsify a will for Clarkson, attempting to wrestle his estate away from Fred Brezinski, a magician to whom Clarkson left all of his worldly goods.²³⁸ Brezinski does not seem to play into any of the other stories publicly available about Clarkson, but the two men must have had a very strong connection. The Court agreed and awarded the estate to Brezinski, even though it appears the estate appeared to have very little in it despite the old wig-maker's success of many decades, both legitimately and, perhaps, illegitimately.²³⁹ Hobbs' actions were so egregious that he was charged with forgery and fraud and was sentenced to five years in prison.²⁴⁰

Archie Nathan, the son of Clarkson's old friend, John Nathan, whose studio Clarkson may or may not have burned down at least twice, ultimately purchased the 'good will' of the 'Wigs by Clarkson' brand and, in the younger Nathan's own words, "*sank it*", supposedly so the "*name of Clarkson should die honoured*". Or, perhaps, he just wanted his father's rival's name to die along with him.²⁴¹

Even in death, Willy Clarkson was an enigma.

Wrapping it Up

There is a certain sense to the story of Willy Clarkson and his possible culpability in the Whitechapel Murders that seems both fanciful and credible at once. While the perpetrator identified by the Victorian media as Jack the Ripper has been profiled endlessly in the last 150 years, this writer asserts there is a viable profile which is perfectly sensible and, considered as a whole, might even be considered more likely than not. This profile is both complex and straightforward at once.

Clarkson was the son of a working-class tradesman and grew up in Covent Gardens with many reasons and opportunities to travel and frequent the East End, running the wig-making business by the time he was fifteen. From the time he was a young man, this writer suggests he maintained an underground criminal business that included blackmail, arson and fraud. Clarkson targeted and controlled women who worked as domestic

²³⁴ Greenwall, p. 22.

²³⁵ *Fancy Dress on Coffin: Burial of Willy Clarkson*, *Belfast Telegraph*, 18 Oct. 1934, p. 12.

²³⁶ See fn. 42.

²³⁷ See fn. 232.

²³⁸ "Forgery Allegations in Willie Clarkson Will Case", *Hull Daily Mail*, 31 Jan. 1938, p. 10.

²³⁹ *Id.*

²⁴⁰ *Id.*

²⁴¹ *Costumes by Nathan, Nathan, Archie*, (Newnes., 1960), pp. 140-141.

servants and perhaps the sex trade, not because of some psycho-sexual deviance; but rather because they were, to him, simply disposable business assets that eventually became more of a liability than an asset.

All the crime scenes were roughly equidistant between the Clarkson's Studio and the Bethnal Green home of his ex-fiancé, where in 1888, his ex-fiancé's siblings still lived. This location was within half a mile of Hanbury Street, and close to other scenes where the killings occurred. Thus, the geography of Clarkson's life matches closely with that of the Whitechapel Murders, and permitted safe refuge in both the East End and West End.

Clarkson spent a lifetime of late nights in the gas-lit streets throughout London, born and raised there, traveling between the family wig studio and theatres throughout London, including the East End theatres and his fiancé's childhood home. He would have known those streets well. Traversing these streets at any time of day or night would be second nature to Clarkson.

Being named Royal Perruquier and Costumier to Queen Victoria, and the royalty of theatre increasingly frequenting his studio, he had motive to remove any possible connections to his alleged underworld business; the Whitechapel victims. He also had motive to replace them with younger, more naïve victims, who knew less and could be controlled more.

Clarkson had access to vulnerable women, both through his wig-shop and the music halls he frequented, and during the Whitechapel Murder spree, Clarkson managed to find three young store workers in a vulnerable position. Using a notorious solicitor and crooked cop, navigated to control them, imprisoning the husband of one and subjecting them to potential months in jail if he ever decided to press charges for the alleged stolen make-up and soap, surely ruining their reputations while doing so.

A master of disguise, Clarkson was renowned for his ability to create close-up make-up that could disguise a black eye or a woman's body. If he wished to roam the streets of the East End in disguise, and change his appearance in a moment, he had the skill and the knowledge to do so. Also, with Mary Jane Kelly's death, his best disguise was to be himself.

Clarkson had a close relationship with the police, and according to newspaper accounts, assisted them in disguising their undercover officers, including in the hunt for Jack the Ripper. Such access would have given him insider knowledge of their strategies and tactics. Even when he dropped a wig, if Clarkson is to be believed, the police literally brought it back to him and didn't suspect a thing. He was in complete control.

Clarkson's experience with taxidermy, coupled with knowledge arising from the controversy of tight-lacing and corsets and some familiarity with female internal organs, would provide him with the skills and knowledge necessary to complete the job; the crime scenes resembling the most horrible of taxidermy's worktable. In the most villainous of ways, he had the theatrical instinct to use these skills to disguise his business killings as those of a madman dripping with lunacy, the most grotesque twisting of *anthropomorphic vivants* and *tableaux vivants*. No one would ever suspect a jester like Willy Clarkson.

The Holy Grail

Perhaps what makes Willy Clarkson such an intriguing suspect in the Whitechapel Murders is that the holy grail to resolve unanswered questions may still be out there. In August 1935, the entirety of Clarkson's sprawling and overfilled studio went up for auction (instead of up in flames).²⁴² From time to time, documents, costumes and wigs pop up in various auctions. In his biography of Clarkson, Harry Greenwall reveals that Clarkson left behind a large stash of papers, of which Greenwall had possession as late as 1937. Perhaps they still exist somewhere. What else has survived the cruel ravaging of time and indifference, and what mysteries are yet to be revealed?



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²⁴² "Willie Clarkson's Treasures", *The Daily Express*, 15 Jan, 1935, p. 9.

Christopher-Michael DiGrazia

The Last Word



It might surprise those few of you who have been regular readers of my column to learn that I do not like Shakespeare. I am not alone in that opinion, of course – Shaw famously dismissed the Swan of Avon as possessing an “*absurd reputation as a thinker*,” while WS Gilbert (of “and Sullivan” fame) fumed “*all of his works should be kept off the boards*.” What I do enjoy is the authorship question; I have several books debating who might have written Shakespeare’s plays, whether he were a man or a woman or even whether he existed at all (personally, I subscribe to the belief that the Man from Stratford wrote the plays, but to each his own).

The other day, as I waited for the kettle to boil, I flipped through Bill Bryson’s *Shakespeare: The World as Stage* and came across this thought regarding the famous Chandos portrait of a man who might – but might not have been – the Bard: “*The paradoxical consequence is that we all recognize a likeness of Shakespeare the instant we see one, and yet we don’t really know what he looked like*.”

In other words, perception versus reality. Or, as I said in a column many years ago, the human tendency to assign big names to big deeds: JFK had to be the victim of a conspiracy, not the target of sniveling Oswald; Kaspar Hauser had to be a lost member of the House of Baden, not an anonymous mistreated child; Pope John Paul I must have been murdered by the Vatican because he was wise to their financial treachery, not because he had a bad heart.

And, naturally, the fury, frenzy and puzzlement occasioned by the Autum of Terror had to be the work of a Deep State cabal, not the blood-soaked rampage of a pathetic, eternally unknown, single man. This is familiar ground, isn’t it, Dr Stowell? Mr Knight?

Of course, since Patricia Cornwell, the vogue for fingering an Eminent Victorian as Saucy Jacky seems to have reached its terminus (not its zenith of silliness, though – I think the nomination of Lewis Carroll was the worst). But, to paraphrase Bryson, we all ‘recognize’ Jack the Ripper, yet we don’t know him at all. We *think* we do, especially if we have studied the crimes, the location and the period. We can choose from a top five, we can trace them through MEPO reports, newspaper articles and police memoirs, we can pore over maps of the East End to determine just where our favourite candidate would have had his bolt hole. But in the end, just as looking at the amateurish First Folio engraving of Shakespeare tells us nothing about the playwright, even if there is a photograph of our suspect – wan Druitt, bristly Chapman, distracted Sickert, stolid Maybrick – the single dimension flatness of the photos distance us from actual knowledge of the wants, needs and desires that propelled Our Man in Whitechapel to swing his carmine blade.

Now, you might think I’m making too much of this. “*Of course we don’t really know who the Ripper was*,” I hear you say. “*We make our best guess*.” Which we do. But allow me to put forward the not very original observation that even if we are convinced Monty Druitt (say) sent the five to their deaths, there’s always going to be, hidden away in the dark recesses of our mind, the smallest tinge of doubt. Which is why what I call “The Great Victorian Mystery” still resonates.

The unsolved mystery, even if perfectly sensible solutions have been put forward, is an eternal attraction. To give an example: the 1961 disappearance of Michael Rockefeller, searching in New Guinea for native artwork. The agreed-upon solution is that he was captured by natives and killed. And yet, there is a brief bit of film from several years later that appears to show a white man, looking much like Rockefeller, paddling a canoe along with a dozen other native islanders. Could he have survived, after all?

Or take the famous “Flight 19” from 1945: five Avenger bombers on a routine training flight cross into the Bermuda Triangle and vanish, with one pilot even begging, “*Don’t come after us!*” No matter how many times the most likely explanation is put forward – instructor Charles Taylor, unsure of his location, unwittingly led his squadron out into the open Atlantic, where all five crashed into the sea – sometimes even the most sceptical can wonder whether that’s really all there is to the story.

As I said above, not a very original observation; Leonard Nimoy probably made the same point in an *In Search Of* . . . episode decades ago. But it is something to keep in mind not just when searching for the Ripper, but also for his circumstances. By which I mean, choosing two articles from the current issue:

Caroline Maxwell: Famous for insisting she saw Mary Kelly alive and well at 8 in the morning of November 9, a time when she had supposedly been dead for four hours. Was Maxwell drunk? Mistaken? Lying? What did she see and when did she see it?

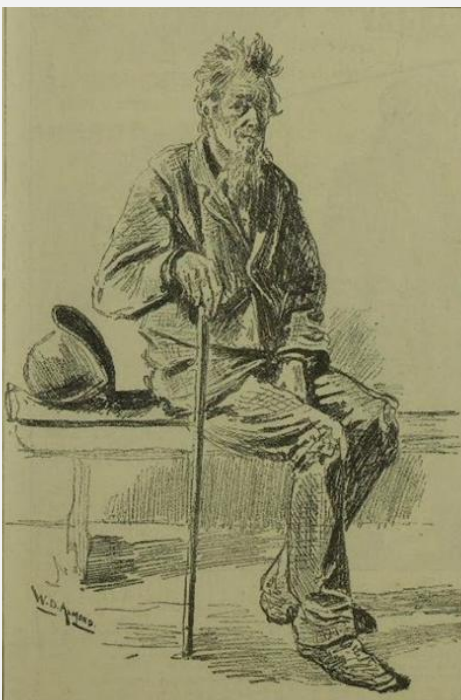
Mitre Square: Just where did Catharine Eddowes and the Ripper meet? Did Harris, Levy and Lawende see them or another couple entirely? How could the Ripper hide from PC Watkins? Where did he escape? And did he really stop to write the Goulston Street Graffito?

It is easy to look at Maxwell’s testimony, believe she saw something and posit that something was Kelly. It is also easy to believe that Eddowes had a prior arrangement to meet Jack (remember her supposed boast about knowing who the Ripper was?) and that the Graffito was a hat tip to the Masons. But just because something is *easy* does not mean it is *correct*.

My point is that true objectivity – being ‘fair and balanced’ – is difficult at best and especially so when your research contradict your conclusion. After all, if I spent a dozen years and thousands of dollars to buttress my theory that Joseph Barnett was Jack the Ripper, I’m emotionally invested in my solution; I’m not very likely to accept an argument that I’m wrong, no matter how impeccable the documentation or eminent the writer.

Don’t let your perception bias the reality. In my experience, a good motto to follow not just in the world of the Whitechapel Murders, but in your daily encounters with other people.

Christopher-Michael DiGrazia is co-author of The News from Whitechapel: Jack the Ripper in The Daily Telegraph as well as the Theda Bara Mysteries series, praised by Paul Begg as "A cracking piece of crime fiction."



The third of four evocative drawings from the 22nd September 1888 edition of the Illustrated London News. The drawings accompanied an article on the Spitalfields lodging houses and their inhabitants. This one is labelled as “*A Regular Customer*”.

Six Questions with...

Natalie Brianne

Interview with Madeleine Keane

Question 1 - I really enjoyed the concept of the entire Constantine Capers series. What was the inspiration for this story?

I grew up watching all sorts of murder mysteries, especially anything by the BBC. So, I suppose it was always in the cards for me to write a mystery someday. As far as Constantine's little memory problem goes, I had a friend who came up with the idea of a detective with short term memory loss. It was such a strange contradiction that I couldn't stop thinking about it. One day, while working in the garden with my mother, I was telling her about different story ideas and happened to mention it. She loved the idea so much, I decided I ought to try and write the book. That one little idea ended up jump starting my entire author career.

Question 2 - What's your research/creative process like?

Every book is different, but usually when I start a new project I have to do a lot of research up front. With Constantine, I'll often look up the month and year that the book is taking place in. I'll see what historical events were happening and if they could be related to or tied into the mystery. Then I'll track down newspaper articles around that time, census records if applicable, and any other historical records that could help me during my process. While I'm writing the book, I'll stop to look up certain facts (like how 'dust bins' were handled/collected in the 19th century). The creative side of the process fluctuates the most, but if there is one constant across all projects, it would be my 'rubber ducks'. These are trusted people that I'll bounce ideas off of as I write. Some of the best parts of my mysteries are thought up during these conversations. There are a few cases where I've done more hands-on research. Not poisons or anything, but some unorthodox uses for corset boning and the like. I can't say much more for risk of spoilers.

Question 3 - One thing I really noticed while reading the book was that you really captured the sense of time and place in your worldbuilding. How did you go about preparing for this?

I had the fortune of going on a study abroad to London, Paris, and Rome while I was writing the first book. I spent six weeks living at 27 Palace Court in London and wrote about two thirds of the book in those twelve weeks. While the times have changed, a lot of the buildings and streets haven't. I try to do research where I can with the resources I have and make educated guesses where there are gaps. I will say that for *The Pennington Perplexity* I kept the Casebook: Jack the Ripper tab open at all times. I chose the year 1888 on a whim, to begin with, and when I realized that I could have it line up with the Ripper murders, I couldn't help but make some reference to them.

Question 4 - Out of all of your novels, which one would you consider your favorite?

It's hard to choose a favorite, but I am partial to *There Comes a Midnight Hour*. The chapters in the catacombs of Paris were a fun challenge to write, both because of the atmosphere and the intensity of some of those scenes. I also really enjoy *The Great Sheep Panic*. It's light-hearted and ridiculous, and I felt as if my dad was there writing it with me.

Question 5 - What current projects do you have in the pipeline?

I'm currently formatting Constantine IV and am in the research phase of Constantine V, so we'll have more of Byron and Mira yet! I am considering doing another mystery series that may or may not be related to the original series, but that is probably a few years out. My *Thirteenth Zodiac* series has been put on the back burner for the time being, but I do intend on finishing it once I have a few more Constantine novels under my belt.

Question 6 - Anything else you want people to know about you? (This can be anything random or personal that your audience might not know about you.)

I love ciphers, codes, and secret messages. In fact, my friends joke that one of my love languages is encryption. It might have started with watching the BBC Dorothy L. Sayers series and learning about the Playfair Cipher in *Have His Carcase*. I've used a few in my mysteries—and may or may not have hidden some secrets for attentive readers to find. Maybe someday I'll disclose them. Also, I'm always told when I describe the premise of my books that it sounds like *Sherlock Holmes* meets *50 First Dates*. While I am fairly familiar with the former, I have never seen the latter.

If you can't tell, one of my favorite authors is Dorothy L. Sayers, and as a result, my cat's name is Bunter. That means that most of the mysterious things that happen in my household can be described as 'the butler did it'.

Quotes to Cogitate On...

"bad women multiply seduction of heedless youth, more rapidly than bad men seduce modest women. A few of these courtezans suffice to corrupt whole cities; and there can be no doubt that some insinuating prostitutes have initiated more young men into these destructive ways, than the most abandoned rakes have debauched virgins, during their whole lives. So that, though the latter deserves execration and great severity, yet the grand effort of those who would promote reformation, should be directed to arresting, and, if possible, reclaiming, those wretched females, who are the pest and nuisance of society, though equally the objects of our compassion and abhorrence."

Michael Ryan, *Prostitution in London*, 1839, Published by H Bailliere.

Conversations

That Could Have Happened

By Jurriaan Maessen



Liz in the LIZ

Perhaps a column devoted to conversations that could have happened but didn't is not exactly the right place in which to discuss conversations that don't usually happen but *should*, but I feel moved to argue a point perhaps not argued often enough.

In a recent interview on *This Week in Space*, a podcast devoted to the advancement of scientific literacy and critical thinking, famed sceptic and UFO-debunker Mick West remarked on a certain prevalent but often underestimated feature of the human condition, namely the will to believe and how easily it tends to overwhelm our critical faculties as we stuff the gaps in our knowledge with speculative fluff. And nowhere is the gap-to-no-gap ratio quite as high as within the field of Whitechapel studies.

"The often asked question 'why do people believe weird things?' really is the wrong question to ask" West points out. *"The real question is: 'why do people believe in science?'"*

Scientific discipline, West argues, is not something that comes naturally to the human animal. It's an acquired feature, characterized by some measure of impulse control that's usually develops after falling on one's face a sufficient amount of times before one is able to exercise some measure of disciplinary restraint.

Easier said than done, to be sure.

I guess the best we may hope for is acquiring an appreciation for the many pitfalls we may tumble into when we venture into what West calls the 'Low Information Zone', or LIZ. An acronym coined to encapsulate the great gaping chasms within our knowledge bank that we attempt to navigate on a daily basis. Whether we do so responsibly or not depends on our willingness and ability to exercise restraint as we proceed.

It must be pointed out that cautionary tales rarely make for engaging reading. Quite the contrary in fact. More often than not the imaginative trumps the factual, especially when laced with a spell-binding conspiracy theory to perpetuate the enchantment. Who needs dry provisions when you can indulge yourself in endless theorizing about what could have happened? Add to that the many weapons forged to attack suspect theories, and fortifications built in defence of them, and we end up with a rather disheartening state of affairs, although perhaps not an entirely unavoidable one.

Just a couple of months ago, whilst casually roaming the British Newspaper Archive in search of any recent uploads, I happened upon a *Morning Advertiser* dated June 24th 1886 mentioning a 27-year-old Elizabeth Stride who was charged with assault for not only kicking a constable in the legs and "scurfing" him "round the neck" but also

Elizabeth Stride, 27, was charged with being disorderly and assaulting Constable 182 K.—On the previous night the defendant was in the East India-road, Poplar, very drunk and making use of bad language. She behaved indecently, and when the constable spoke to her she spat in his face on 12 different occasions. She also kicked him a number of times about the legs. While the charge was being taken at the station defendant suddenly rushed out of the dock and "scurfed" him round the neck. It took five police officers to separate them.—Mr. Saunders sentenced her to one month's hard labour.

spitting in his face no less than twelve times before she could be taken into custody. Apparently five police officials were required to release the poor constable from the grip of the enraged woman.

Apart from the fact that age errors were the rule rather than the exception, especially in hurriedly written newspaper reports, the age ascribed to this particular Elizabeth Stride obviously differed greatly from the third canonical victim's age at the time. A bit too dramatic a difference for us to casually embrace the resemblance.

The fact that this particular incident was apparently unknown to those who were in a position to know, made me stop short of uncorking the champagne.

So, it was with a heavy heart that I turned to researcher extraordinaire and 2023 Robert Linford Award-winner Jose Oranto for the umpteenth time, hoping he might be able (or willing) to provide a Thames police court record to either confirm or reject the defendant's purported age.

As it turned out the corresponding court record, dated June 23rd 1886, not only differed from the age mentioned in the article, but it differed radically: 23 years in fact, forcing me to reconsider a possible positive identification.

35	Steph	Butler	23	Dr
26	Timothy	Sullivan	64	"
4	Joe	Hughes	34	"
2	Elizabeth	Stride	15	"
7	Annie	Stanley	30	"
1	John		11	"

Although still not exactly consistent with Stride's actual age at the time (she was actually 42 in 1886), the corresponding record did at least leave the door open to the possibility I may have stumbled upon one of those rare finds that previously went undetected by researchers. It must be stressed that resourcefulness played no part in the finding. We have archival availability and archival availability alone to thank for the find; had the incident been reported upon by more than just this one newspaper, it would have certainly been picked up at some point in the past.

I nevertheless admit the temptation to celebrate the find as proof positive was almost overwhelming. Even more tempting was the urge to use it as a springboard for speculating about Elizabeth Stride's apparent psychical strength only two years prior to her being thrown onto the street by 'broad-shouldered man' in front of Dutfield's Yard, the implications of which could have some bearing on how sturdy the perpetrator may have been to be able to subdue a woman of whom, it was said, took five able-bodied constables to unclench her from their colleague before escorting her away.

In the final equation what we really have is a newspaper report giving an age of 27 for the 1886 Stride, the corresponding court record recording her as 50. That's it. And even if it was somehow definitively established they were in fact one and the same, a comment about Stride's purported physical strength in 1886 says precisely nothing about her condition more than two years later, which may after all have been subject to a steep decline in the intermediate period.

It's the same as Aaron Kosminski's apparent frailty in the asylum records saying nothing about his condition during the autumn of terror. It's through our willingness to exercise some measure of discipline and not indulge in speculation, that we may hope to avoid becoming entrenched in a perpetual would-have-could-have cycle without the prospect of breaking free from it.

Again: easier said than done.

The LIZ, after all, lies deeply steeped in shadow, leaving much room for flights of fancy. So much room in fact that we risk losing our way and ultimately crash-land into inevitable conspiracism.

Jurriaan Maessen is an author and researcher based in the Netherlands.



The fourth of four evocative drawings from the 22nd September 1888 edition of the Illustrated London News. The drawings accompanied an article on the Spitalfields lodging houses and their inhabitants. This one is labelled as "Widowed and Fatherless".

On Complexity – Remembering the Whitechapel Victims in Their Full Humanity

Madeleine Keane

After I posted on my social media announcing my project about the Whitechapel women, I decided to create a Substack to document my research and reflections as a way of showing my work. It would make sense to some to launch it right before the anniversaries of the Whitechapel murders, but that didn't sit right with me. Launching it close to the murder anniversaries would defeat the purpose of the project. I wanted to treat these women's lives with dignity and care without sensationalizing their horrible deaths.

While looking at my calendar, I noticed that the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene in the Catholic church was coming up on July 22nd. Mary Magdalene was my Confirmation saint and has always held a special place in my heart. Mary Magdalene's story has changed drastically throughout the centuries. In the New Testament, she is one of Jesus's devoted woman followers who bore witness to his crucifixion. She was the first to see him after his resurrection and then told the other apostles about what had happened. Centuries after Jesus's death, the Church cast her in the role of penitent prostitute, only for the Catholic church to walk that back in the twentieth century and name her "*apostle of the apostles*." Mary Magdalene has also been called many other things without much evidence to back it up: the wife of Jesus or a temple priestess. But despite the surface-level arguments, Mary Magdalene's story has become her own. She was still the one to walk with Jesus as he taught, the first to bear witness to his resurrection, and she carried on his work in her own right. To many, she has become a symbol of redemption and faith...and to me, at least, a reminder of how we need to acknowledge people's complexities and multifaceted natures when we're studying historical figures and events.



With that being said, it's a fitting day to remember the women who were murdered in the autumn of 1888 – Polly Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Jane Kelly. For years, in the collective consciousness, their names have been tied to their killer's moniker. Ripperologists and other historians have painstakingly researched and pieced together the stories of their lives so that we can get an idea of who they were as people. But like with Mary Magdalene, the surface-level arguments of whether they were 'just prostitutes', or if they had even engaged in prostitution at all, took center stage and diminished the importance of these women's actual stories.

These women all had lives before they ended up on the streets of London's East End. They were wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters. They had hopes and dreams like everyone else. They were simply trying to live their lives, until misfortune struck many times in the form of the end of a marriage or the death of a child. It was difficult to find work, and even if they did, the pay wasn't enough for a woman to live on her own. A woman could be working multiple jobs and still need to rely on prostitution to survive. Alcohol, which was easily available, offered a means of self-medication or simply an escape from emotional and physical pain. These factors don't make these women any less important, rather, these women's stories show us how difficult it was to survive in Victorian London. These stories remind us that nuance matters, and that we must hold space all facets of these women's lives, the good, the bad, and the ugly, no matter how unappealing they might be to some. The choices that these women had to make should not be a stain on their character, but we need to acknowledge the difficulties they faced. Remembering them fully means understanding the realities of their lives, not sanitizing them.

As Mary Magdalene's example shows, no one's identity fits neatly into one box. Each person's story is their own. It's important to honor these women in their full humanity and not simply reduce them to the role of saint or sinner, of victim or martyr. To deepen our understanding of these women's lives and the times they lived in, we need to view them as full, complex human beings, beyond victimhood and beyond stigma.



PROPER RED STUFF

RIPPER FICTION BEFORE 1900

DAVID GREEN

In this series we take a look at forgotten writers from the 1880s and 1890s who tackled the Jack the Ripper theme in their novels and short stories.

No. 8: Effie W. Merriman: *A Queer Dilemma* (1898)

The American author Effie Woodward Merriman (1857–1937) is almost completely forgotten today, despite being an extremely able writer of considerable reputation in her heyday. She was a prolific contributor to a wide range of fiction and nonfiction periodicals, and the author of many highly-regarded novels and plays.

The daughter of a New England farmer, she grew up in Hyde Park, near Lake City, Minnesota. At the age of 16 she became a schoolteacher. Between 1889 and 1905 she edited *The Housekeeper* magazine. During the Progressive Era she started up a nationwide club for women agitating for social change. In 1906 she married the lawyer James Fifield, and settled in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. She was active in the ‘back-to-the-farm’ movement of the 1930s which encouraged self-sufficiency and homesteading.



Effie Woodward Merriman

She achieved success primarily as a writer of serials and short stories for children, her most popular book being *Pards*, the tale of how two homeless boys in Minnesota rose from destitution to respectability. Many of her books were published by the well-known house of Lee and Shepard in Boston. Her work is characterised by a warm sense of humour and by a tender-hearted sympathy for high ideals; running through all her fiction is a love of nature, especially the prairie landscapes of her native state.

But Merriman also wrote for an adult audience. She had two stories published in the pulp magazine *Weird Tales*, and, under her married name, Mrs James Fifield, she authored a comic novel entitled *Rejuvenated* (1928), in which a man in his seventies becomes thirty again through a process of rejuvenation.

Occasionally her work dwelt on darker and more macabre themes. In 1898 she published a volume of supernatural fiction, *A Queer Dilemma and Other Stories*, with illustrations by H. B. Wiley (Minneapolis: Franklin Taylor Pub Co). Although the book was marketed as a collection of thrillers of a ‘humorous nature’, the title story is a subtle and disturbing novelette about astral projection, out-of-body-experience, body hijacking, and Jack the Ripper!

Synopsis

Wearied by the monotony of married life in Wisconsin, David Scranton begins an affair with Helen, an old school friend. To avoid gossip, they hit on the idea of using astral projection so that they can enjoy longer

periods in each other's company without arousing suspicion: soon, during the night, they are leaving their sleeping bodies and travelling together to the Italian lakes or hundreds of miles above the surface of the Earth.

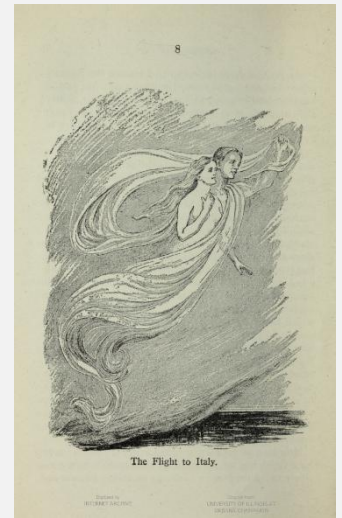
Recklessly, Scranton allows a fellow astral traveller – a man from the East End of London called Jack Walsh – to inhabit his sleeping body in Wisconsin while he is off consorting with Helen. But when he returns, Jack refuses to vacate Scranton's body, and Scranton is forced to occupy Jack's sleeping husk in 'smoky, foggy' London:

"I looked at it with a growing repulsion that nearly drove me to insanity. As I have said, it was about the size of my own, but, oh ! such a face! It made me ache just to think of wearing it. There was not a hair on the crown of the dirty head, and only seven teeth in the repulsive mouth."

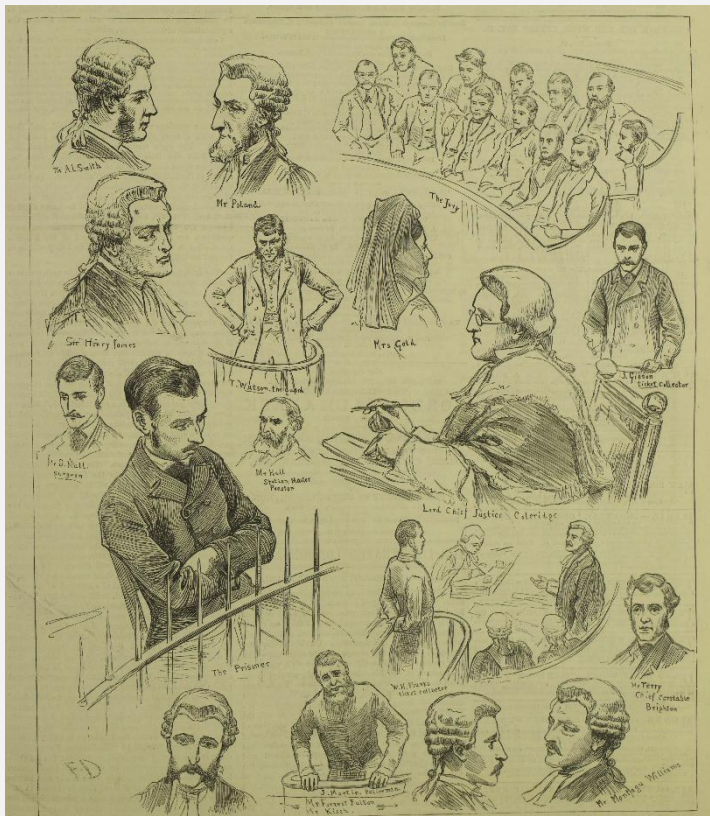
Of course, the Englishman is Jack the Ripper. He is an unemployed drunkard and a wife-beater. Shortly Walsh – or more exactly, David Scranton, who is reluctantly occupying Walsh's body – is arrested for murder and held in custody awaiting execution, while in Wisconsin the body of the man who used to be David Scranton is now possessed of the spirit of Jack the Ripper...

A Queer Dilemma is an impressive tale of terror that utilises the notion of body jumping from one host to another to explore notions of self-identity and personal responsibility. The story's central gimmick – astral travel – is intelligently handled in a way that doesn't come across as too far-fetched. Despite this, it did not achieve anything close to the popularity of Merriman's fiction for children and young adults, and I have not found any reviews of it in my trawl of North American newspapers. This underwhelming response no doubt explains why she seldom returned to dark or occult fiction in the years ahead, which is a shame.

David Green is a freelance book indexer based in Hampshire, England. He indexes books in the areas of police history, true crime, forensic science, and general biography. He has authored four books on true crime: his latest is The Murder of Lily White (Hastings Press, 2024).



"A Flight to Italy" An Illustration from A Queer Dilemma



The front page of the *London Illustrated News* dated 12th November 1881 which detail various court artist impressions of the trial of Percy Lefroy Mapleton.

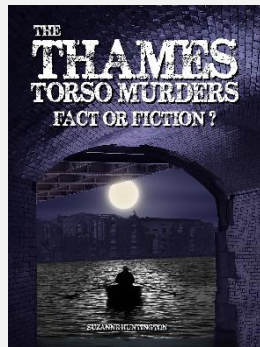


Reviews



The Thames Torso Murders: Fact or Fiction?

Suzanne Huntington
Mango Books, 2025
ISBN: 978-1-914277-51-1
(hardcover)
ISBN: 978-1-914277-52-8
(softcover)
400+pgs, Illus. Index Biblio
Hardcover £20



Suzanne Huntington's eagerly awaited book on the Thames Torso Murders has finally arrived, and it was well worth the wait. This will, no doubt, be considered *the* major work on the series of appalling dismemberment murders that took place in Victorian London in the later-half of the 19th century. These crimes have been largely overshadowed by the Whitechapel murders, up until now garnering only a small handful of books, all ranging from the terrible to the mediocre, which is why a full-length, evidence-based treatment of each entire case was so greatly needed.

Huntington relates to us the complete existing record along with her thoughtful and measured analysis on twelve unsolved dismemberment murders spanning the years 1873 to 1902 including the 'big four' that tend to draw the most attention from students of Ripperology: Rainham, Whitehall, Elizabeth Jackson and the Pinchin Street Torso. If you are unfamiliar with the minutiae of these twelve murders-buckle up. This is an extraordinarily grisly topic and Huntington spares no details. Possibly due to the 'next-level' brutality

involved, the author's writing style communicates all of the information and evaluation in a welcoming, conversational manner that sets the reader at as much ease as possible given the inherently uneasy events being described. I can easily tell why it is this series of murders that captivates her attention.

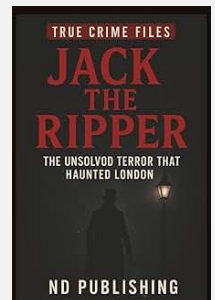
The Thames Torso Murders in Suzanne Huntington's expert hands make the Ripper murders look wholly unremarkable in comparison.

Since, as of this writing, the book is only available on pre-order, I won't be getting into any more spoilers. Just know that if you're reading this magazine, you must purchase this book. I think I can safely say that this is the definitive account of the Thames Torso Murders.

Jonathan Menges

Jack the Ripper: The Unsolved Terror That Haunted London (True Crime Files)

ND Publishing
Independently Published, 2025
ISBN: 9798298938570
79pp
Softcover £7.99, eBook £3.70



This book is 79 pages long. Not only are there very few words on those pages, but those words also don't tell you much, and what they do tell you is often incorrect. For instance, the name of the deputy lodging-house keeper at 18 Thrawl Street, where Mary Ann Nichols had been staying shortly before her death, is listed as 'John Walker'. In reality, we don't know the deputy's name. We are also told that Mary Ann spent her last night drinking with fellow lodgers (as far as we know, she didn't), that she was seen leaving the Frying Pan public house at 2:30 a.m. (she wasn't; it was at 12:30 a.m.), and that at 3:15 a.m. she was seen by

Emily Holland (she wasn't; she was seen at 2:30 a.m., and her friend's name was possibly, even probably, Ellen Holland).

I don't think I want to waste any more words on this 'book'. It seems sufficient to say 'don't bother'.

Paul Begg

Detective's Archive: The Curious Case of Jack the Ripper

Amuthan

Independently Published, 2025

ISBN: 9798298977425

121pp

Softcover £7.99, eBook £2.22



Reading for enjoyment among children has been declining year after year, and it appears that this has affected their literacy skills as well, so books on topics that are likely to attract kids to reading are extremely important. Gruesome murders probably don't immediately come to mind as suitable reading topics for young children and teenagers, and it's certainly a far cry from *The Famous Five*, *Jennings*, or *Billy Bunter* from my childhood, but 'Jack the Ripper' – the subject, not the person – interests children just as much as it does adults, and many adults say they became interested in the mystery after encountering a book, TV programme, or documentary on the topic as a child. I'm all for a book on the subject aimed at children, but obviously it must treat the subject with sensitivity.

This A4-sized book is obviously intended for younger readers – it's called a 'teen mystery' – and it's focus is the mystery of the killer's identity, but Amazon gives the intended age group as 16 to 18, which I found a little disturbing. The book has large, slightly juvenile print, and the text in places is in bite-sized chunks. Is this the literacy level of 16 to 18 years olds these days? Maybe it is.

Anyway, perhaps surprisingly, this isn't a bad introduction to the case. There are weaknesses, a few areas where perhaps a deeper knowledge of the case might have benefited the author, 'Amuthan', but overall you might feel that this is a worthy attempt to cover the mystery for a young reader.

Paul Begg

Unsolved Mysteries: Jack the Ripper

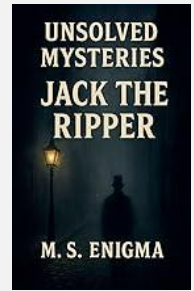
M.S. Enigma

Worldwide True Crime Reports, 2025

ISBN: 9798231171422

499pp.

Softcover, £20.49



When casually reading a book about a familiar subject, do your thoughts ever drift away from the page and ponder other things, such as what you will have for lunch or whether the rain will stop long enough for you to take the dogs for a walk? Then, suddenly, you are snapped back to the book by a little voice in your head uncertainly asking, 'Did you really just read that?'

That little voice spoke up as I was reading a chapter about the early life of Mary Ann Nichols. It was an idyllic existence, 'rooted in the rural landscape of Middlesex', and 'marked by the familiar rhythms of village life'. Then tragedy struck. Her father died when she was a child, and her mother was left to navigate the world as a widow...

I was reminded of an old Woody Allen routine in which he found himself in one of those situations when his life flashed before his eyes, except it wasn't his life. What I was reading wasn't Mary Ann Nichols' life either. She was born close to Fleet Street, London, as far removed from a rural landscape and the rhythms of village life as could be. And her father didn't die when she was a child, her mother did. Reading on, past the heart-wrenching bit about how, following the breakdown of her marriage, Mary Ann Nichols was forced to send her children to the workhouse, I got to how she was last seen alive entering a lodging house on Whitechapel Road with two men and spoke to a man named Jonathan Thomas...

I read no further. As a reviewer, I should plough through all 500 pages (well, 499 page to be pedantically accurate) and provide you with a careful and considered review, and I tried. I really did. I flicked through the pages, stopping here and there to read things like how Elizabeth Stride spent her last few hours doing things she didn't do before meeting a friend she called "the Russian", but I had to give up. I thought this was a book for a reviewer of fiction, but on the back cover it says this book is

‘perfect for readers of true crime, history, and Victorian era mysteries’. I’d describe it differently.

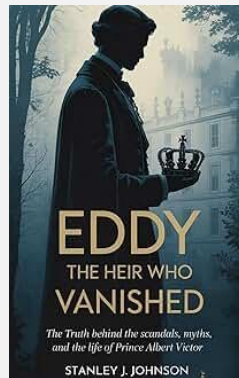
To be honest, I don’t know whether this is intended to be read as fiction. Maybe, if I’d had the stamina to read on, I’d have discovered that it is. Maybe it is stated somewhere and I missed it. But this is fiction. No doubt about it. According to Amazon, M. S. Enigma is the pseudonym of Mariana Sofia Enríquez, who adopted the name in 2005 ‘to protect her privacy amid threats from sources connected to her investigations’.

Hmmm.

Paul Begg

Eddy: The Heir Who Vanished: The Truth Behind The Scandals, Myths, and the Life of Prince Albert Victor

Stanley J Johnson
Independently Published,
2025
90pp;
Softcover, £11.89, eBook
£5.20



Prince Albert Victor Edward, often called the Duke of Clarence or simply Eddy, is surrounded by scandals and myths, mainly his alleged links to the infamous Cleveland Street male brothel and the more recent suggestion that he was Jack the Ripper. Johnson provides woefully little information about either. Regarding the latter, for example, there is no mention of how the theory originated with Dr Thomas Stowell, nothing is said about the supposed entry in the diary of Dr William Gull, and there is no detail about Dr Stowell’s meeting with the author Colin Wilson and his subsequent article in the journal *The Criminologist*. Although there is no evidence that Prince Albert Victor was Jack the Ripper—records show he was not in or near London when some of the murders occurred—there is no explanation for what Dr Stowell saw in Dr Gull’s diary or why he believed it concerned the prince or suggested it was linked to Jack the Ripper.

One thing that really irritates me is how the idea that Jack the Ripper was Prince Albert Victor is often used by under-informed journalists to show how foolish some theories are and thereby belittle the topic, but Ripperologists did not originate the

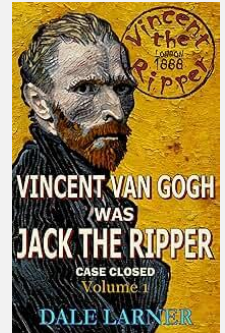
theory, and it isn’t entirely without some substance. After all, if whatever Dr Stowell saw or was told about did not refer to the prince, who did it refer to?

Don’t bother with this title. It appears to be AI generated (a lot of well-written words saying very little and saying it repetitively), only runs to 90 pages, and is disgracefully overpriced. And in case you wondered, the dad of former prime minister Boris Johnson is Stanley P Johnson, not Stanley J Johnson.

Paul Begg

Vincent Van Gogh Was Jack the Ripper. Case Closed.

Dale Larnier
Black Crow Publishing, 2025
ISBN: 9798987568316
266pp; illus*; notes; biblio.
Softcover £12.60, eBook £7.44



The extensive notes and sources show that Dale Larnier has invested a considerable time and effort into researching and writing this book. He has gained thorough knowledge of his subject and has produced an engaging and well-written volume. He has also been promoting his theory that artist Vincent van Gogh was Jack the Ripper for around twenty years, with Van Gogh even featuring in C.J. Morley’s superb *Jack the Ripper Suspects* (2020). The problem is that it appears to be a universally accepted fact that van Gogh was in Arles in southern France throughout 1888. He could not have been Jack the Ripper, and Dale Larnier provides no evidence to the contrary. Larnier forcefully argues that van Gogh *could* have come to London, but ‘could’ is not ‘did’, no matter how badly one wants it to be true. However, this is volume one in what is promised to be a three-volume account, so maybe some hard evidence is lined up for later.

As I mentioned, this is an interesting and engaging book that also introduces readers to van Gogh’s life, although some claims should be approached with healthy scepticism, such as Larnier’s assertion that van Gogh murdered his father, Theodorus, who died suddenly from natural causes. Some family members certainly blamed Vincent, claiming that Theodorus’s heart attack was caused by the considerable stress Vincent had

inflicted on him, but the idea that Vincent actually murdered his father is quite far-fetched.

Unless there is solid evidence that Vincent van Gogh was in London, particularly in the East End, during the autumn of 1888, the idea that he might have been Jack the Ripper does not hold much weight. Additionally, suggesting that Vincent committed other crimes, such as the Thames torso murders or even that he murdered his father, does not help to make this theory more plausible.

[*https://vincenttheripper.com/book-images-volume1](https://vincenttheripper.com/book-images-volume1)
<https://dalelerner.com/>

Paul Begg

The Hidden Lives of Jack the Ripper's Victims

Robert Hume

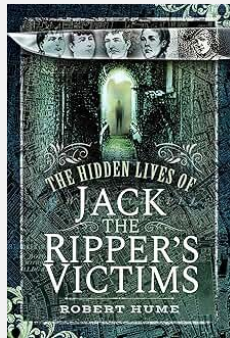
Pen & Sword

ISBN: 978-1399022057

176pp;

Softcover £14.99

(Also available in hardcover, £17.79, and eBook £5.99)



This book was published in hardcover in September 2019, several months after Hallie Rubenhold's *The Five*, which covered the same subject, the lives of five of the women whose murders have been traditionally credited to Jack the Ripper. This softcover edition doesn't appear to have been updated from the original, and so it is subject to all the same criticisms of the hardback edition.

It's hard to shake the feeling that Mr Hume's book was a hastily written attempt to piggyback on Rubenhold's book, the topic of her book having been promoted at least a year before *The Five* eventually saw print, and it was a good idea too. It reads like it was largely lifted from the internet, although Hume clearly read some books and did some original research. He does appear to lift some material from *The Five* though; he refers to the year Annie Chapman spent in a sanatorium for alcoholics. He is not specific about what place this was, nor does he provide a source for his information, but Chapman's stay at Spelthorne Sanatorium was one of the few bits of new information to be found in *The Five*, so it seems reasonable to conjecture that Hallie Rubenhold was the uncredited source.

The feeling that Mr Hume doesn't actually know very much about the subject and largely took what he could from the internet principally comes from his use of some of those bogus photos of the victims in life that are scattered across the web. None made it into Mr Hume's book, except a photo supposed to be that of Mary Ann Nichols, but captioned 'Maid in a pinafore: what Nichols may have looked like'. It is credited to the blog of a lady named Amyson Dunlop, which is largely concerned with the supernatural, not crime history. I intend no offence to Ms Dunlop, but she doesn't seem to be an authority on the Ripper crimes, or even particularly well-informed, and presented all the best-known bogus victim photographs as genuine. I can't help but wonder why it never crossed Mr Hume's mind why these photos had never been published as genuine by any reliable source. And why, if he needed a photo of a maid, he didn't find one that's not spread across the net as being of Annie Chapman.

What I really don't like about this book is the fiction. For example, he writes that one day, 'befuddled by drink', Mary Ann Nichols walked straight into a Lambeth street and into the path of a cab. She suffered a slight head injury and was taken to St Thomas's Hospital for a gash on her forehead to be treated. Further, William Nichols had been angry and rowed with Mary Ann when he learned that the accident had been caused because she was drunk. William, says Hume, said that Mary Ann was being driven raving mad by her drinking. The source for this story is given as the *East London Observer*, 8 September 1888, but in that newspaper the only reference to any part of the tale is William Nichols's inquest testimony in which he said he had identified his wife by a scar a mark on her forehead 'which was made larger when she was knocked down by a cab in Lambeth, and was taken to St. Thomas' Hospital.' There was no mention of her being drunk at the time or of her drunkenness causing the accident, or of there being an argument afterwards.'

There was an accident, but we don't know when it happened, whether or not it was when Mary Ann was married to William Nichols, or that it wasn't caused by the cab driver rather than Mary Ann, and we don't know that Mary Ann was drunk. Hume's story is an invention. It adds colour to what might otherwise be a dry-as-dust narrative, but it is better

suited to a novel than a historical account, albeit one intended for general readers. It also does a disservice to Mary Ann Nichols.

It's a pity that neither Mr Hume nor Pen & Sword took the opportunity of this softcover edition to correct these and the other errors and inventions. The story of the lives of the victims of Jack the Ripper is needed, but it hasn't been properly provided by Hallie Rubenhold or Mr Hume. Not recommended.

Paul Begg

Dark London: A Journey Through the City's Mysterious and Macabre Underworld

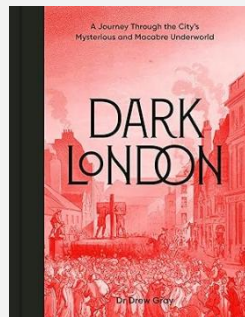
Drew Gray

Frances Lincoln, September 2025

192pp; illus;

ISBN: 978-1836004240

Hardcover £13.09, eBook £12.44



'Dark London' may be the non-fiction book market's most overused concept, and here we have another addition to its already swollen ranks. Will it be worth your money? What distinguishes it from countless similar volumes?

No attempt is made here to do anything scholarly. Gray – an academic working at the University of Northampton with whose work many readers will already be familiar – describes spending time with the holdings at the London Archives and at the British Library, but we are not given the benefit of file references. Of course, in any popular book like this, in which a few dozen star criminal cases, pressing social phenomena and public scandals are selected for brief discussion from a vast constellation of options, formalities of this sort may feel very much like unnecessary complications, and even pretensions. Anyone seeking to establish a sense of the author's method will be left high and dry. You are meant to relish, wonder at and lament the iniquities and inequities of the city; you are not meant to treat the text as if it is a contribution to a more sophisticated debate.

That said, if Gray's academic credentials are not the USP here, marking this book out from its competitors in the field, what is? Maybe the illustrations, which are copious to say the least and

(as far as I can tell from the pre-publication .pdf which was made available to me) very nicely reproduced. But many of these will be entirely familiar to the experienced reader: Spring-Heeled Jack, for example, is represented in his customary pose atop a gravestone, and, striking though this image is, one wonders whether any consideration was given to making use of a less well-known depiction.

Jack the Ripper is illustrated with panels from the *Illustrated London News*, the *Illustrated Police News* and *Famous Crimes* that have been seen over and over again. John Williams (of the Ratcliff Highway Murders), Rhynwick Williams (of the London Monster affair), Maria Manning and Belle Elmore all appear in their usual deportments. Perhaps it is unfair to expect too much novelty among the illustrations, but their centrality to the entire project is obvious, and, in the circumstances, there is sometimes too little going on visually to compensate for the necessarily cursory passages of text that accompany them. Against this, the captions are often very useful and, at their best, guide the viewer towards an interpretation of the imagery with which they are presented.

So if it's not the academic credentials of the author (which are hardly brought to bear) and it's not the selection of illustrations (which is conservative), perhaps it's the structure of the book. Here, we have positives and negatives. As a whole, the book is divided into four chapters which are arranged alphabetically: this is mildly amusing as a slice of needless formality, since one of them begins with *C* and the other three with *D*. Within each of those chapters, between two and three dozen entries are provided, few of which depart from a recurring three-paragraph format. Some readers will appreciate the rhythm that this establishes; some will regret that more complexity could not have been accommodated. One entry – that pertaining to the pillory – dispenses with paragraphs altogether, although one can see where they ought to have been. (The pillory itself is described as a punishment reserved for “*those accused of crimes against public moral*”. We will discuss some of the book's proofing issues later in this review.)

It is strange to relate that, on first glance at the book, I wondered how its non-chronological arrangement might affect it: within each chapter,

individual entries are organised apparently at random, and certainly without attempting to create a discernible flow from the older to the newer. In fact, I found that this did not detract from my enjoyment of the book at all, but it can hardly count as an innovation and feels more like luck than judgement. Perhaps it is best to read the book in short bouts, a random entry at a time, rather than cover to cover; there is nothing wrong with that, although the use of a chronological arrangement might have opened up another option for the reader.

The selection of entries is perhaps where the book justifies its existence most thoroughly. Accepting that everyone will disagree about what is included and what is excluded in a book which, by its own description, dances across the surface of the history of 'Dark London' from 1750 to 1914 (there is actually a little slippage at both ends of this period – for example, we hear about the Cornhill fire of 1748 and the explosion of the TNT factory at Silvertown in 1917), it is clear that thought was put into the representation of gender fluid and homosexual Georgians and Victorians. This, more than anything, differentiates the book from others of its ilk. Sensitive and sympathetic discussions of Fanny and Stella, Ann Marrow and the Chevalier d'Éon all have the valuable effect of connecting the concerns of the past and the present, and Gray's decision to examine "*those who chose to challenge society's idea of 'normal'*" provides the book with an explorative edge which is often absent from general surveys of London over his chosen period. One wonders whether the same curiosity could have been extended to race and religion, which are much less obvious vectors within the text; but, at least to the extent described, we have the point of difference for which we were looking.

As promised, a discussion of mistakes, errors, misfortunes and so on. It may be that the version of *Dark London* which hits the shelves differs somewhat from the pre-publication text sent to me, and if it obtains the attention of a really good proofreader before printing, then all the better. Some of the book's mistakes are close to excruciating, but one can sometimes see how they came into being. It is not true to say that there had been 'a goal of sorts' on the site of Newgate Prison for hundreds of years before its demolition in 1903. The word being sought for is 'gaol', and no doubt this is either a slip of the typing finger or the

mindless intervention of spellchecking software. It cannot be the case that the aforementioned Chevalier d'Éon, who died in 1810, settled in London sixty-five years later, in '1875': doubtless '1785' was intended, and the medial digits have been accidentally transposed. It cannot be right to say that the Royal Polytechnic Institute stood on 'Regent's Street', but 'Regent Street' would have been correct. The wife of Ikey Solomons is ungrammatically described as 'Solomon's wife': we can negotiate about how to denote the possessive form of the surname 'Solomons', but 'Solomon's' is not on the table. The daughter of Ellen Cashin is 'Catherine' in one sentence and 'Catharine' in the next one. The word 'now' does not need to appear twice in the phrase, 'but of it now there is now no trace', and perhaps this error would not have occurred if the simpler phrase 'but there is no trace of it now' had been preferred. The word 'foreboding' does not do the work of the word 'forbidding', the word 'expedite' does not do the work of the word 'execute', and the word 'interred' does not do the work of the word 'imprisoned'. There is a general aversion throughout the text to using the correct form of the gerund, and commas which ought to come in pairs often don't: it is certainly true in the general sense to say that Florence Bravo 'formed a relationship with her physician, Dr Gully despite him being much older', but how much nicer to say that she 'formed a relationship with her physician, Dr Gully, despite his being much older'? ('Even though she was much younger than he was' might have been an even better way to end that sentence.) James Greenacre did not have a male 'fiancé' but a female 'fiancée'. The Chevalier d'Éon was also known as the Chevalière d'Éon, but you cannot hybridise these appellations as 'the Chevalièr d'Éon'. The literary rival of Dickens was not 'Thackery' but 'Thackeray'. There are plenty of other examples of this sort of thing: too many. A book of this sort, whose virtues need every opportunity to shine on a shelf crowded with lookalikes, demands the thorough support of its publishers, and no publisher ought to let such obvious and distracting mistakes into print.

I am pleased to say that, as far as it goes, this volume is cheerfully affordable. Not every book has to retail for £20 or £25. *Dark London* is £16.99 in hardback in the UK shops and a little less than that online: this may vary for international

purchasers. I hope that the paper stock used to produce it does justice to the illustrations. There may be reservations about this book in some respects, but, *prima facie*, the price is not one of them.

Mark Ripper

The Death Ship: Recovering the Bodies of the Titanic's Dead

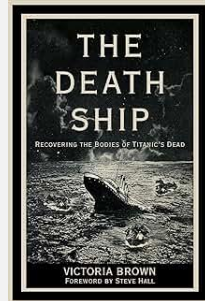
Victoria Brown

The History Press, 2025

224pp; illus, biblio; index.

ISBN: 1803998032

Hardcover £17.07, eBook £8.99



Having read quite a few books about the Titanic, I was drawn to this recently released one by author Victoria Brown. Available in both hardback and Kindle, it was published on the 3rd April this year.

The book is set in three parts, the first covers the law relating to lifeboats, as it was then, explaining how their number depended on the tonnage of the ship and not the number of passengers. It then goes on to examine how the boats were filled and the chaos which ensued, but its primary focus is on the people who didn't make it.

Brown does not go into the sinking of the ship in any detail, instead she focuses on those who fell into the sea, the body recovery effort, the identification of those bodies and what happened to them. In taking this approach, the book is markedly different from previous accounts, whose focus was on the survivors rather than the dead.

The second part goes into the actual body recovery effort, how they were identified, (or not) and why some were sadly buried at sea. Brown details some of their background stories which I found interesting, some were familiar but some I'd not heard of before.

One thing which did surprise me however was how the author glossed over the story of Louis Hoffman, one of the biggest stories to hit the headlines at the time. For anyone who's unfamiliar, he boarded the Titanic under an alias with his two young boys. His real name was Michel Navratil, a Frenchman, and he had kidnapped his sons from their mother and, unbeknown to her, he was planning on a new life in America. On the night of the tragedy, he carefully put the children into

Lifeboat 15 knowing he was unlikely to survive. His body was recovered by the cable ship *Mackay-Bennett* a few days after the sinking and was identified by items on his person. Among his possessions was a loaded gun, which I've often wondered if he'd planned to use on himself. The children were finally reunited with their mother a month later.

The third part of the book covers the aftermath of the tragedy which resulted in changes to the law following both the British and American inquiries. Almost immediately, all ships were to have enough lifeboats to accommodate all passengers and crew.

These chapters also cover the burial of those lost and the final chapter discusses the future of the ship and ways to protect the site.

Because of its unique approach, I found it a refreshing change to read a familiar story from a different perspective. It is very well researched, well written and thought provoking. I highly recommend it.

Amanda Lloyd

Jack the Ripper: A Psychic Investigation

Pamela Ball

London: Arcturus Publishing, 2025

First published by Arturus Publishing, 1998

ISBN: 9781398856011

256pp

Softcover £9.99



In 1888, in a journal called *The Popular Science Monthly*, a man named Joseph LeConte famously wrote with complete confidence that heavier than air flight was impossible. I'm not sure that he actually wrote those precise words, but they sum up his argument. He reversed his opinion a couple of years later, but that original pronouncement has been used time and again to illustrate the dangers of being certain. I feel certain that nobody really has psychic abilities, that the position of the stars and planets don't influence us, and that nobody can talk to the dead, but, with Mr LeConte in mind, how certain should I really be about those things?

The foregoing is fallacious, of course. Some things really are impossible, and we shouldn't be persuaded to believe they're not.

I met the author of this book several times and she even drew up my horoscope. I thought she was a sincere person who genuinely believes she has psychic gifts, can communicate with the dead, and believes horoscopes are meaningful. If you don't believe this stuff, I'm pretty sure you won't read this book, but if you do believe it, or even if you have a little niggles that maybe it's not fluff and flummery, then maybe you'll find this a different take on an old mystery. The author doesn't expect you to believe, but says in her introduction, "*I hope that readers will accept this book in the spirit in which it was written, purely and simply as a record of a psychic investigation.*"

This book was originally published in 1998, so it's very nearly thirty years old and this new edition doesn't appear to have been updated.

Paul Begg

Jack the Ripper Double Cross: Was Charles Lechmere Jack The Ripper?

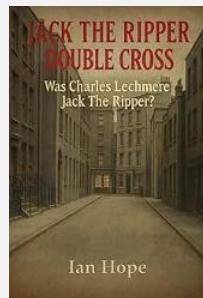
Ian Hope

Self-published, July 2025

225pp

ASIN: B0FKTJRSLY

Kindle eBook only £8.50



In recent years, Ian Hope has emerged as a vocal, tenacious, and persistent critic of the main arguments supporting Charles Cross or Lechmere as the likely perpetrator behind the infamous Whitechapel murders. The central debate regarding Charles Cross's alleged guilt mainly revolves around a set of highly contentious timings concerning the lead-up to, discovery of, and moments after the murder of Mary Ann Nichols in Bucks Row on 31st August 1888. Also, the words and actions of four key figures: the carman Robert Paul, constables John Neil and Jonas Mizen, and, of course, Charles Cross, particularly his use of the surname Lechmere.

The 'Lechmere Theory', has caused a lot of impassioned argument on both sides of the case for some years and when Ian Hope recently discussed his book in an interview on Richard Jones's Jack the Ripper podcast on YouTube, it caused a lot of comment, opinion, critique and analysis. To say that this debate is a very hot potato for some groups in Ripperology is perhaps an understatement. For others the debate is long past its sell-by date. Ian

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Hope's book is a breakdown and presentation of his objections to the arguments put forward in a television documentary *The Missing Evidence: Jack the Ripper* (2014, Channel 4) and a subsequent book by Christer Holmgren, *Cutting Point* (February 2023, Timaios Press). It is beyond the scope of this review to describe the points raised in the book, or comment on their merits, validity and quality, and they are already being heatedly debated and analysed by all those who are emotionally and passionately immersed in this singular aspect of the Whitechapel murders.

The benefit of this book for the unenlightened and curious is that it provides an excellent and well-written history of how Charles Cross was elevated from a footnote in the Ripper saga to a full-blown (or some might say 'overblown') Ripper suspect. On the other hand, if you are a committed 'Charles Lechmere is the Whitechapel murderer' believer, Ian Hope will provide you with a clear understanding of many of the reasons why some people are unconvinced.

This book will comfortably sit on a shelf in the 'Charles Lechmere, innocent carman or Jack the Ripper?' section of your library, alongside Stephen Blomer's heavyweight *Inside Bucks Row* and Christer Holmgren's *Cutting Point*. Wherever Charles Cross or Lechmere is, he's either looking on with a knowing smile or scratching his head in pure bewildered astonishment.

Jonathan Tye and Paul Begg

The Martians: The True Story of an Alien Craze That Captured Turn-of-the-Century America

David Baron

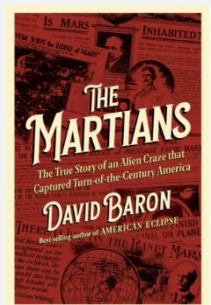
W.W. Norton & Co., 2025

336pp; illus

ISBN: 978-1324090663

Hardcover £19.99, eBook £11.99

Audiobook also available



The Martians is a wonderful page-turner of a book that tells the story of the first American 'Mars craze' by focusing its lens on the fad's chief carnival barker, Percival Lowell. Born into a family of wealthy Boston Brahmins, Lowell was an eccentric Harvard educated mathematician who, while serving as a young diplomat in Asia, became fascinated by the works of Italian astronomer

AUTUMN 2025

Giovanni Schiaparelli and, specifically, his claim that there were ‘channels’ on Mars visible through a telescope every two years as the red planet makes its closest approach to Earth. ‘Channels’ (*canali* in the original Italian) became ‘canals’ in English, a mistranslation that led to a belief, and with Lowell an obsession, that these canals on Mars must be artificial and made by Martians.

Lowell turned this mania into a new career as an astronomer and, using a seemingly endless family fortune, constructed the Lowell Observatory outside of Flagstaff, Arizona. Here he studied the surface of Mars and drafted increasingly complex maps of the dozens of irrigation canals his eyes spied through his telescopes.

The turn of the 20th century was primed and ready for the Martian craze that Lowell would become the public face of. H.G. Wells’ novel *The War of the Worlds*, detailing a Martian invasion of Earth, was a huge success when published in 1898. The following year, Nikola Tesla, a Mars obsessive like Lowell, announced that he was receiving radio signals from Earth’s closest planetary neighbor and would soon be establishing two-way communication. Newspapers across the globe would publish Lowell’s latest discoveries and openly debate what life was like on Mars. The general consensus was that the Martians lived in a peaceful, cooperative society where every odd-looking alien pulled their resources and ingenuity together in order to survive, and thrive, in regions of lush, Eden-like oases nourished by these massive Martian canal networks.

Lowell promoted his Mars findings for decades in publications and public lectures. Tesla’s Martian mania lasted for half a century, but SPOILER ALERT - they were seeing things. Hearing things. Other astronomers in their circle disputed their discoveries. There were no Mars canals, no Martians, and no radio transmissions. Baron’s book *The Martians* turns from an entertaining, historical romp into a dark warning about the psychological tendencies of confirmation bias. Quoting Francis Bacon, Baron describes confirmation bias as “*The human understanding when it has once adopted an opinion it draws all things else to support and agree with it, while everything to the contrary it either neglects and despises, or else by some distinction sets aside and rejects.*” This trait to seek out only information that supports one’s pre-

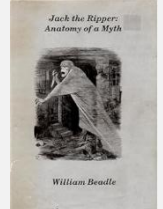
existing views is all too familiar to us in the field of Ripperology, and *The Martians* is an outstanding, illuminating and compelling case-study.

Jonathan Menges

And from the archives, let’s look at the Casebook.org reviews from 1995...

Jack the Ripper: Anatomy of a Myth

William Beadle

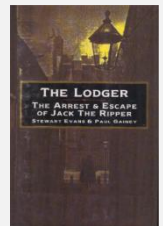


Extremely well-researched and comprehensive book. Beadle covers all the facts and reviews nearly every previous theory on the case. His case for Bury as the Ripper is perhaps not as strong as he would have it seem, but the book itself is a wonderful overview of the case.

Highly recommended.

The Lodger: The Arrest and Escape of Jack the Ripper

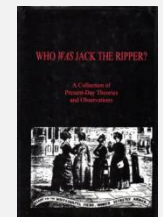
Stewart Evans and Paul Gainey



The discovery of the Tumplety suspect may be the single greatest Ripper discovery of the 1990s. This is the book that first introduces us to him. The book is well researched and an interesting read, though many remain unconvinced by Evan’s hypothesis. Recommended.

Who Was Jack the Ripper?

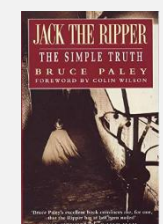
Camille Wolff



A wonderful achievement. Camille Wolff has compiled a series of short essays by practically all of the top name authors and researchers in the field. Each essay reveals each author’s particular views on the case. A must have for readers of all levels, and a fascinating look into the people behind the books.

Jack the Ripper: The Simple Truth

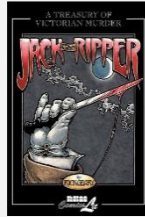
Bruce Paley



Paley spent over fifteen years researching Joseph Barnett as a suspect, culminating in a well-researched and informative book. The section on

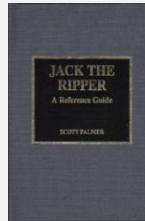
the social conditions of Victorian Whitechapel is especially valuable. Recommended for readers at all levels, though beginners would do better with Sugden or Rumbelow.

**Treasury of Victorian Murder:
Jack the
Ripper**
Rick Geary



A fun little book, treasured more for its illustrations than for its historical content. The story of the murders is told through a comic-strip layout. Recommended for collectors and those interested in comics.

**Jack the Ripper: A Reference
Guide**
Scott Palmer



A mediocre attempt to compile an encyclopedic overview of the case. There are numerous errors in the text, much of which appears to be taken directly from the Jack the Ripper A-Z!

Readers of all levels would do best to purchase the A-Z instead.

The Enigma of Jack the Ripper
Dr. John de Locksley



Production so laughable that it truly defies description. Recommended only for those who have a burning desire to fill their Ripper collection with absolutely everything ever published. All others should avoid the Locksley “books” like the plague.

**Jack the Ripper and Victorian
London**
Roy Gregory



A curious collection of articles concerning various subjects ranging from the Ripper to Victorian London as a whole. Contains some lovely color illustrations. Recommended to collectors.

And new in paperback in 1995 were...

The Diary of Jack the Ripper by Shirley Harrison

The Complete History of Jack the Ripper by Philip Sugden

Jack the Ripper: The Uncensored Facts by Paul Begg

The True Face of Jack the Ripper by Melvin Harris

Reviews courtesy of Casebook.org



The Corset Girls Unlaced

Annie R McEwen

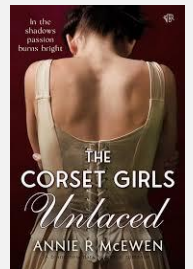
Bloodhound Books, January 2025

290 pp.

ISBN: 978-1917449502

Softcover £9.99, eBook £1.99

Audiobook also available



The Corset Girls Unlaced is an historical romance about two young working-class people who find love and intrigue in London’s East End. With so many stories revolving around the poverty and suffering in the area during the late Victorian period, I was keeping an eye out for fiction that involved people finding happiness despite how difficult their lives could be. *The Corset Girls Unlaced* was the perfect answer to that.

Housemaids Jillian Morehouse and Ada Kelly flee into the East End after Jillian stabs their employer when he attempts to assault her. Ada finds her brother, Michael, who helps the girls find shelter and employment. After the police write off the murder to a botched robbery attempt and close the case, Jillian attempts to move in with her life, though the trauma of the event will always haunt her. She and Ada find jobs in a corset shop, making corsets to order. Ada’s brother, Michael, begins to show interest in Jillian, but he has his own secrets, too. He was part of a now disbanded East End gang called the Jacks, and he was responsible for the death of a rival gang member during a fight. While

he wants to pursue a relationship with Jillian, he is haunted by his past, too, and fears that the remnants of his old life will jeopardize her safety. When Jillian is kidnapped, Michael must rely on his old gang associates to rescue her before it is too late.

What I liked most about this book was that both hero and heroine were trying to put the ghosts of their pasts to rest. Both grappled with whether or not their pasts defined them and determined if they were worthy of love and happiness. In the end, both Michael and Jillian decide to take the risk of loving each other and carve out their own joy in the East End. The emotional payoffs are worth the edge-of-your-seat moments for romance readers, and the Victorian London history aficionado will enjoy the Easter eggs like mentions of *The Illustrated Police News* that pop up in the story. And everyone will love that the couple gets this happily-ever-after.

Madeleine Keane

Shadow at the Morgue

Cara Devlin

First Cup Press, January 2025

275 pp.

ISBN: 979-8992305708

Softcover £10.67, eBook £3.69

Audiobook also available



Shadow at the Morgue is the first book in the Spencer and Reid historical mystery series set in Victorian London. The sleuths in this series are Leonora 'Leo' Spencer, a young woman with an eidetic memory who assists her uncle in the local morgue, and Inspector Jasper Reid of Scotland Yard. A traumatic event in Leo's childhood brought them together and they have regarded each other as family ever since.

One late evening, Leo is helping her wrap up autopsies when a robber enters the morgue demanding an article from a newly arrived body, a young woman who was run over by an omnibus. He forces Leo into the morgue closet and locks her in. Inspector Jasper Reid arrives at the morgue and lets her out of the closet. Leo and Jasper discover that the young woman's locket was stolen and that her other jewelry, which is worth more, was left behind. Later, the robber is found dead, and it's discovered that he was a member of one of Whitechapel's 'high-rip' gangs. It soon becomes obvious that the young woman's murder wasn't an accident, and that she was part of a sordid criminal

enterprise that has a hold over the highest echelons of London society.

I enjoyed the set-up and pacing of the book. Devlin weaves the characters' backstory seamlessly in with the plot and leaves just enough on a cliffhanger that the reader wants to find out more about what happened in Leo's childhood. The found family aspect, which we're seeing in a lot of current mystery series, provides a balance to the grimmer aspects of the plot. This is a series I will absolutely be returning to.

Madeleine Keane

A Deadly Deception

Tessa Harris

Digital Publications, 2025

335pp

ISBN: 978-3-98998-959-7

eBook £2.99



In *Ripperologist* 156 (June 2017) I reviewed Tessa Harris's *The Sixth Victim*, the first volume in her Constance Piper mystery series about a spirit medium who becomes entangled in the Jack the Ripper and London Torso murders. After *The Angel Murders* (2018), which explored baby farming, Harris returned to the Ripper theme with the third book in the series, *A Deadly Deception* (2019), now released in a slightly revised eBook edition.

It is July 1889. The body of Alice Mackenzie (*sic*) has just been discovered in Castle Alley bearing similar injuries to those of the Ripper victims. Fear is spreading that Jack may have come out of retirement. Constance sets out to track down Alice's killer, assisted from beyond the grave by her late mentor Emily Tindall (aka the Whitehall torso). Has Jack the Ripper indeed returned, or is there another 'lone psychopath' at work in the East End? Intelligence from various sources suggests a possible Irish nationalist connection linking the Mackenzie murder with the slaughter at Miller's Court and the Phoenix Park murders. Could the Whitechapel murders be a decoy designed to make the police look inept? Is Mary Kelly still alive? Where is her sister, Patrica, and who has kidnapped her son, Timmy? Who is the strangely veiled lady seen at Alice's funeral? Furthermore, Special Branch are plotting their own treacherous schemes, and as Constance delves further and deeper into the case, she begins to realise she is up against a

conspiracy involving some of the most powerful and dangerous men in society...

There's a lot going on in this novel. Perhaps too much. The exposition is a little heavy-handed at times, and there is a surfeit of contrived surprises and sudden implausible twists. What made *The Sixth Victim* so appealing – the relationship between Constance Piper and Metropolitan police officer Thaddeus Hawkins, the creeping sense of terror and unease, the unsavoury horror – is mostly missing from this sequel. That said, there are still plenty of wonderful scenes (Joseph Barnett carving the Sunday roast sticks in my mind), and the last quarter of the book rattles along at a terrific pace as Constance finds herself in a race against time to prevent a Fenian dynamite outrage. This is an ambitious work that examines the complexities of the Irish Question and the Jack the Ripper murders and distils them into a satisfying literary thriller.

David Green

They Called Him Jack

Matt Novotny

Independently published, 2025

40pp

ASIN: B0F4RW5JPP

eBook £0.77



From Colorado-based fantasy and science fiction author Matt Novotny we have a dark and shuddersome short horror story. The narrator is Dr Thomas Bond, newly married to his second wife, Cybil. Already circulating in the upper tiers of London society, Bond is a caring and compassionate man – we see him attending the scene of a carriage accident and gently putting down one of the injured horses.

Bond and his wife visit an antiquarian bookshop just off The Strand. It's full of 'strange and forbidden' articles for sale, such as *The Codex of Aozoth*, a grimoire written in blood dating back to ancient Egypt. As a wedding gift, Cybil buys her husband an exotic surgeon's field kit, but once in possession of this artefact Dr Bond's fortunes change. Soon his wife and daughter are kidnapped by members of a malefic cult, and to save them he is forced to abet the murder of five women from the streets of the East End.

In just forty pages the author conjures up a universe of pain and torment for the good doctor.

The story reeks of rot and old magic and the stench of Whitechapel sewers and tunnels. I particularly enjoyed the little Lovecraftian touches here and there – 'the grotesque statuary of a peculiar greenish stone', 'the passages of nitrous-dripping stone and evil-smelling lichen'. Bond is called in by Sir Charles Warren to examine the autopsy files of the first four canonical victims, but corruption is everywhere and the tentacles of The Hand of Aozoth and their ancient Egyptian rituals spread far and wide. An excellent little shocker.

David Green

Ripper of Ashwyck

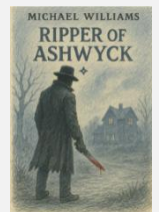
Michael Williams

Independently published, 2025

244pp

ISBN: 979-8311078894

Softcover £8.84



Michael Williams has attempted a modern re-telling of the Ripper story from the perspective of John Druitt, a geography teacher living and working in the quiet American town of Ashwyck. Liz Stide and Mary Kelly are also staff members, while Aaron Kosminski is employed as the school cleaner. Druitt is tormented by sexual desires towards his male pupils and plagued by childhood trauma. He can hear voices accusing him of terrible deeds; he experiences horrifying visions of blood and injury. He seems haunted. Or maybe he is slowly going mad. When dead bodies start turning up in town, Druitt has to confront these voices and visions: are they memories, or are they evidence of some kind of demonic possession or personality breakdown? Or are they warnings – premonitions, almost – that he is being hunted?

Just under halfway through the novel, Druitt commits suicide by throwing himself in the river, and the police investigation into the homicides concludes with Druitt named as the perpetrator acting alone.

But secrets remain, and in the second half of the novel the story lurches in a completely different direction, following Mary Kelly as she struggles to maintain her sanity in a world crumbling around her. She suffers from a rare neurological disorder called prospometamorphosia which causes her to see human faces as deformed and distorted. The reader is taken on a disconcerting journey through the darkest terrain of human nature.

Ripper of Ashwyck might be termed an experimental novel. At times the author favours a prose style consisting of sentence fragments: “Polly. Lifeless eyes. Blood-slick skin. John blinked. Shook his head. But the blood didn’t go.”

The novel’s jerky one- and two-sentence paragraphs work best when they mirror Druitt’s fractured grip on reality. At any rate, this is a powerful story, unlike anything I’ve encountered before. The author should be praised for his ambition and imagination.

David Green

The Shadow of Jack the Ripper

Philip Stengel

Independently published, 2025

164pp

ASIN: B0FHXTN8LP

eBook £3.72



It is 22 March 2025. London’s premiere Jack the Ripper tour guide, Callum Hayes, has just escorted a group of sightseers through Mitre Square. Suddenly, he experiences a vision of a woman being murdered in the south-west corner of the Square. Is it a ghostly re-run of the murder of Catherine Eddowes, or is it a kind of sneak preview of a copycat murder waiting to happen? Three days later, a graphic design student is found slaughtered in Mitre Square.

What is going on? Callum and an archivist colleague begin investigating the accursed history of the Square, looking for reports of strange coincidences, details of unusual crime-safety incidents, hallucinations and cold spot phenomena, violence, apparitions. They uncover a series of unexplained events – in November 1978 a Jack the Ripper tour guide named Arthur Flynn vanished in bizarre and mysterious circumstances, in 1888 a police constable became insane after handling crime scene evidence from the Ripper enquiry. And a close examination of a photograph of Dorset Street taken in 1888 reveals an image of Callum wearing modern shoes...

This is a cleverly imagined and compulsively readable short novel about the legend of Jack the Ripper. The Ripper is characterized as a malign viral contagion, a sentient predator, coursing through history and infecting individuals most obsessed with the mystery. It is through society’s

performance of the Ripper story – by incessantly reciting the details of the crimes, by endlessly walking the routes and murder sites – that the entity gains a foothold in the world, takes over a host, and uses its body to re-enact – to *improve on* – the original killings. The entity exists inside Callum; it is ‘hollowing him out and making a home there’. Callum’s only hope is to obtain Arthur Flynn’s diary which contains instructions on ‘an occult recipe for salvation.’

The Shadow of Jack the Ripper is a tremendous novel, rich and complex in theme, creepy and very disturbing in execution.

David Green

The Ripper’s Legacy

Nigel Plant

Unearthed Quill, 2025

340pp

ASIN: B0F79T3SKT

eBook £1.99



This is the third instalment in Nigel Plant’s series of archaeological thrillers featuring professional treasure hunter, parkour enthusiast and martial arts ninja Reed Hascombe. When Madeleine Robinson, CEO of a mining supply company, runs into cash flow difficulties, she calls in Reed to help solve a family mystery. Her great-grandmother possesses a love letter sent to her (apparently) by Jack the Ripper, which contains clues to hidden treasure. If Reed can identify the Ripper and locate the treasure, then the windfall might save her business empire.

But members of The Ripper’s Guild, a secret club of menacing oddballs who meet regularly in a cellar room at the Ten Bells, are intent on breaking into Robinson’s offices in the Shard and stealing the letter (and the treasure) for themselves. At the same time, the Metropolitan Police have to deal with a Jack the Ripper copycat killer who has just started attacking people on Gunthorpe Road. The two themes come together when Jacob Kosminski, the great-great-grandson of Aaron and a member of The Ripper’s Guild, is pulled in by the police for questioning over the copycat murders. Have the Met got the right suspect, though?

Essentially, *The Ripper’s Legacy* is a laughably far-fetched caper where goodies and baddies chase each other around London. It’s not particularly well

written, either, although you may enjoy the scenes of Hascombe and his team scrambling around the disused underground station at St Mary's (Whitechapel Road) and scaling the rooftops in Puma Court. They also go hunting for treasure in the tunnels beneath St Paul's Cathedral and in the storm drains under the City.

David Green

The House of Jack the Ripper

Amy Cross

Blackwyck Books, 2025

3 volumes

eBook £9.98



In *Ripperologist* 157 (August/September 2017) I reviewed *Broken Window*, the first volume in Amy Cross's *The House of Jack the Ripper* series. I praised it as a 'superior horror tale' full of 'macabre and creepy effects', but for some reason I never got round to reading the other books in the series. Luckily for me, the original eight volumes have just been re-packaged as a trilogy: *New Ghosts for the Old Ceremony*, *A House That Dreams of Death* and *The Only Haunted House in the World*. You can purchase them as a bundle for under a tenner.

Homeless teenager Maddie Harper breaks into a long-abandoned three-storey Victorian townhouse on the outskirts of Whitechapel. The place has an evil reputation. It has scurrying rats, rotting floorboards, doors that open without human agency, and bells that sound mysteriously from upstairs rooms. Worst of all, in the basement there is an old operating theatre and an array of surgical equipment.

We learn that the house was once the residence of Dr Charles Glazier, a retired surgeon, who ventured out at night into Whitechapel to slaughter prostitutes in order to harvest their organs for transplant into his dying wife. We watch as he manacles his wife to a wheelchair and takes her down to the basement theatre for one last unsuccessful bout of surgery. Then an intruder breaks into Dr Glazier's home – a monstrous ruffian called 'Jack'. He becomes Dr Glazier's manservant and theatre assistant (think of Bela Lugosi's Ygor), and together they set out on an obscene, maniacal mission to bring Glazier's wife back to life, to conquer death itself. For this, they

need a further supply of body parts and internal organs.

But the past is leaking into the present. Horrors from a century and a quarter ago are taking shape and re-materialising in modern-day London. A copycat killer is roaming the streets, preying on homeless girls in Whitechapel and Hammersmith, mimicking the Ripper's crimes and stirring up a fanatical following among anarchist worshippers who view the murderer as a great British anti-hero. Meanwhile, Maddie escapes the house and survives for a while as a rough sleeper before she takes the terrible decision to return once more to Jack the Ripper's house...

The House of Jack the Ripper has a relatively straightforward haunted house setup, but it quickly warps into something far more complicated. As the narrative develops, we get to understand the history of the house and the life of its arrogant, deluded owner, Dr Glazier. His master-servant relationship with Jack is wonderfully portrayed. Amy Cross is not afraid to take her time describing appalling scenes – *gloat* is the word that comes most readily to mind. The result is a nasty, utterly depraved and relentlessly creepy supernatural story in which tension ratchets up with every chapter. I read the eight books in this series over three weeks in August – a vastly enjoyable experience even if I was left feeling soiled and ghoulish at the end of it. Scenes come back to haunt me at odd moments – Mrs Culpepper getting titillated at the idea of being abused by the Ripper; Dr Glazier returning to Mitre Square after the double event and lovingly rubbing his bare hands over the blood stains still visible on the ground. Highly recommended.

David Green

Conversations with the Ripper

Anthony Bailey

Independently published, 2025

81pp

ASIN: B0FF9XFVH1

eBook £2.18



In New South Wales an antiques dealer finds a curious leather-bound diary in an old chest. It contains the jottings of Albert Hollis, a one-time sailor, who describes how he met a man called 'Jack' in the Red Lion pub in Whitechapel in June 1888. "*The door of the pub swung open with the evening breeze, and I was met with a face that*

would haunt my nights for years to come. A man, tall, gaunt, with eyes like burning coals. He looked like any other Londoner, dressed in an overcoat and a battered hat. But there was something about him. Something unsettling.”

He has met the man once before, briefly, in January of that year, and the pair will meet again, one last time, in November 1888. Over these three encounters, Hollis is unnerved, frightened even, by the strange man, who claims to be Jack the Ripper and has a story to tell.

The text of the novel is interspersed with mortuary and crime scene photographs and snippets from contemporary newspaper accounts of the Ripper murders. This merging of fiction and nonfiction makes reading the book something akin to a multimedia experience, as if the diary sections were witness testimony in court proceedings. This is a boldly conceived, compelling short novel that uses the monstrous to shed light on some very ordinary human preoccupations.

David Green

Catch Me When You Can

J. Philip Davies

The Accidental Press, 2025

302pp

ASIN: B0DZ8GB8V5

eBook £4.64



The New York City police are called out to a gruesome murder at an abandoned warehouse near the docks. Written on the wall in the victim’s blood is the chilling taunt: *Catch Me When You Can*. Three weeks later, a second body, horribly mutilated in the manner of Mary Kelly, is discovered in Hightower, Missouri, with the phrase *From Hell* scrawled in blood at the scene.

The perpetrator is quickly apprehended. He is George Maybrick, a merchant seaman, who readily confesses to both murders as well as a string of other homicides in various ports around the world. He is a most peculiar individual, suffering from chronic nightmares and exhibiting a personality disorder unlike anything in the clinical literature. The police bring in forensic psychiatrist Dr Richard Crane, who in turn seeks the expertise of Dr Shoshana Liebman, a past life regression therapist. Maybrick proves to be a willing subject, and over the course of several hypnosis sessions he claims to

recall past lives as a witch-finder in seventeenth century Spain and as a murderer of women in the East End of London in 1888.

The question at the heart of this novel is this: is Maybrick genuinely recalling a previous incarnation as Jack the Ripper, or is he faking it for purposes of his own? Or is the therapy itself inducing false memories and wishful thinking? As the story unfolds we see Drs Crane and Liebman, together with Missouri Detective Chris Stanford, struggling with these issues as they delve into Maybrick’s background.

Authors of Jack the Ripper fiction are always looking for new ways to send their modern-day protagonists back to the late nineteenth century. Over the years we have marvelled at time machines, dream states, induced comas, astral travel, psychic transference, experimental drug trials, and so on. Now we have past life regression. You may recall this plot device being used previously by Anne Stuart in *Break the Night* (1993), Kit Crumb in *Time Ripper* (2015), and most recently by MW Taylor in *Killing Time* (2017) (see *Ripperologist* 155). In *Catch Me When You Can* the therapy is depicted as being rapid and reliable. At first Crane dismisses the practice as questionable, but gradually embraces the therapy as Maybrick recalls more and more verifiable details about his murderous activities in London. At the same time Crane turns into a sort of Ripperologist, digesting texts by Paul Begg and utilising Casebook resources to corroborate Maybrick’s ‘memories’. He even lauds Trevor Marriott’s *21st Century Investigation* as a ‘compelling study’.

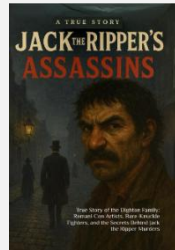
Catch Me When You Can is the debut novel from J. Philip Davies, a retired educator living in Miami. It offers an original and intriguing slant on the Ripper murders, and is packed with interesting information about all sorts of subjects from optography and reincarnation to Shalimar perfume and bonsai trees. It begins as a police procedural before turning into a dark psychological thriller about Jack the Ripper’s identity. Perhaps the plotting is a little thin in places, and the motivations of some of the characters didn’t always convince me; I could have done without the uninteresting romance between the two mental health professionals brought together by the Maybrick case.

Overall, though, I thought this was an enjoyable romp, briskly written in short snappy chapters. I found myself gripped by the drama of it and keen to keep reading. The author has researched his subject well and produced a clever murder mystery. A sequel appears to be in progress.

David Green

Jack the Ripper's Assassins

Rohan Dighton et al,
Independently published, 2025
378pp
ASIN: B0FKZTGR81
eBook £11.98



On 30 July 1966 – the same day that England defeated Germany in the FIFA World Cup final – six-year-old Keith Dighton became the keeper of his family's 'darkest and most precious secret'. He was given a small leather journal wrapped in oilcloth belonging to his great-great-grandfather, Andrew Dighton, who had thrown himself under a train at a railway crossing in 1916. This journal, partly written in code, recounts the supposedly true story of how 'Andrew the Giant', a bare-knuckle fighter, rose from lowly gypsy origins to take his place alongside the highest echelons in the land; it describes how he unwittingly aided and abetted the Jack the Ripper murders and how he battled to bring down a depraved prince protected by the government and the full weight of Empire.

The book is being marketed as an 'extraordinary true story' passed down by word of mouth from grandfather to grandson, but it contains so many blatant mistakes of fact, so much untrustworthy embroidering, so little in the way of reliable corroborative evidence, it surely can't be anything other than a total fabrication or at best an attempt by the author to craft a fake gypsy heroic fantasy epic along the line of *The Belgariad*. Only the dimmest and most credulous souls are likely to be taken in by this farrago of nonsense.

Andrew Dighton was born in 1830 into a Romani traveller family. He claimed descent from a Norman knight who fought at the Battle of Hastings. Aged eighteen, he apparently stood seven feet tall with a muscular Viking-like physique, and quickly gained a reputation as a fierce street fighter. Through family connections in Rye, he underwent physical instruction to become a bare-knuckle pugilist while also learning the arts and refinements

necessary to pass as a gentleman. For the next twenty odd years, from 1855 onwards, he prospered as a con artist, teaming up with his wife, Caroline, an orphaned serving girl and also a traveller, to execute a series of elaborate scams, confidence tricks, swindles, deceptions and frauds, all the while moving smoothly between gypsy encampments and the drawing rooms of the rich and powerful.

On Boxing Day 1859 Andrew and Caroline found themselves mingling with royalty at Sandringham, and it is here that Andrew first meets Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale, who we are told is twenty-six. Of course, the astute reader will spot the blunder straightaway – Albert Victor wasn't born until 1864. It is one of hundreds of serious uncorrected errors and anachronisms scattered throughout the book that singly and in combination utterly demolish the reliability of the Dighton family saga.

Albert Victor is depicted as a dangerous predator 'harbouring appetites that belonged in humanity's darkest nightmares'. His mere presence in a room produces unease and repulsion:

"The prince stood just a fraction too close, invading the invisible boundaries of proper social distance. The scent of his cologne was overwhelming this close—something heavy and oriental, with undertones of decay, like flowers left too long in a sickroom...The prince's smile widened, revealing teeth that seemed too sharp, too white. They put Andrew in mind of a predator's fangs, designed for tearing rather than chewing...The prince leaned closer, and Andrew caught a whiff of something else beneath the cologne—something sour and unhealthy, like meat left too long in the sun."

A decade later Albert Victor makes his move, ensnaring the Dightons into becoming his 'creatures', utilising their unique skills as thieves, confidence tricksters and con artists for his own purposes to destroy rivals and obtain private information about his enemies. And then, the rumours begin about an aristocratic man, handsome as a prince, fascinated with anatomy and surgical knives, preying on women in Whitechapel . . .

The book claims that this first wave of attacks took place between 1876 and 1877 (Albert Victor would have been twelve at the time). A second

wave occurred eleven years later – the Jack the Ripper murders. The blurb and a timeline inside the book inform the reader that during the Autumn of Terror Albert Victor hired Andrew Dighton for 500 guineas per day: with a crew of six heavies his task was to block alleyways and secure access at street level enabling Albert Victor to go about his murderous activities uninterrupted and undetected. What's baffling to me, though, is that there is no mention of any of this in the book itself. Indeed, later in the novel we learn that Dighton had been out of the country for several years so couldn't possibly have undertaken this security role on the streets of Whitechapel anyway.

The book is chaotic, convoluted, and disorganised. Andrew Dighton (born 1930) is somehow twenty-four years old in 1878 and a decade later he is forty-eight; his 39-year-old wife has a 32-year-old daughter. She is four months pregnant in November but seven months pregnant in December. Meetings take place in hotels that haven't yet been built; the same meeting takes place in different locations at the same time; the names of people change at random (Thomas Brennan / Thomas McKay); Detective Constable Sagar is found drowned in the Thames thirty-six years before he died. The book has Andrew and Caroline fleeing to France in January 1889 to begin a new life as wine merchants, but according to the timeline they escape to a remote island off the Kent coast where they establish a horse ferry service. Right at the end of the book there is a scene where Andrew and Caroline are riding the train from Victoria to Dover: among the passengers are 'a group of sailors heading to Portsmouth'. He can't even get that right! There are howlers like this on almost every page.

The author doesn't seem to care about these discrepancies, preferring to regard the inaccuracies not as flaws but as 'the natural patina that time lays upon all great family stories . . . Some stories are too important to be constrained by mere dates.' But to my mind these anachronisms and continuity errors and factual errors betray sloppiness and are indicative of the author's general disdain for his reading public.

This is all very sad. As a campfire story, narrated while everyone is half-sozzled and full of kippers and hedgehog pie, I imagine the exploits of 'Andrew the Giant' might go down rather well. The

novel itself is beautifully written and a pleasure to read. But as a true account of the Jack the Ripper murders and associated events I feel it needs to be shelved as 'junk' alongside the works of Michael R. Gordon and Tony Williams. What's also sad is that henceforward the Dighton family will have to live with this preposterous, far-fetched legacy fastened round their necks. A report in the *Kentish Independent* for 31 January 1941 records the death of an Andrew Dighton (71), run down by an electric train at a level crossing in Belvedere in southeast London. He was a scissors grinder and had spent most of his life in the close-knit Gypsy marsh community near Erith. I wonder.

David Green



Book Recommendations from *Off the Shelf*

The Pennington Perplexity

Natalie Brianne

Searose Press, July 2024

ISBN: 979-8987095348

354 pp;

Softcover £11.12, eBook £2.97

Fiction



The Pennington Perplexity is the first book in the *Constantine Capers* series, which its author, Natalie Brianne, describes as "Sherlock Holmes Meets Fifty First Dates." After reading it, I can tell you that it is not only that, but a delightful romp that mixes mystery and intrigue with the right amount of romance.

Young Mira Blaise's parents died in an airship accident when she was a child, leaving her and her brother to be raised by the uncle. Mira has just moved out of her uncle's house to her own rooms in London. She spends her mornings in a local teashop drawing the people going about their day. It's here that she encounters a man named Byron Constantine, who is looking for his journal. After he moves on, she finds it and returns it to him. It turns out that Byron is a private detective who suffers from amnesia that's a result of a mysterious accident. He wakes up the next day not remembering what happened the day before and

depends on his journals to keep track of things. After losing his journal, he concludes that he needs a secretary, and he hires Mira to fill the position. Soon after, Byron and Mira take on their first case, the mysterious death of a former airship engineer. Their investigations lead them on a trail that connects an international smuggling ring, sabotage, and a series of murders of poor women in Whitechapel.

This book was an absolutely delightful read and reminded me of a cross between the *Enola Holmes* series on Netflix and the steampunk romance novels like Zoe Archer's *Blades of the Rose* series. It's definitely a must-binge series, and I will be reading the rest of them.

Madeleine Keane

A Deadly Affair

Carla Simpson
Oliver-Heber Books, July 2022
ISBN: 978-1648394560
325 pp;
Hardcover £30.96, Softcover
£22.41, eBook £4.99,
Audiobook also available
Fiction



A Deadly Affair is the first book in the Angus Brodie and Mikaela Forsythe mystery series. It details the adventures of Mikaela Forsythe, a 'new woman' who earns her own money as an author of a series about an adventuress named Emma Fortescue, and Angus Brodie, a Scottish-born private detective who once worked under Inspector Abberline at Scotland Yard.

Mikaela Forsythe accompanies her family's housekeeper to Bow Street station police station to help identify a body. Days earlier, Mikaela's sister Linnie and her maid, Mary, went missing. Linnie's husband, Sir Charles Litton, has just sent word to Mikaela that the body of young woman with a slit throat was just pulled from the river. The housekeeper positively identifies the body as her daughter, Mary. Given the wounds, the police believe that Mary might have been the victim of the Whitechapel murderer who terrorized the East End just last year. But Linnie's whereabouts are still a mystery, and Mikaela doesn't believe that the Whitechapel murderer had anything to do with Mary's death. Mikaela's aunt puts her in touch with private detective Angus Brodie. Together, they try

to find Linnie and piece together what happened to her. Sir Charles Litton's involvement in an international anarchist conspiracy and a scheme to abduct the Prince of Wales raises the stakes, as Linnie's disappearance is part of something bigger than the police first believed.

Mikaela and Angus's working relationship is full of romantic tension and banter. Their different backgrounds give them both valuable skills to navigate the investigation and it's very clear that the author has set up the series to include a slow-burn romance based on forced proximity and opposites attracting. This is a splendid start to a series, and I will definitely be binge-reading it.

Madeleine Keane

Long Shadows in Whitechapel

Dian Williams
Center for Arson Research, 2021
ISBN-13: 979-8985333718
288pp
Paperback £7.50
Fiction



Dian Williams runs a criminal profiling company in the US. Her speciality is arson, fire setting, and domestic terrorism. All of which makes it rather curious that she has chosen to venture into the world of Victorian serial crime with a novel about Jack the Ripper. But *Long Shadows in Whitechapel* is an engaging debut, quirky and sly, and fun to read in the same way it can be pleasing sometimes to peel back a plaster and poke around inside a cut.

Cousins Vicki Hagarty and Linley Geneva start up a private detective agency aimed at clients worried by ethical dilemmas. Admittedly, it's a rather niche market, but soon they get a visit from a 'quintessential English lady, lovely accent and all' called Emily George. It turns out Emily's three times great-grandfather, William Leach, was an East End butcher questioned by the police during the Ripper investigation (he was spotted walking down the street with blood on his apron). The family feels so ashamed at this 'ancestral burden' they want the agency to solve the mystery of Jack the Ripper and thus clear their forebear's name.

It's hard to imagine anyone today seeking personal reputation management over murders committed nearly 130 years ago (the novel takes

AUTUMN 2025

place during the Obama administration). Nonetheless, the cousins agree to take on the case, and before we know it they are delving into the social and economic conditions of late Victorian London, re-examining archives and material evidence, looking into the lives and deaths of the victims, and drawing up a top-ten list of 'viable suspects' which includes Lewis Carroll, William Bury, Montague Druitt, James Maybrick, and so on. All this is done from their Philadelphia office and apartments as they tuck into maple donuts and strawberry scones with White Russian coffee.

What we have here is a cosy yarn offering, in effect, a cold case review of the Ripper murders, mixing social history with armchair theorizing and Kantian ethics. The author's concern is not so much with who committed the crimes as with the moral ambiguities surrounding blame and accusation. Given this focus, it's somewhat ironic that she spends so much time slagging off Ripperologists as conspiracy theorists who 'believe what they want, even when it makes no logical sense' – this from an author who imagines 'Scotland Yard has a treasure trove of information about the murderer they still refuse to share with the public'. While the book has its share of blunders and misunderstandings, on the plus side it raises some interesting ideas and explores them in an entertaining fashion.

David Green

Butcher and Blackbird

Brynne Weaver

Zando – Slowburn, Dec 2023

ISBN: 978-0349441566

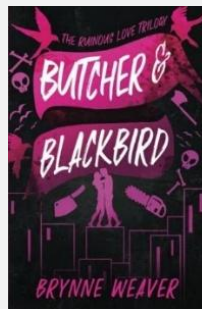
368 pp.

Hardcover £22.97, softcover

£10.11, eBook 5.49, also

available as an audiobook

Fiction



I first heard about the book *Butcher and Blackbird* on BookTok and didn't pay it much mind. But when one of my romance writing groups began to discuss it as they were reading it together, it sounded like something that was right up my alley, as he falls first, touch her/him and die, and forced proximity are three of my favorite romance genre tropes.

Sloane and Rowan are a pair of rival murderers. When Rowan rescues Sloane from a close call, they find out they have one thing in common: they hunt

serial killers. Rowan is actually a big fan of Sloane's "work." Sloane challenges Rowan to an annual game of meeting up to hunt a serial killer in a given area, and Rowan, intrigued by Sloane and itching for some competition, accepts. The story is told through both Rowan and Sloane's first-person points of view, so we get to see the tension building into romance for both. The book takes place over the span of a few years, so we get to see their relationship develop from friendship to eventual romance.

Butcher and Blackbird is part of what seems to be a new horror romantic comedy subgenre. It's basically a romantic comedy spoof of *Dexter*...and Weaver has a wicked sense of humor. The serial killers in her book are based on famous serial killers in fiction, and it's fun to see how cleverly she inserts these characters into the story. And the banter between Sloane and Rowan and certain parts of the narrative and plot beats are laugh-out-loud funny. The book is the first in the *Ruinous Love* trilogy, and I enjoyed it so much I picked up the other two books in the series.

Madeleine Keane

Shadow of the Knife

Richard Ayre

Burning Chair, 2021

ISBN-13: 978-1912946204

304pp;

Softcover £8.99

Fiction



It's 31 August 1890. In Whitechapel a mutilated body is discovered in a fishmonger's yard. Has Jack the Ripper returned? Or is there a copycat killer on the loose? It's a case for Inspector Jonas Handy of Scotland Yard and his sidekick Sergeant Frank Callow. As the victim count rises and the two officers appear to be getting nowhere, they call in Carter 'Jigsaw' Jarman, a brilliant but troubled young surgeon – 'the greatest living expert on why men kill and how to stop them killing' – who brings Holmesian reasoning to the murder investigation.

Shadow of the Knife is my first exposure to the work of Richard Ayre. I admit I approached this novel with a degree of trepidation, fearing it might turn out to be yet another derivative Jack-is-Back yarn. But the author has produced an above average crime thriller with a rich cast of appealing characters and a convincing storyline that deals in

a very realistic way with some of the uglier aspects of life. The prose is often lush and fruitful (perhaps too lush and fruitful in places) so that the reader gags on the stained and yellow sheets, the crusty mattresses, the dead dogs, and the ‘fetid air thick with the smells of dirt, sweat, sewage and seminal fluid’.

“The bones of both arms and legs were exposed to the smoky morning air. They had been excised, brutally, and the flesh hung in tattered strips from them like discarded, scarlet wrapping paper. The head had once again been scalped, but this time the soggy bundle of flesh and hair had been flung into a corner of the yard, as if in a terrible rage. Everything about the corpse was ripped, sliced and defiled.”

As the murder investigation proceeds, Handy and Jarman find themselves delving into the sordid goings-on at a sex club that may include Jack the Ripper among its members. Pursuing dangerous people in high places, they are forced to confront a monstrous predator with a sick fetish for scarified flesh and the ‘ripe, dirty smells of putrefaction’.

This is a chilling piece of horror fiction with plenty of human depravity.

David Green

Murder Most Foul

Graham Debenham

Independently published, 2021

ISBN-13: 979-8786201605

243 pp;

Softcover £7.48

Fiction



Graham Debenham continues his series of London police procedurals featuring old school copper DCI Ray Hawkins of Stepney Green. Over the years, Hawkins has dealt with many mysterious cases ranging from vigilantes in Tower Hamlets, a secret society plotting to overthrow the monarchy, and a sniper targeting officers from the Met. Now, he’s back in a new caper revolving around a Jack the Ripper copycat killer terrorising the East End.

Debenham’s other literary interest is science fiction, especially time travel stories, and in *Murder Most Foul* he manages to combine both themes. Following a car accident, Hawkins ends up on a life support machine in intensive care. Ludicrously, while his colleagues at Stepney Green hunt down

the modern-day copycat killer, Hawkins journeys back in time (while still in an induced coma) to join the original investigation into the Ripper’s crimes.

Inevitably, the two murder investigations merge, becoming more and more closely linked, and throwing up interesting parallels and connections.

This is a rather silly crime thriller, although it’s competently written and packed with enough convincing detail and memorable characters to sustain the reader’s attention. Who Jack the Ripper is – the original one and the pretender – may actually be the least interesting part of the novel.

David Green

Trial by Ambush: Murder, Injustice, and the Truth about the Case of Barbara Graham

Marcia Clark

Thomas and Murder;

December 2024

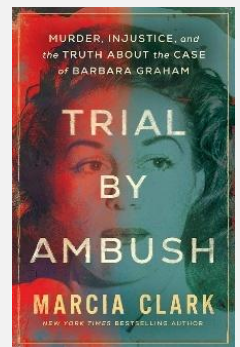
ISBN: 978-1662515958

284 pp.

Hardcover £12.70, softcover

£6.99, eBook £2.99

Non-Fiction



Trial by Ambush tells the story of Barbara Graham, the young mother whose 1953 trial and execution was the subject of the Susan Hayward film *I Want to Live!* While the film gave a sympathetic portrait of Graham’s plight, it glossed over her role in the murder of elderly Mabel Monahan during the course of a robbery.

Marcia Clark, who has lent her expertise to true crime media and has written her own mystery novels post-O.J. Simpson trial, seeks to try and piece together what happened in this case. Barbara Graham didn’t fit into the neat box of 1950’s womanhood. She had grown up as a neglected child and had committed a series of petty crimes to support herself and her young son as her husband was an unemployed drug addict. While working as a dice girl for a gambling racket, she met the four other men with whom she would later plan to rob Mrs. Monahan. At least two of these men had a history of committing violent crimes. When they were arrested, one of the co-defendants turned state’s witness in exchange for immunity and proceeded to cast the blame for the murder on Barbara. Almost immediately, the press jumped on

the story and went out of their way to cast Barbara as a film-noir femme fatale who had remorselessly planned and executed the murder of an elderly woman. After a sensational trial, Graham was found guilty of the murder and sentenced to die with two of her co-inspirators in California's gas chamber.

Clark was able to gain access to not only the newspaper archives, but the trial transcripts. Using her experience as both a former prosecutor and defense attorney, Clark shows us that Graham did not receive a fair trial at all due to good old 1950's misogyny, gross prosecutorial misconduct, and an inadequate defense. She also provides her own opinion as to what occurred that night and the role that she believes Graham played in the murder.

I found the book to be enjoyable. Clark is very careful to advise the reader that the conclusions she draws are based on her own assessment and opinion. One would assume that since she was a prosecutor, she would be showing a strong preference for them in the book, as a lot of true crime is very prosecution friendly, but this is not the case at all. She really shines light on how corrupt police and prosecutors can be, especially when they're under a lot of pressure to convict someone for a crime that shocks a community and sparks a lot of public outrage as the murder of Mabel Monahan did. These are questions that still need to be asked today, especially as forensic science has changed the way crimes are handled within the criminal justice system.

Madeleine Keane

Sister, Sinner. The Miraculous Life and Mysterious Disappearance of Aimee Semple McPherson

Claire Hoffman

Farrar, Straus, and Giroux;

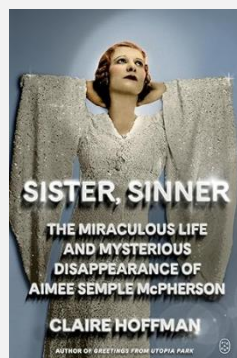
April 2025

ISBN: 978-1250419910

384 pp;

Hardcover £21.90, Softcover £15.00

Non-Fiction



Sister, Sinner tells the story of religious guru, first megachurch founder, and proto-influencer Aimee Semple McPherson. Her life was as colorful as the sermons she turned into performances, and

the infamous scandal of her mysterious month-long disappearance. What started out as a promising religious movement actually became little more than a cult of personality centered around McPherson, and in the end, it cost her everything.

McPherson was born in Salford, Ontario. Her mother was highly active in the local Salvation Army chapter and would often take Aimee with her to the activities. Aimee was beginning to show a religious bent when she wrote a letter to a Canadian newspaper questioning the teaching of the theory of evolution in school. But it was attending a revival at age seventeen that made her decide to convert to Pentecostalism. Here she met and married Pentecostal minister Robert Semple and traveled with him to China to help him with his evangelical work. Robert would die of malaria, but this was the turning point that would start her on her life path.

Aimee soon became a traveling evangelist and preached her faith all over the United States. She became known for her claims to have a direct relationship with God and for faith healings. She found a permanent location in Los Angeles, California, and went on to build Angelus Temple the first megachurch.

Aimee was very adept at including theatrics in her sermons, and she even bought a radio broadcasting license in the to communicate her message to the world. Everything was on the upswing. But on a fateful day in May 1926, Aimee Semple McPherson disappeared from Venice Beach and was feared dead. After thirty days, she emerged from the Arizona desert, claiming to have been abducted and held captive. The public was relieved that McPherson had been found alive, but the ensuing investigation revealed that all wasn't as it seemed. It appeared that Aimee had run off with a former employee, Kenneth Ormiston, with whom she was suspected of having an affair, for a short idyll. As the prosecutor's office presented in the grand jury trial, the kidnapping plot was used as a ploy to cover this, and Ormiston dropped her off in the desert to make the three-mile trek to the small Arizona town where she was found. Aimee stuck to her story, as did the people who testified in her defense. The grand jury trial didn't go anywhere, but the damage was done. Things would never be the same for McPherson again.

Madeleine Keane

The London Séance Society

Sarah Penner

Park Row, March 2023

ISBN: 978-1915643179

375 pp;

Softcover £9.19, eBook 1.79

Fiction



Murder, scams, spiritualists, and strange secret societies all work together to make the plot of Sarah Penner's book *The London Séance Society*. Two women, a spiritualist and her understudy, must navigate the male-dominated world of the London Séance Society before danger closes in on them.

After the murder of her sister Evie, young Lenna Wickes has come to Paris to study under the famous spiritualist Vaudeline d'Allaire. Vaudeline is famous throughout the world for being able to invoke the spirits of murder victims and help them identify their killers. Lenna, a skeptic who has always been more preoccupied with the tangible world around her, is the polar opposite of her late sister, Evie, who was interested in the unseen world and communicating with the dead. Lenna grapples with setting aside her doubts and embracing her sister's belief that the dead can communicate with the living. On top of that, Lenna is struggling with her own growing romantic feelings for Vaudeline.

Mr. Stephen Morley, the vice president of the London Séance Society, invites Vaudeline to London to hold a séance to determine who killed the president...whose body was found in the same location as Evie's. When Lenna and Vaudeline arrive in London, they sense that not all is as it seems, and they race to unlock the London séance society's secrets before the scheduled séance is to occur.

I found the book to be an engrossing read. Penner strategically drops clues throughout the book so that the reader is putting them together alongside Lenna and Vaudeline. Not all of the narrators are necessarily reliable, though, which forces the reader to pay attention. What I found to be most appealing about the book was how the London Séance Society, which is run exclusively by men, tries to exert its influence on the spiritualist industry, which was historically mostly run by women. But it's Vaudeline and Lenna's presence which they are desperate to have for the séance, that throws a spanner in their plans. The two women whom the society is depending on the most are the

ones who end up bringing all of its secrets to light. The irony is absolutely delicious and makes *The London Séance Society* a satisfying read.

Madeleine Keane

A Lovely Girl: The Tragedy of Olga Duncan and the Trial of One of California's Most Notorious Killers

Deborah Holt Larkin

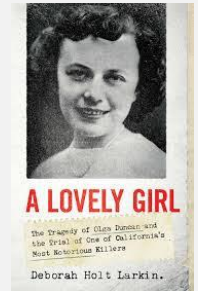
Pegasus Crime: October 2022

ISBN: 978-1639362448

528 pp;

Hardcover £16.43, eBook £13.90

Non-Fiction



Every community has a story of a shocking murder or crime that's become part of their collective consciousness. For Deborah Holt Larkin, who grew up in Santa Barbara, it was the 1958 murder of pregnant nurse Olga Duncan. Olga was married to young lawyer Frank Duncan, but Frank's overly possessive mother-in-law, Elizabeth, did not approve of the marriage. She forged an annulment to end the marriage and tried to hire different people to "get rid" of Olga several times. Eventually, she hired the right people to get what she wanted. Even after Olga's body was found, Elizabeth Duncan still maintained her innocence, and her son Frank's support was unwavering, even throughout the trial. Yet the jury didn't buy Elizabeth Duncan's story, and she was found guilty and sentenced to death, becoming the last woman to be executed in California before the United States suspended the death penalty.

Holt Larkin was a child of about ten years old at the time the murder occurred. Her father was a journalist who covered the murder and subsequent trial for the local newspaper and her mother was a social worker at one of the hospitals for mentally ill patients, so she had a unique perspective into what was going on. Holt Larkin followed the case obsessively as she tried to wrap her mind around who would want to hurt someone like Olga Duncan, whom everyone said was "a lovely girl."

The book is part coming-of-age memoir, part tragic true-crime story, as Holt Larkin tries to process how the murder of Olga Duncan changed the way she viewed the world. The more amusing anecdotes of Holt Larkin's childhood lighten the graver details of the murder case. We also see how

a crime like this can affect not only the victims and their families, but the community as well. But perhaps the most touching part is that Holt Larkin's father had wanted to write his own book on the story, but died before he was able to complete it. Holt Larkin picked up where he left off and completed it, both to tell Olga Duncan's story and finish what her father had started. Despite the tragedy of the murder, Holt Larkin putting the story out into the world as she remembered it makes it all the more poignant.

Madeleine Keanne

Ripper Country

Jack Harding

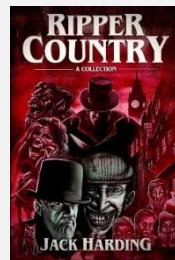
Blood Rites Horror, 2022

ISBN-13: 978-1915272041

385pp;

Softback £8.99

Fiction



Ripper Country brings together ten interconnected short stories set mostly in East London during the Autumn of Terror. Gruesome horror yarns predominate, interspersed with tales of unease.

Inevitably, the book is filled with monsters and doomed and frightened characters. There is a repellent cat's meat man and a sinister hairdresser who may be partly based on Seweryn Kłosowski. The Beast of the Thames puts in an appearance, as does the Nemesis of Neglect, and to round things off there is a far from cosy fireside story from Frederick Abberline featuring the Elephant Man, Jack the Ripper, and a mad scientist. Despite many of the stories sharing the same dire and dangerous landscape, this is actually quite a diverse collection showcasing a variety of genres from splatterpunk to folk horror.

Maybe at times the author tries too hard to be repulsive for the sake of it. There's a nasty streak running through the book, and a preoccupation with vile smells and leaking body fluids – 'Blood and phosphorus oozed from her stupid, gurgling mouth like frothy cranberry sauce'. Even so, this is a powerful, memorably disturbing work of fiction that creates an intricate portrait of the East End pregnant with its own Ripper history. My favourite story was 'Underground', an unnerving tale about a drifter from Portsmouth who starts a new job as a

night watchman in the Whitechapel Underground Station.

Jack Harding has a vivid, darkly poetic prose style that is well suited to his macabre material. It's a pity, though, that his publishers have felt the need to plaster content warnings all over the book for the benefit of readers triggered by 'Prostitution and discrimination against prostitutes'.

David Green

The Dark Side of London

D. H. Gutzman

Independently published, 2022

ISBN-13: 979-8447041199

Paperback, 218pp

£8.38

Fiction



Set in London in the 1880s, this quietly compelling novel focuses on the love affair between Montague John Druitt and Prince Albert Victor. The author races through the early life of Druitt in a blur of rent-boys, guttersnipes, and cock-sucking guardsmen, and it is only during a cricket match at Cambridge in the summer of 1883, when Druitt by chance meets James Stephen and Prince Eddy, that the prose turns lush and mannered, and the novel settles down:

"He smelled of summer, and was as fresh as laundry on the line on a sunny day. His eyes were blue, and his lips rose petal pink... "You're' that cricket fellow, looking all creamy in your cream-colored suit. Are you all creamy?""

There are horrors to come – a severed uterus in Johnny Druitt's cricket bag, and a golem-like tentacled monster smelling of decay and rotting flesh – but first there are secret liaisons at Trinity Court and gay sex parties at Sandringham and the Hundred Guineas Club, a sort of mobile brothel that moves from mansion estate to mansion estate. Prince Eddy likes dressing up in his grandmother's clothes.

Mostly this is an extravagant, good-humoured romp through the Victorian underworld, with Druitt as our guide to the degraded, nefarious pleasures at the highest and lowest ends of society. London delights of the 1880s include Dr Treves and his crew of circus freaks, a sword fight in the

Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussauds, opium dens, and electro-shock torture in a private sanatorium. Mr Gutzman's talent leans less toward exploring the inner world of his characters than to creating a landscape of depravity. Gradually, by degrees, the novel shades into a Jack the Ripper murder mystery with all its attendant grue and conspiracy theory, which in turn transforms into something far weirder. Druitt's monogrammed white silk scarf is deployed in an unexpected fashion, and Joseph Merrick (he is called John Merrick throughout the novel) sits in the corner covered in giant mushrooms, honking like an elephant.

David Green

The Ripper Lives

Kevin Morris

Trilogies of Terror, 2024

ASIN: B0CR7XJT8Y

eBook 10 volumes £10.20

Fiction



Kevin Morris has crafted a terrific novel exploring the aftermath of the Jack the Ripper murders. *The Ripper Lives* was originally published in ten instalments over several months in 2024, each episode comprising between 50 and 60 pages. Now, in 2025, it is being re-issued in a binge-worthy three-volume set under the title *No Rest for the Damned*.

Living out his retirement in Bournemouth, Frederick Abberline reminisces about his career in law enforcement and reflects sourly on the police investigation into the Jack the Ripper murders. He decides to recount the true story of what happened *after* the fifth murder. Thus, the novel begins properly a few days after Mary Kelly's funeral when senior figures from Scotland Yard, including Abberline, assemble in Henry Matthews' gaslit office in Whitehall. The Home Secretary decides to publicly close down the Ripper enquiry while at the same time setting up a covert task force charged with hunting down the notorious serial killer. The officers selected are Abberline, Swanson, Macnaghten, Anderson, and Dr Thomas Bond, with Monro and Matthews handling the government liaison.

Over the course of nearly two months we follow the task force (but mainly Abberline and Macnaghten) as they pursue leads and interview

suspects. Starting with the Stride case and the IWMEC, they quickly branch out into the rookeries and Alfred de Rothschild's 1,400-acre country retreat in Buckinghamshire. The novel is saturated with gothic atmosphere: as the investigation delves further and further into the mystery of Jack the Ripper, becoming darker at every turn, there are numerous macabre set pieces – an ogre-like suspect questioned in the crypt of a fire-damaged church, a mummified corpse in Buck's Row, an escaped lunatic dossing in the Lolesworth tenements:

"I saw the creature's yellowed, frog-like skin, hands outstretched with blackened nails chewed to the flesh... There was sewage fused to the flesh and deep red avulsions from where he's tried to dig out the gangrene with his bare hands. Wounds gaped necrotic down the length of his back, black and rotting and crawling with maggots."

At times, perhaps, the author pushes things a little too far, turning the narrative into a horror story rather than a crime mystery. The East End is depicted as a place of harrowing foulness and depravity, populated with hoarders, wife beaters, vagrant burn victims, thugs, muggers and other individuals on the margins. You will recognize many of the characters – George Lusk and Batchelor and LeGrand play key roles – but there are also several intriguing cameos from the likes of James Hardiman and Eleanor Marx, as well as an assortment of new murder victims and new suspects. What is especially impressive, and one of the main pleasures of this novel, is the author's characterisation of the political realities of the Ripper murder investigation and the relationships between the senior police officers and between Abberline and his wife. They are all complex figures operating in extraordinary circumstance, effortlessly depicted with the style and texture and excitement of 19th century serial fiction.

The Ripper Lives has to be one of the best novels about the Jack the Ripper crimes in recent years. The author has a talent for taking historical facts and twisting them to make a credible and compelling story. The ingenious plotting and the cliffhangers at the end of each instalment keep the narrative bowling along. This is historical crime writing of a superior sort.

David Green

The Moat Farm Murder

Anthony Payne

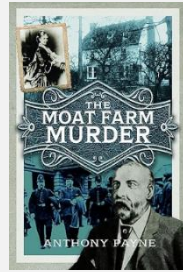
Pen and Sword, 2024

ISBN 978-1036106805

164+viii pages

Softcover £12.99, eBook £9.99

Non-Fiction



No time is wasted in this account of the murder of Camille Cecile Holland by Samuel Herbert Dougal. Dougal is on trial for his life by page 68, and – spoiler alert, if one is needed – judicially hanged on page 94. He always was a man in a hurry.

So far, so good for Anthony Payne's book, which can hardly be accused of outstaying its welcome. Good, too, is the publication of a couple of images which do not form part of the usual corpus of MoatFarmiana. These would seem to have emerged from the collection of Payne's great-grandfather, Alexander Daniels, a superintendent in the Essex Police at the time of the murder – or, rather, at the time of its discovery and investigation. The body of Miss Holland, a naïve, lonely spinster with healthy investments in various heavy industries, spent four years in the farm's saturated earth, competing with the urgent water table, before it was recovered.

There are a few faults, however. The most jarring of these is Payne's misunderstanding of the nature of the drawn-out preliminary criminal proceedings before the magistrates. It is true to say that Dougal was arrested for financial misrepresentation – attempting to pass stopped notes in the Bank of England – but profound suspicions about the fate of Miss Holland were already circulating. If Dougal had been forging her signature, which he had, and embezzling her fortune, which he had, then he must have been unusually confident that she would not reappear to contest his transactions. If he had murdered her, which he had, and concealed the remains, which he had, then this would be a very good source of exactly this sort of confidence. But, *contra* Payne throughout his book (and even in the synopsis on the rear cover), the magistrates were not *trying* Dougal. They were almost certainly going to pass even the most simple case of fraud up the chain to the Quarter Sessions or the Assizes, rather than dealing with it summarily; in the meantime, they remanded the accused over and over again at the

request of the prosecutor while further investigations took place. As I indicated in my book on the case (*The Moat Farm Mystery*), the development which was hotly awaited throughout this tense period was proof of murder, and it arrived with the exhumation of Miss Holland just when it looked as if the search of the farmland would have to be abandoned.

It is probably fair to say that so many remands – week after week after week until the body was found – tested the assumptions of natural justice, especially on a comparatively trivial holding charge, but there were ways to justify Dougal's treatment. He was a known flight risk, and this, if nothing else, gave the magistrates scope to insist on his detention while his financial knots were slowly and perhaps somewhat unenthusiastically untied. The real energy was in the concurrent digging and delving in the fields, and, for the authorities, a conviction for fraud would have been a poor second prize in a case in which murder was so strongly and reasonably suspected.

Still, the good-natured deportment of *The Moat Farm Murder* undoubtedly helps it through sticky patches such as these. No space, in a hundred pages, for character development – no special reason for the reader to feel anything for Dougal, Miss Holland, or anyone else – no great accumulations of tension – no particular problem. The whole thing is done in a manner which is entertaining and readable enough to justify the book's existence, and it can be recommended for anyone wishing to know the outline of this legendary case without being troubled by some of its more complex features.

Mark Ripper

The Impostor Heiress: Cassie Chadwick, The Greatest Grifter of the Gilded Age

Annie Reed

Diversion Book; June 2024

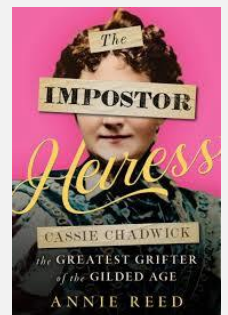
ISBN: 978-1635768466

352 pp;

Hardcover £11.99, softcover

£13.34, eBook £11.39

Non-Fiction



Newspapers christened her the Duchess of Diamonds, the Queen of Swindlers, and the High Priestess of Fraudulent Finance. She was called

worse than Charles Ponzi. More recently, her character was featured by name on *Murdoch Mysteries* and was the loose inspiration for the character Maud Beaton on *The Gilded Age*. Who was she? She was Cassie Chadwick, one of the most notorious con women of her time.

Annie Read's biography about Chadwick covers not only her life, but how her illicit activities affected the lives of her victims. Chadwick was born in Canada and started her career at the tender age of 14, using a forged letter of inheritance to open a bank account and pretending to be an heiress. After this, she made her way to Ohio and began leaving her business cards with shopkeepers as collateral to run up large debts without the intention of paying them. After a stint in prison, she took up her forgery career again and progressed to pretending to be a clairvoyant and advising clients on financial matters, all while running up debts throughout a series of three marriages.

After a second prison term, she married for a fourth time and embarked on the con to top them all: she claimed to be the illegitimate daughter of Andrew Carnegie and the heiress to a huge fortune and persuaded several banks to lend her money. She forged Carnegie's signature on securities and certificates as collateral, claiming that he had left her promissory notes for up to \$7 million dollars and that she would receive a large inheritance from him upon his death. She was so good at what she did that it got to the point she was using one loan from one bank to pay off a previous loan with another bank, almost like a Ponzi scheme. By the time news of this reached Carnegie's ears and Cassie's creditors started coming for her, she had swindled \$653,00 out of her male victims and was responsible for one bank shutting down. Because of this, she is known as one of the most notorious lady con artists of the Gilded Age.

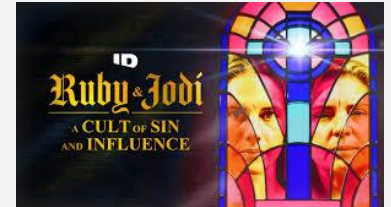
Reed's book is a dual biography of both Carnegie and Chadwick that reads like an Edith Wharton novel. It's easy to forget that this isn't fiction, but an actual true story. And much like Wharton's novels, you find yourself rooting for Cassie and wanting to see how much she can get away with even though she's a horrible person doing horrible things. Through it all, it's easy to see how Cassie got away with as much as she did by playing into the Victorian stereotypes of women at

the time. It would almost be a "good for her" story if so many people's lives hadn't been ruined.

Madeleine Keane



**Ruby and Jodi:
A Cult of Sin and
Influence**
Investigation
Discovery
1st September 2025



I've been invested in the Ruby Franke and Jodi Hildebrandt case since it broke in the news in 2023, so I was thrilled to find out that a documentary that concentrates on the more cultlike aspects of Hildebrandt's organization was airing. I was also thrilled to see creators Jordan and McKay, two former Mormons who discuss their experiences and offer insight into Mormon-related news on their channel, and Dr. John Dehlin, the host of *Mormon Stories*, were featured on the program to offer their insight.

For those not in the know, Ruby Franke and her husband, Kevin, along with their eight children, were part of the Mormon family vlogging boom on YouTube that occurred in the mid- to late-2010's. Their channel, *8 Passengers*, garnered millions of views and followers. However, concerns over Ruby's parenting style and possible abuse of the children led to the channel's demise in the early 2020's. Ruby later joined forces with church-affiliated therapist Jodi Hildebrandt and became involved in Jodi's business called Connexions. Connexions purportedly offered troubled families therapy based around the principles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. However, there were serious issues within the organization and Jodi's treatments. Soon, whispers began to circulate that it was possibly a cult. In August 2023, Jodi and Ruby's carefully constructed world came crashing down around them when one of the minor Franke children escaped from Hildebrandt's house and went to a neighbor for help.

What appeared to be an organization built to help Mormon families, was actually a cult of

personality built around Jodi Hildebrandt. After Hildebrandt's arrest, survivors of her abuse, including her own niece, came forward to tell their stories. Hildebrandt claimed, among many other things, to have a direct connection with God and to determine who was "evil" and "*possessed by demons*." Hildebrandt claimed that the purpose of her program was actually help her patients "*repent for their sins*." The program, which was based on similar rapture-based rhetoric that Chad and Lori Daybell used to justify their crimes, was really little more than a system of abuse.

Both Hildebrandt and Franke have pleaded guilty to charges including child endangerment, and Hildebrandt has lost her state license, but so many questions remain. If elders within the Mormon Church knew that Hildebrandt's treatments were abusive, why did they continue to refer patients to her? Why were the calls to social services from both Sherri Franke, the oldest daughter, and several other people concerning their own children, ignored or not followed up on properly? Why didn't Kevin Franke, who had been ordered to move out of the house as part of the family's treatment, maintain better contact with his younger children and intervene when things got horrific? It's very clear that Connexions was a cult, and that the political and religious climate allowed it to thrive.

Madeleine Keane

Let The Fresh Erin
YouTube
31st March 2020 onwards



With YouTube being oversaturated with different true-crime creators, the choices can be very overwhelming. It can even be more difficult to find a creator who is ethical and victim-centered. I randomly came across creator Let the Fresh Erin on YouTube one day and I found exactly what I was looking for in terms of true-crime content.

Erin is a trauma-informed creator who covers subjects ranging from cults, homicide cases, and toxic influencer culture. I discovered her content on the Ruby Franke case and immediately got caught up on her other work. Let the Fresh Erin is a survivor of a group that she now states could be

considered a cult, and this has shaped her approach to how she covers organizations such as Twin Flames Universe, 7M, and NXIVM. Her coverage of Twin Flames Universe, a cult that originated in my area, is one of the best I have seen from an independent creator. She has interviewed some of the survivors on her channel to help them get their stories out to the world so people understand that it's easier to get pulled into a cult than you think. She also has profiled problematic influencers and gurus like Teal Swan, whose undue influence over her followers is chilling, and Russell Brand and Jared Leto, both of whom have been accused of sexual assault and predatory behavior by several women. In her coverage of specific true-crime topics, like the West Mesa Bone Collector, Erin centers the victims throughout her storytelling and emphasizes to her viewers that victims and survivors should never be blamed for what happened to them.

Erin has a backlog of almost 200 videos that cover a variety of different cases. Her content can be found on platforms such as YouTube and TikTok.

Madeleine Keane

Queen Victoria: Secret Marriage, Secret Child?
Channel Four
31st July 2025



As an avid romance reader, I'm going to confess that the secret baby trope is one of my least favorites. But when I saw the promotion for Dr. Fern Riddell's new book, *Victorias's Secret* and its tie-in documentary, *Queen Victoria: Secret Marriage, Secret Child?*, I was intrigued. And of course I told my mom, who's taken an interest in Queen Victoria after watching the TV series, so she wanted to watch the documentary, too.

Riddell's book revolves around the claims of an American care worker Angela Webb-Milinkovich, who believes that she is a descendant of Queen Victoria and her manservant, John Brown. According to Webb-Milinkovich, Queen Victoria and John Brown shared a very deep relationship that blossomed into love and resulted in a secret marriage. From this union came a love child, Mary Ann, who was spirited away to New

Zealand to be raised by Brown's brother Hugh, unaware of her true parentage. Riddell has a paper trail that supports this to an extent and presents a compelling case but the evidence is still circumstantial. It's the stuff of sensation novels and gothic romances, but the question is: Is it true, and is there evidence to prove it? While the documentary leaned toward the possibility it being true, the disclaimer at the end indicated that only a DNA test could prove it or disprove it. And even then, due to how many generations lay between Victoria and Webb-Milinkovich, it could be quite difficult to get good results.

Mom and I had a pretty good discussion about it after we finished watching it. While the evidence Riddell presented was compelling, it simply showed that Queen Victoria and John Brown had a very deep friendship, that they genuinely cared for one another, and that she was very dependent on him. This isn't a surprise, considering how many of Queen Victoria's relationships with her children and grandchildren were what we would consider to be quite codependent today. We agreed that Brown likely filled the vacuum that Albert had left in Victoria's life when he died, and that he was able to provide a lot of the emotional needs previously catered for by Albert. It seems that he was more of a stabilizing force who came into her life when she felt completely lost, and that he was likely one of the few people who 'got' her. At the least, it was likely a very deep friendship or, at most, an emotional affair.

As for Victoria's interest in Mary Ann, the supposed child, it sounds more like it came from a place of knowing what Brown had done for her and wanting to reciprocate by helping his family out where she could.

One thing that my mom did like was Riddell's presentation and how she made her case without saying, 'I'm right and if you criticize or attack me, you're a horrible person.' *"It's more like she's trying to say, 'Here's a different point of view and why I believe this. It's food for thought.' They're not going to know for sure until they get the DNA test. She still provided a lot of good insight into Victoria's relationship with Brown,"* Mom said.

What I noticed most about the documentary was how it wasn't as polished as past historical documentaries, almost as though the showrunners were going for authenticity rather than a shiny, RIPPEROLOGIST 174

curated presentation in which they were trying to sell you a story. This tracks with the movement toward deinfluencing that we're currently seeing in branding, and Riddell seems to have found her stride in this new trend. And even if the DNA tests disprove Webb-Milinkovich's claims and Riddell ends up pivoting, I think she'll be fine in the long run because she seems to have embraced this move toward authenticity that audiences now want to see.

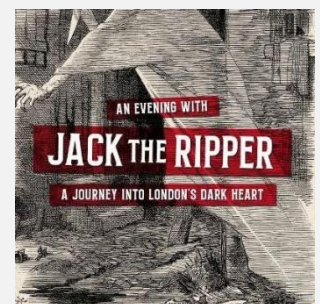
So do I think claims made in the documentary are true? No, not really, but it was still interesting to see Riddell make her case and really delve into Victoria's relationship with John Brown and show that Victoria was just as human as anyone else. It's honestly a fun watch if you're just curious and want to have hangout time with Mom.

Madeleine Keane



An Evening with Jack the Ripper: A Journey into London's Dark Heart

Steve Morgan
24th July 2025,
Cambridge Junction,
Cambridge



Steve Morgan isn't (yet) a household name, and the events he describes aren't the focal point of a landmark anniversary sparking renewed curiosity, yet the turnout at a Cambridge theatre – midweek, no less – suggests interest in Jack the Ripper is widespread.

A chronology of the 1888 murders is standard fare. What ensures the ticket price (£20) is reasonable value is what the self-described 'student' teaches us during two, 45-minute halves: sociological factors underpinning the criminological; more on industriousness and less

on impoverishment would, however, undermine the charge of presenting a one-dimensional view of the East End. Morgan deserves praise for not obsessing over the minutiae of injuries (no graphic imagery features on the big screen) or linking the deaths – Martha Tabram is included alongside Nichols, Chapman, Stride, Eddowes and Kelly – to the perceived licentiousness of their lives. Insight shared on the press, prejudices and photos of two suspects placed in the metaphorical dock will likely be new to the enthusiast if not the expert, though both would've appreciated a Q&A session.



Morgan's laudable storytelling skills (honed over the years as a tour guide) enable him to maintain such a surprising level of suspense that budding Ripperologists might think they've

developed amnesia – no mean feat given the Ripper industry. Despite the promotional billing, though, be under no illusion: Morgan's roadshow is no DeLorean-like vehicle transporting you back to the 1880s; only Matthew Green's first-rate, immersive Spitalfields Walk comes a distant second to Marty McFly's journey in *Back to the Future III*.

Lee Ruddin's reviews have featured in the Independent and, more recently, the Whitechapel Society's Journal.

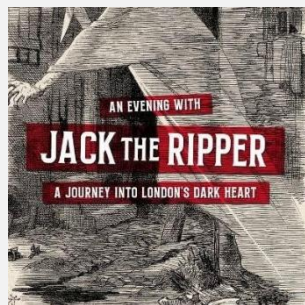
An Evening with Jack the Ripper: A Journey into London's Dark Heart

Steve Morgan

7th May 2025

Severn Theatre,

Shrewsbury, Shropshire



Living in the outer reaches of beyond, or Shropshire as it's otherwise known, can create obstacles when your chosen pastime is located 140 miles away. To our American and Australian readers this may not seem that bad, but when your journey is hindered by slurry-coated tractors and the overwhelming whiff of fishmeal fertiliser, things can get a little frustrating. I was, therefore, pleased to see Steve Morgan's *An Evening with Jack the Ripper* advertised at the county's only theatre of note.

Taking along three friends, who all had a keen interest in true crime but were not hugely up on Jack the Ripper, we duly tramped to Shrewsbury to attend what was a sell-out gig. Steve Morgan is one of the old guards of East End *tour-guidery*, he was already established long before everyone and their mate jumped on the bandwagon, and I was rather looking forward to his insights on the subject. Describing himself as a student rather than a Ripperologist, he explained he feels the -ologist moniker leans towards entrenched viewpoints whereas he is always open to new ideas. Conceptually I wouldn't disagree, so our relationship seemed to be off to a good start.

The problem with doing any talk on the Whitechapel murders is knowing where to pitch your level. How detailed or generic should you be? Does your audience want a 'solution', or would they rather you provide them with food for thought? Should you introduce humour into the mix, and perhaps cloaks, gladstone bags and the odd sprinkling of dry ice? By definition you're never going to please everyone and I'm sympathetic to that, someone will always complain it was too crass, too technical, too ambiguous, too rigid, too flippant, too simplistic, too biased, too feminist or too misogynistic. There's also the issue of how to structure your talk, and how to progress your chosen narrative. Mr Morgan decided upon the tried and tested method of detailing six murders chronologically from Martha Tabram to Mary Jane Kelly. There was then an intermission and the second half consisted of two theories he *'kept coming back to'*.

Now I have no issue with this, there's only so much you can fit into the two-hour timeslot, so with the best will in the world you're never going to hear the minutiae of all the if's and but's that have embedded themselves so irritatingly into this subject matter. Steve's stage presence is booming, emphatic and self-assured. He spoke through a radio mic but he didn't need it, all those years of walking tours on busy Whitechapel streets ensured everyone at the back could hear him. It was a minimalist set, a table, a bust of Queen Victoria, a Union Jack flag. Projected behind him were the famous newspaper illustrations from the time and the odd contemporary photograph. He desisted from displaying any of the lascivious post-mortem photographs of the victims, choosing instead to

describe their wounds and leave the rest to the audience's imagination.

As a presentation it was fine, good even, and he commanded the room and engaged his audience well, but I was left more than a little confused (and not to say at times agog) at his theorising. As Ron Burgundy so succinctly put it, I was not expecting that.



There were some hints in the first half that Mr Morgan was going to throw a googly at the audience; and interspersed with the standard Jack the Ripper trope we were told that only two of the victims were prostitutes (without any corroboration or explanation as to why), that the Goulston Street Graffito was *de facto* written by the Ripper, that 'everyone' agreed the murders had been carried out in a ritualistic manner, that there were unquestioningly six victims (again without any explanation as to why he believed this to be the case), that Catherine Eddowes had a large 'V' carved in each of her cheeks, completely omitting any other facial injuries, that there was ritual significance in hers and Annie Chapman's intestines being placed over their right shoulders, that it was highly significant that the only organ missing from the Miller's Court bloodbath was Mary Jane Kelly's heart and finally, the curious lack of any mention of Swanson, Reid, Monro or Abberline, but instead an overemphasis on Sir Charles Warren...

All of this information, some potentially factual and some, well, not so factual, made far more sense once the second half had been aired and the statements contextualised. As it turned out Mr Morgan had ensured his presentation of 'evidence' in the first half justified his theorising in the second. This I found disappointing because, yet again, we're presented with selective 'facts' and reasoning in order for a theory to be crowbarred into a narrative.

My disappointment however was secondary to my bemusement on the two theories themselves. Although presented as two distinct hypotheses,

there was a homogenised element which overlapped into both arguments, namely freemasonry. Perhaps we could properly term it as the quasi – masonic – Lechmerian – anti – catholic – daddy – issues – royalist – conspiracy.

The first rationale gave us Charles Allen Lechmere as a man who'd idolised his masonic grandfather and wished to emulate and honour him by erm ritualistically murdering the women. I confess I became rather confused at this point and struggled to understand why they, specifically, were targeted, but the emphasis was very much on those Machiavellian freemasons, with the Lechmerian theory taking a noticeably depleted secondary role. To my knowledge this slant has not been readily discussed within Ripperology circles, and if it has, it has failed (for whatever reason) to gain much traction – either from the pro or anti Lechmere camps. I'll readily admit I'd never heard of it, and when I asked around to friends with far greater Ripperology knowledge than myself, they also drew a blank, so it was puzzling to me why an experienced student of Ripperology like Mr Morgan made these claims without presenting any source evidence. If Charles Fox Lechmere was an avid freemason, (which he may well have been for all I know) let's see the evidence for it. And if Charles Allen Lechmere did have a deep spiritual connection with his grandfather and his masonic background it would have been nice to have seen where that evidence came from, particularly in view of the fact that Charles Fox Lechmere had died fifteen years before his grandson was born.

As I sat there pondering, we were hit with Steve's second, surprisingly straight-faced take on the subject matter. I'm only glad the lights were down in the auditorium because my face must have resembled an audience member from *The Producers* when they were first presented with the Busby Berkeley-esque rendition of *Springtime for Hitler and Germany*.

I genuinely was not expecting what was to come: a near-exact rendition of the fifty-year-old Stephen Knight theory, replete with Annie Crook photograph, masonic conspiracies, Sir William Gull and a cab-driving John Nettley. Much as most Ripperologists can say they have a sneaky soft spot for *The Final Solution*, to claim it's anything other than an engaging yarn would be stretching credulity

to its limits. Mr Morgan however presented it as not just revelatory but wholly veracious.

Perhaps, because I'm passionate about this subject, I took things far more seriously than I should have, certainly my friends said they all enjoyed the evening but took everything with a pinch of salt, one stated it wasn't true crime but entertaining storytelling. But for me the whole thing was disingenuous, if you're going to bring Gull into the equation at least have the courtesy to tell the audience he was recovering from two strokes in 1888, if you want to mention the mutilations to Catherine Eddowes please don't insinuate (with the placing of your index and middle fingers in a 'V' shape against your face) that she had two compass marks etched into her cheeks; instead admit they were smallish nicks and detail the other facial mutilations. If you believe Mary Ann Nichols wasn't prostituting herself in the early hours but instead going out to sell her *jolly new bonnet* don't follow that up by informing everyone that she'd lost and regained her doss money three times over the previous day only to not provide any explanation as to where she got the money from. I could go on, but I think you get the general gist.

A Q&A at the end would have been a welcome addition in light of this but I got the feeling it would have inconvenienced Steve and his narrative. The audience seemed rather nonplussed as they wandered out, as was I. How should you react to *that*? Ultimately, it was a talk that had so much potential on paper but the failings of the second half really ensured the audience were irretrievably let down.

Suzanne Huntington is an author and researcher from Shropshire, England.



Review

A Complete Triumph in the Face of Adversity

The days leading up to this year's East End Conference simply oozed with a feeling of RIPPEROLOGIST 174

foreboding. Two members of the five-person organising committee had been seriously ill and then a third member fell ill at the last moment.

Matters however got even worse when, on the eve of conference, one of the scheduled speakers Stefan Dickers also had to withdraw due to ill-health. This seemed a recipe for disaster, and on Friday 10th October, ideas were flying across the internet on how to cover this loss. A Q&A session or something similar was proposed by some, but we needn't have worried as that force of nature (and one of the last two remaining organisers), Mark Ripper, had received a premonition that something of this sort might take place and was already busy preparing a replacement talk as the rest of us were chattering.



Mark Ripper with Jon Horlor in the foreground

People met on the Friday evening for the traditional pre conference social, and this year everyone gathered at the Princess of Prussia in Prescott Street, although earlier in the day smaller groups had met up in other local hostelries.

With the arrival of Saturday, people gathered at The Astronomer in Middlesex Street, to await the opening of the conference at 11am. Unbelievably however, the Gods sought to throw one last thunderbolt in everyone's direction by ensuring the fifth member of the organising committee, and conference emcee, Karl Coppack, was delayed by unexpected public transport issues and therefore was absent for the first talk.

Did this deter the last man standing? Not at all, Mark stepped into the breach once again.

Volunteers stepped forward to help with other tasks including Tony Dennard (who also supplied these wonderful photographs and won the photography prize for the second year running) and Melissa Ford, who arranged the raffle which raised a conference record of £285 for the London Air Ambulance Charity.

And so the conference began, with the first speaker Janine Booth. Janice is a former resident of the East End who gave an incredibly detailed, informative and entertaining talk on the Poplar Rates Rebellion of 1921.

This was followed after lunch by Roger Barber who spoke about his preferred suspect Edward Buchan, a suspect he has been researching for several decades.

The final talk of Saturday was by Mark Ripper, who provided a very entertaining and high-quality account of the faked supernatural séances so prevalent in the 19th century.



Karl Coppack

In the absence of Adam Wood, I offered to conduct the Saturday night walk, which consisted of, surprise, surprise, a tour around the Bucks Row area, followed by a social gathering in the Hoop and Grapes on Aldgate. A singer performed some crowd-friendly covers adding to

the general feeling of *Bonaime* of the delegates.

Sunday began with Jonathan Tye and “The Unfortunate Life of an Unfortunate”. Being a friend of Jonathan’s, I was very much looking forward to this as I was aware of how much work he had put into it, and I have to say I was not disappointed.

Lunch (for me anyway) was spent partaking of the vintage ale offered by The Astronomer at 8.4 % in discussion with Messrs Tye, Horlor, Malcolm and Richie.

After lunch we had Andrew Johnston giving a very informative presentation looking at links between the Ripper murders and Belfast as reported in the press at the time. This was Andrew’s first appearance at an East End Conference and he went down very well.

Our final talk was by my dear friend Suzie Huntington and was linked to the broad subject of the Thames Torsos. The cases discussed were in the Blackheath area of southeast London, which I was particularly interested in as I had visited one of the sites a few years back to take photographs for Suzie’s book.

Finally, the annual Katherine Amin award for Outstanding Contribution to Ripperology was awarded to the highly respected Jonathan Menges, the creator and host of the groundbreaking Rippercast, early transcriber of contemporary texts, moderator of Casebook.org and now Editor-in-Chief of Ripperologist magazine. It was, to say the least, extremely well deserved.

Obviously this is a very personal review, and I am, of course, unashamedly biased, so for me a highlight was when I finally got to meet Mark Ritchie in person after years of chatting on Facebook. I also saw John Malcolm and Jon Horlor for the first time in several years.



John Malcolm and I *not unsurprisingly* spent several hours in Bethnal Green on Friday evening at The Carpenters Arms in Cheshire Street, discussing all things Kosminski, whilst drinking several pints of London Black porter. Bliss. This is really what the conference is about, conversing and discussing with likeminded individuals, a relaxed atmosphere and friendship, both new and old.

What started out on a more than wonky footing ended up a truly *great* conference. We wish Andrew Firth well in his return to good health and acknowledge that despite illness he still managed to produce yet another outstanding conference booklet.

Finally, and most importantly, we must mention Adam Wood, chief instigator of the conference and a true gent. Adam, we wish you well in your journey and look forward to seeing you next year.



RIPPEROLOGIST

Newsletter of the Cloak & Dagger Club



The First 30 Years of The Ripperologist – A Retrospective

In this, our final section of this 30th anniversary edition of The Ripperologist, we thought it would be nice to look back on some of our early editions. We've come a long way in the past three decades, both in terms of graphics and size, but the quality of the content has always, we hope, remained high.

We begin with the very first edition of the Cloak and Dagger Newsletter: Winter 1994/1995

Cloak and Dagger Club Newsletter

Pilot issue

Winter 1994/95

The pub haunted by Ripper victim's spirit...

by *Dave Keen*

Reporter for the East London Advertiser

PARANORMAL probers are claiming that a victim of Jack the Ripper is haunting an East End pub.

The American TV team says that the spirit of Liz Stride, the third victim of the notorious Victorian mass-murderer, has been sighted at The Ten Bells in Commercial Street, Spitalfields.

Former pub guv'nor Jim O'Donnell claims to have witnessed the ghost of Long Liz.

He said: "It was just something I couldn't explain. I went to the cellar and when I got to the bottom of the stairs I got a glimpse of a woman in old-style clothes. "It gave me quite a fright," he added.

Liz Stride, who was a 45-year-old prostitute when she was murdered, is said to have frequently drunk at The Ten Bells. Psychic Marion Dampier-Jeans also visited the pub as part of the investigation carried out for an American programme Sightings which looks into paranormal events.

Speaking from the pub cellar, she said "I know spirits have showed themselves to landlords here." But the current manager of the pub Fyfe Johnston has not witnessed any ghostly apparitions.

He said: "We get hundreds of tourists coming in here every day because of Jack the Ripper connection."

Elizabeth Stride was born Elizabeth Gustafsdotter near Gothenburg in Sweden. She had come to England and married John Stride, a ship's carpenter from Sheerness, who opened a coffee house in Crisp Street, Poplar. After her husband's death Liz had scraped a living as a prostitute. Liz was found dead in Berner Street, Whitechapel on September 30, 1888.

Her throat had been cut. The killer had heard a disturbance and fled before he could begin his ritual disembowling of the victim. The police and surgeon William Blackfield arrived to examine the body of Long Liz - so called because among the undernourished inhabitants of Whitechapel she was tall enough at 5ft 5 ins to ear the nickname.

Jack the Ripper struck again that night in Mitre Square, Aldgate, claiming the life of Catherine Eddowes.



Elizabeth Stride
"Illustrated Police News"

Welcome

Welcome to the pilot issue of the Newsletter of the Cloak and Dagger Club. The Newsletter will be issued once a quarter in January, May, September and December to coincide with the meetings. The meetings will be held on the first Saturday of January, May, September and December.

Saturday 7th January	Paul Feldman
Saturday 6th May	Nick Warren
Saturday 9th September	Paul Begg
Saturday 9th December	Martin Fido

The Club has been organised by a group of people interested in Jack the Ripper for people interested in Jack the Ripper as a Club dealing with serious historical research and a meeting place to swap ideas and generally meet people with the same interest. The interesting talks will be given by people who are experts in their field.

The Editor will be glad to receive any items of interest you have and which you think might be of interest for the Newsletter. If you have any serious research articles that you have done then I would be interested in publishing them. Also, if you have ever wanted to write something about Jack the Ripper and never got round to doing it, now's your chance. I would also be glad to receive any pictures that will be of interest to other members. Unless stated otherwise, all material will be returned to the authors, if allowed material will be copied for the intended Cloak and Dagger Club Archive.

All the meetings will be held at The Alma, 41 Spelman Street E1 5LQ, Steve Kane has kindly agreed to allow us the use of part of the pub.

Mark Galloway
Hon. Editor



The Mystery of Mary Jane Kelly Jack the Ripper's Last Victim

Mark Madden

Investigates just who was Mary Jane Kelly and where did she come from?

The background of the last victim of Jack the Ripper has been almost as great a mystery as the identity of her killer. Just who was Mary Jane Kelly and where did she come from?

Most of Jack the Ripper's victims lied about their history and their reasons for becoming prostitutes, and some of them had aliases. I suspect that Mary Jane Kelly, the Ripper's last victim, was no exception. After an intensive search, I have found nothing to support anything she supposedly told her lover, Joseph Barnett, about her past.

She told friends and neighbours that she had been born in Limerick in Ireland and Barnett informed the police that she had said her family moved to Caernarvon, in Wales, when she was young. Barnett believed that at 16 she had married a man named Davies or Davis, who about three years later was killed in a mining accident. But there is no record of this marriage.

Kelly also claimed that she subsequently moved to Cardiff, where she was a patient at the infirmary and also cleaned its floors. After her murder, however, the press checked with the hospital and found no evidence that she was ever there. She had told Barnett that it was while she was in Cardiff that she got into bad company with her cousin, started to sell herself on the streets and subsequently moved to London.

Such a tale is virtually impossible to verify, but one thing which she told Barnett is open to checking. She said she had a brother, Henry Kelly (nicknamed "Johnno"), who was in the Scots Guards. My research has established that there is no record of a Henry Kelly serving in the Scots Guards during the 19th century. But there was a John Kelly - remember that nickname, "Johnno" - in the regiment during the 1880s. He joined the Scots Guards in 1876 and records show that he was discharged in Dublin in 1883. His next of kin was his brother Richard, who was in the Dublin Metropolitan Police from 1882 until 1909.

Mary Jane Kelly told Barnett that the Scots Guards were serving in Ireland in 1888, but records show that both the regiment's battalions were in England during that year. John Kelly and his brother came from a Protestant family. Richard was born in Belfast on October 3rd, 1857, and John on September 13th, 1861. They were the sons of William and Dinah Kelly. Records show that a Jane Kelly was born in Belfast on March 3rd, 1854, the daughter of William and Ellen Kelly. Were the two William Kellys one and the same? The explanation could be that Jane's father was also the parent of Richard and John, and that his sons were by a second marriage.



Mary Jane Kelly entering Miller's Court

At the time Mary was living in Miller's Court, Dorset Street, her mother and brothers were believed to be in Ireland - Mary received mail from her mother in Ireland, said her landlord - yet her father was supposed to have moved with the family to Wales. All this could have been true, had the father remarried. Although Kelly is a surname most commonly held by Irish Catholics, this does not rule out the possibility that Mary Jane Kelly was Protestant. As we have seen William and Dinah Kelly were in fact Protestant. True, Mary was buried in a Catholic cemetery, and she is believed to have stayed for a short period at the Women's Refuge in London's Providence Row (run by nuns, then and today) near her Dorset Street home. But the nuns would have taken women regardless of their faith.

It is possible that Barnett and Mary Jane Kelly's other friends simply assumed she was a Catholic. Checking her story that she was born in Limerick to a father named John, and bearing in mind that she claimed to have a brother, Henry, I have found that only one Henry Kelly was born in Limerick between 1850 and 1875. His father was Thomas Kelly, and Henry had no sister named Mary or Jane. As Mary Jane Kelly was believed to be from Limerick, her murderer was extensively reported in the *Limerick Chronicle* and the *Munster and Limerick Clare Advocate*, but my check of those newspapers' files has established that no locals wrote to say they had ever known the murdered woman.

Local people, however, would have known only a Jane Kelly, not a Mary Jane or Marie Jeanette Kelly, as the murdered prostitute's name was given in the press. The changed name would have protected her family from scandal, and they would not have acknowledged relationship with a woman who had died in such circumstances.



Dorset Street, Spitalfields c.1901

John Wilding's *Jack the Ripper Revealed* suggests that the Prince of Wales met Mary Jane Kelly, and talks of a possible blackmail plot targeting royalty. Anyone wondering how the two met may be interested to know that John Kelly was first stationed at Curragh Camp in Northern Ireland, where the prince went for his initial army service ... Although she said that she had grown up in Wales, Mary Jane Kelly nevertheless regarded Ireland as her home. To her neighbour Lizzie Albrook she confided that she was sick of her way of life, wished she had enough money to return to her people in Ireland, and only walked the streets to avoid starving. She was believed to have come from a well-educated family, who in the 1880s would have been in the minority. In this context it is perhaps significant that John Kelly was able to sign his name when he joined the army, while his brother was sufficiently literate to be promoted to the rank of police sergeant in 1895.

I suspect that her life story, as Mary Jane Kelly told it, needed to be taken with a pinch of salt, but that it was nevertheless peppered with a few grains of truth. Which of her statements was true and which false, however, we will never know. The absence of evidence to support her account of her early life puts in doubt her claim that she had spent some time in France with a rich gentleman, returning to England to work in a high-class brothel in the West End of London.

I suspect that this was a yarn spun to impress Joe Barnett by adding a touch of what Mary Jane Kelly saw as glamour to what in reality had been a depressingly empty life. This suggests that she craved drama, but when drama came, it was of a kind that none would have chosen.

On the night of November 9th, 1888, Mary Jane Kelly's story came to its horrific end with a final "chapter" contributed by Jack the Ripper. She had achieved fame of a kind, albeit posthumously. And in the matter of her true identity, she has left us an enigma.



The Providence Row Night Refuge and Convent of the Sisters of Mercy in Crispin Street a stones throw from Miller's Court and where Mary Kelly is said to have stayed for a short time.
(Mark Galloway)

FROM THE FILES

Newspaper cuttings from the past

Did Jack the Ripper have royal blood?

By Magnus Linklater

The Sunday Times 1st November 1970.

THE GRIM but perennially fascinating spectre of Jack the Ripper is raised again tomorrow when the most sensational claim yet made about the murderers identity is published in the *Criminologist*, the journal of forensic science and criminology.

The author, Thomas Stowell, is a senior and eminent surgeon. Now in his eighties, he was a child when the murders were committed and remembers the excitement they caused among the housemaids "behind the green baize door."

The killings, which took place in the autumn of 1888 in the East End of London, were all particularly grisly. At least five girls were murdered, and four of them were grotesquely disembowelled. The murderer was never apprehended.

For nearly 50 years, says Stowell, he has kept to himself evidence about the real Ripper, for fear of involving, as witnesses, some close friends who were still alive. But now he has set it down.

This evidence suggests that the murderer was a man so senior in the hierarchy of the land, of so noble a family that the police, when they realised who was involved, were forced to conceal his identity. Even now, Mr Stowell will not reveal who he thinks it was, but he provides some generous clues: "He was the heir to power and wealth. His family, for 50 years, had earned the love and admiration of large numbers of people by its devotion to public service to all classes, particularly the poor, but as well to industry and the workers.

"His grandmother, who outlived him, was very much the stern Victorian matriarch, widely and deeply respected. His father, to whose title he was the heir, was a gay cosmopolitan and did much to improve the status of England internationally. His mother was an unusually beautiful woman with a gracious personal charm and was greatly beloved to all who knew her."

Mr Stowell is clearly referring to a very eminent family. Possibly, even a royal one. He goes on to say that his suspect, whom he refers to as "S" was a gay young bachelor who went on a world-tour just after the age of 16, and during his journey contracted syphilis. This disease caused him to cancel at least one public engagement at the last moment, and gradually began to dominate his life.

He resigned his commission at the age of 24, just after a homosexual brothel off the Tottenham Court Road was raided by the police. This place was frequented by the aristocracy, and its name has been linked with a member of the royal family.

Mr Stowell claims that "S" was treated by the great physician, Sir William Gull, the royal doctor. It was said that on more than one occasion Sir William was seen in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel on the night of one of the murders. "It would not surprise me to know that he was there for the purpose of certifying the murderer to be insane so that he might be put under restraint," writes Stowell.

At the height of the search for Jack the Ripper, police consulted a medium who led them to "an impressive mansion in the West End." The house was the home of a highly reputable physician.

It is this story that Mr Stowell has a personal knowledge of. He is convinced that the house referred to was that of Sir William Gull, whose daughter, Caroline Acland, Stowell knew well. She told him that Lady Gull had been extremely annoyed by the visit of the police with the medium and had dismissed all their questions about her husband. Later Sir William himself came down, and in answer to questions said that he occasionally suffered from lapses of memory, and that he had once discovered blood on his shirt. This, says Stowell, would not be surprising if he had medically examined the Ripper after one of his murders.

Mrs Acland also told Stowell that she had seen her father's diary the entry: "Informed Blank that his son was dying of syphilis of the brain." The entry was November, 1889. "S" and "Blank," according to Mr Stowell, were one and the same person.

Sir William had therefore realised early on that his eminent patient was in fact the perpetrator of the Ripper murders, and invoked the assistance of the Commissioner of Police, Sir Charles Warren, to keep the name secret. It is for this reason, suggests Stowell, that so many clues were destroyed (at one stage a message left by Jack the Ripper was obliterated personally by Sir Charles).

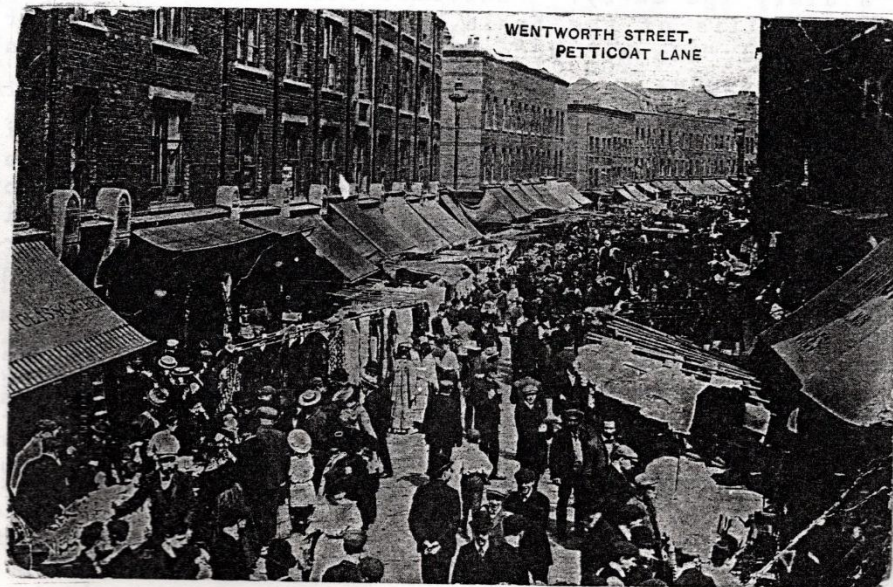
And it could explain why police vigilance was relaxed after the death of Mary Kelly, in November 1888. The police knew, says Stowell, that the murderer was now restrained in a mental home. The Coroner in the Kelly case chose deliberately to suppress evidence and said so. Did he, too, know the real identity of Jack the Ripper?

Mr Stowell knows who this man is-but he resolutely refuses to give his name. Another authority, Donald McCormick, author of *The Identity of Jack the Ripper*, republished tomorrow, names the killer as the Russian doctor called Konovalov who, he says, knew four of the murdered women and disappeared after the last murder. But Konovalov fits none of Mr Stowell's evidence - and McCormick mentions in passing another suspect who does.

It is a sensational name Edward, Duke of Clarence, grandson of Queen Victoria, brother of George V, and heir to the throne of England. All the points of Mr Stowell's odd story fit this man. He did die young, he was ill, he was almost certainly affected mentally by his illness.

Mr Stowell, in his article, gives other clues. He describes a photograph of the suspect, which he has, showing him wearing a tweed knickerbocker suit, a tweed cap, a small moustache and wide starched collar and cuffs. Apparently he was at one time given the nickname "Collar and Cuffs."

He was, he says, a keen sportsman in particular a keen deerstalker, and Stowell mentions the fact that Jack the Ripper wore a deerstalker when he murdered and mutilated the Spitalfields prostitutes. All Mr Stowell would say yesterday was: "I would never dream of doing harm to a family whom I love and admire by revealing the name."



NOTICE BOARD

RIPPER LANDMARK TO GO

The last remaining building in Durward Street (Bucks Row) is soon to be demolished. The old school that stood opposite Essex Wharf (demolished in 1990) and next to Brown's stable yard where Mary Ann "Polly" Nichol's body was found, has, since Essex Wharf was demolished, been the last remnant of this Victorian Street. But soon it will join the rest and Durward Street will have no more reminders of that night in 1888. Your Editor is looking into when the building is going to be demolished as he is in touch with Tower Hamlets Council who will inform him when they intend to demolish. In the mean time a detailed photographic record is being made of the building by the Editor which will then be put into the archive.

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The Club meets at 8 p.m. on the first Saturday of January, May, September and December at The Alma, 41 Spelman Street E1 5LQ. Annual subscription is £10. Visitors are always welcome at our meetings and pay £2.50p admission.

Cloak and Dagger Club

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By issue 3 the newsletter had expanded from 7 to 20 pages.

Cloak and Dagger Club Newsletter



No. 3

September 1995

THE MILLERS COURT MYSTERY

by Claudia Oliver

WHITECHAPEL 1888, and London is exposed to one of its worst menaces of the late 19th century - Jack the Ripper.

The man and the myth may have little on 20th century serial killers such as Jeffrey Dahmer and the Moors Murderers but the name is burnt into criminal history forever.

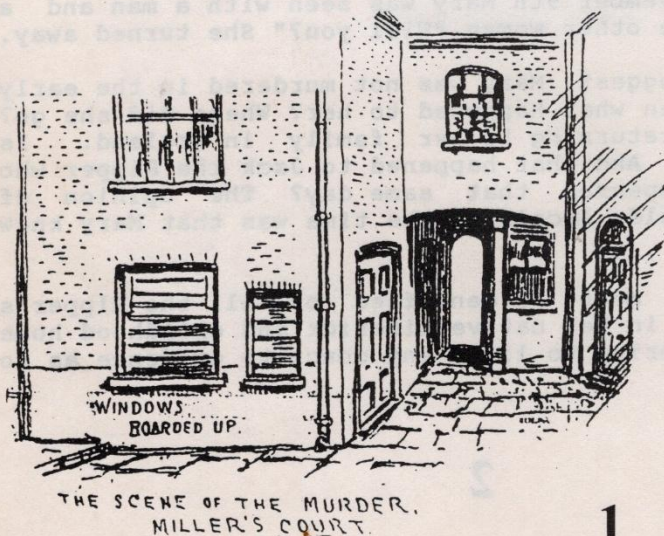
However, the Whitechapel murders are not as straightforward a case as many may think, regardless of the speculation surrounding the killer's identity and whether he did indeed give himself his chilling nickname.

A twist to the story concerns others involved, those who have received little press. Who else knew the killer? One witness report from the time suggests that Catharine Eddowes, murdered on September 30th in Mitre Square as part of the "double event", may have known her killer and had returned from a working holiday in Kent to earn the £100 police reward offered for his capture. This is what she told the Superintendent at a casual ward she visited though it was not something she ever related to her common-law husband John Kelly.

As much mystery surrounds the life and death of the supposed fifth victim Mary Jane Kelly as it does the murderer. One of the newest theories now increasing in popularity and holding substantial

credibility is the possibility that Mary Kelly was not murdered at 13 Millers Court off Dorset Street in the early hours of Friday 9th November, but escaped the killer's knife.

At 4.00 a.m. on that day a cry of "Oh murder!" was heard to come from the direction of number 13. It was not a cry generally associated with a young woman as her murderer drew his knife across her throat.



1

But it would be relevant if someone had unexpectedly discovered a murder victim.

At 8.00 a.m. a Dorset Street resident Maurice Lewis saw Mary Kelly leave her room and then return a few moments later.

At 8.30 a.m. Mary was again seen, this time at the entrance to the court. Here she was spoken to by Caroline Maxwell, wife of a Dorset Street lodging house deputy. Mary had been sick on the roadside and complained of feeling ill. Caroline went on her way and on returning about half an hour later saw her outside the Britannia public house in Dorset Street talking to a man she thought looked like a porter.

At 10.00 a.m. Maurice again saw Mary, this time in the Horn of Plenty public house at the opposite end of Dorset Street drinking with friends.

At 10.45 a.m. the body was discovered in number 13 Millers Court by the rent collector chasing up Mary's overdue rent payments.

These people could not have been mistaken in whom they saw. Maurice had known Mary for the past few years and Caroline knew her from being in the lodging house. Criticism from various researchers that they must have seen Mary's ghost or had the day or time wrong is simply sweeping annoying facts and doubts under the carpet.

A police surgeon arrived at Millers Court in the afternoon and concluded that death would have occurred between one and two in the morning.

The day before the murder Mary had been seen talking to a well dressed stranger in the court. Later she was seen by a woman talking to another stranger. This woman claimed to have been accosted in Bethnal Green not a week previously by the same man.

That evening Mary was drinking in the Horn of Plenty with a woman named Elizabeth Foster. She was never traced in the investigations that followed.

In the early hours of November 9th Mary was seen with a man and a woman. The man asked the other woman "Will you?" She turned away.

If, as witness reports suggest, Mary was not murdered in the early hours of that day then what happened to her? Where did she go? She had often spoken of returning to her family in Ireland. Is that where she ended up? And what happened to Jack the Ripper who also mysteriously disappeared that same day? The opinion of Whitechapel and Spitalfields locals at the time was that Mary knew the killer.

Attempts to trace the most unidentified of all the Ripper's "victims" and her family in her native Limerick and childhood home in Wales have failed to bring to light any concrete evidence as to her background.

But are researchers looking in the right place? With the alleged existence of Inspector Abberline's diaries which claim her real name was Mary Jane O'Brien a whole new avenue of investigation is opened up. News of the final murder was published in two Limerick newspapers but provoked no response from the public. Mary Jane Kelly did not exist. But Mary Jane O'Brien did.

If she did return to her family's side, possibly with the Ripper, there would have been no reason for family and friends to suspect anything. John McCarthy, Mary's landlord, claimed that she received letters from Ireland so she was still in contact with someone there.



And what happened to the mysterious Elizabeth Foster? Was she an alias for Winifred May Collis, a friend of Mary's from her days in Cleveland Street, West London? According to Abberline's diaries she went to Mary in the East End in November 1888 due to an unwanted pregnancy and was never heard of again.

The authenticity of the diaries has yet to be proved but what is almost certain is that Mary was three months pregnant in November and she was seriously considering an abortion. No trace of pregnancy was found in the body removed from 13 Millers Court and all the organs for this to have occurred were present and correct. The only organ missing was the heart.

But what grounds can there be for the possibility that Mary knew her killer? For one she had a personal fear of being struck down by the Ripper and she contemplated suicide in the autumn of 1888. She was also seeing another man behind her common-law husband, Joseph Barnett's, back.

His name was Joe and he beat Mary sometimes for staying with Barnett though close friends thought she would marry him. Was she carrying this man's child and if so how far would he have gone to get her back - blackmail through murder?

If he found out about her abortion plans and caught her with an abortionist, whether professional or amateur, would he have removed her?

This horrific act of violence would certainly have prevented Mary from returning to her sanctuary in the court. It might explain why she was still wandering around Dorset Street half an hour before the body was discovered. She was lucky to escape and someone must have had a hand in her disappearance.

Mary was known to use a pub near Monument called the Britannia. After the murders of Elizabeth Stride and Catharine Eddowes she stopped going there. Was she trying to avoid someone as a result of which nothing happened during October? The list of evidence to prove "The Kelly Connection" is endless.

To say that the Ripper was cunning enough to escape detection is a little inaccurate to say the least. If the police of 1888 had co-operated and had taken as much notice of Whitechapel's locals as some theorists do today Jack the Ripper might not have gone unidentified....

MARY KELLY

by Adrian Morris

One area of Ripper related history which has been almost completely empty of factual data has been the known, or in this case, unknown history of Mary Jane Kelly. We have only snatched accounts of her past given mainly to Joseph Barnett.

If we look at what we know about Mary Kelly and what evidence we have accumulated about her, we might be able to come to some conclusions about her and where she may have come from.

It is quite possible for Mary Kelly to have been born outside Ireland, probably in Wales. There are certain anomalies in her evidence, second-hand evidence granted, that makes us wonder if indeed she was born in Ireland. It is said she came from Limerick, (City or County?). However, when she was murdered local Limerick papers carried news of her death. Even taking into account that she was a prostitute, the fact that no one in Limerick recognised her seems very strange indeed.

It could be that, as Mark Madden has suggested, she came from another part of Ireland. If this was so then the Limerick connection would appear odd as she seems to have mentioned it to Barnett and one would therefore wonder that there would be little scope for confusion.

So it could be possible that she may have in fact been born in Wales as this would account for the lack of documentary evidence of her in Ireland. Paul Begg in his book "Jack the Ripper - the Uncensored Facts" quotes the "Western Mail" (10th Nov. 1888) as claiming that Kelly spoke fluent Welsh. Londoners would not have found it easy to distinguish between the Celtic Irish/Welsh brogues.

Emigration of the Irish in the 19th century was enormous especially after the Irish potato famine of the 1840s. In fact by 1890 over two thirds of Irish people were living outside Ireland!

Many families would have moved to the British mainland, especially in port areas. However, only the poorest stayed as the wealthier immigrants would almost certainly have then taken another ship to the United States. Of those that emigrated from Ireland in the 19th century to Britain, over 80% moved on to the United States; only 8% stayed in Britain. It was the poorest Irish immigrants that stayed in Britain as they obviously couldn't afford the fare to the U.S.A.

This fact, along with the assumption that Mary Kelly was illiterate (Barnett used to read to her from the newspapers) seems to undermine Kelly's suggestion that she was from a well-to-do family.

Anyway, the greatest concentration of Irish immigrants tended to be in the major cities - including Welsh ones. In fact Wales still boasts a large Irish community today. If Kelly was born in

Wales she still may have regarded herself as Irish because of family ties and also because second generation Irish from large well knit Irish communities still have a great affinity with their ethnic culture of origin. Also, coming from Wales there would have been a Celtic affirmation of this.

Kelly, it is claimed, said she wished to return to Ireland, and that her mother lived there. This may seem to dispute the idea that Kelly was born in Wales and indeed seems also to dispute any Kelly family movement to Wales at any time if her mother was still in Ireland! It was a well-established experience in the 19th century that once a family or person moved from Ireland for economic reasons they never ever went back to live.

However, it was not unknown in 19th century Irish migration for a father to emigrate to Britain to earn money for the family back home in Ireland. If Kelly was born in Ireland she could have gone on to join her father in Wales - but this would have to have happened in her teens as it would have had to be when she was economically responsible for herself.

Kelly could have, of course, gone over to Wales as a child if she was sent over to be semi-adopted by other members of her family (aunties, uncles, cousins). This did happen with Irish immigrants as sometimes families in Ireland couldn't cope with the economic burden of traditionally large Irish Catholic families. This theory of an original family in Wales is supported by the evidence that Kelly is supposed to have been introduced to prostitution by a cousin of hers - although this cousin could have been related to her through her marriage to Davis/Davies.

Whatever her movements and whenever they took place one thing is sure; she knew the whereabouts of her mother and she still kept in contact with her brother Henry, who was known as John to. Henry is known to have written to Mary right up to her time in Millers Court as both Barnett and the landlord McCarthy claimed she received letters from him and that he was stationed with the Scots Guards in Ireland. Yet neither Henry nor any other member of the Kelly family came forward at the funeral or inquest!

These letters that Mary received seem to suggest she was literate as Barnett only admits to reading newspaper reports to Mary and not private letters. If he had done so, one could reasonably assume he would have known more about Kelly and her family.

It has been suggested that Kelly may have been born in Belfast and was Protestant. This is viable. Once outside the sectarian still waters of Ulster, most 19th-century Protestants strayed from their often rigid religious cultural bonds. In fact many Protestant Irish would often find themselves victims of anti-Irish racism and move closer to their Catholic counterparts. However, most Ulster Protestants could afford to go to North America unlike some of their Catholic counterparts.

However, I feel that Mary wasn't born in Belfast. She was probably Catholic. When coming to Spitalfields she contacted the nuns at Providence Row in the same way that the Swede Liz Stride contacted the Swedish Church on the Ratcliff Highway. This was a typical action of an Irish Catholic girl in a new area - i.e. finding a familiar focal point for reassurance. When Kelly first

came to London, she lived near the Docks. The Docks in the 19th century were a major settlement of Irish in London.

Kelly is supposed to have come from a large family of seven brothers and one sister - a typical Catholic family. Also Henry, Kelly's brother in the British Army, need not have worried about joining the British Army because he was Catholic because the British Army had always been, in 19th-century Ireland - even with Fenianism on the rise - a major employer of the Catholic population. Many Irish joined because of unemployment. In fact by 1891 14% of the entire British Army were Irish Catholics.

I think more research will bring us nearer Mary Kelly's true identity. One thing to remember, the immigrant, and especially the Irish immigrant of the 19th century, was one of the hardest group for registrars to measure as they were always on the move, lived in bad over-crowded housing and also because of the large numbers of them over a short time. It has been suggested that the censuses of the 19th century left off so many Irish immigrants that the number runs into tens of thousands!

Newsround

RIPPER SLEUTH SOLVES MARY'S MURDER RIDDLE

That was the headline of an article in The East London Advertiser, 6th July 1995. In which Mark King claims to have solved the mystery of who was murdered in Miller's Court.

Mr King says that "I believe the sightings of Mary after her death were accurate - and that Mary's boyfriend Joe Barnett's identification was wrong."

He says that Mary's mutilation made identification impossible and that Joe Barnett would often complain that Mary let other whores use her room and he believe it was one of these that was killed.

Mr King says that he has found some startling evidence to back up his claims. He has found both birth and death certificates for a woman of Mary's name and age who also resembles her in other remarkable ways. "The only difference" he says "is that my Mary Jane Kelly married a year after the murders and died in Stamford Hill in 1912."

The similarities between the two women are startling. Both Mary's were born in Ireland, both were 25, both lived in Wales and then moved to London and both had full names of Mary Jane Kelly. He is convinced the two women are one and the same...that Mary discovered the body in her room and ran for her life. "This means," he said "another unknown victim is buried in Kelly's grave."

FROM THE FILES

Newspaper cuttings from the past

Was JACK THE RIPPER A SPIRIT OBSESSION ? How a clairvoyant tracked a criminal

This first appeared in "BEYOND" April, 1931

THAT Jack the Ripper was a murderer who obsessed the body of a doctor, is practically proved by a document which has only recently been made public and which was lately reported in "The Daily Express". The case is of particular interest to Spiritualists as not only does it seem that the murders themselves were spirit phenomena, but because their instrument was discovered by a medium, Robert James Lees, whose psychic powers were several times tested by Queen Victoria.



Robert James Lees was a medium and clairvoyant of some repute and is chiefly known for the two beautiful transcripts, "Through the Mists", and "The Life Elysian". The document concerning Jack the Ripper has only been made known since his death at his own request since in it is contained information known only to a few men who had been solemnly sworn to secrecy.

Briefly the facts are as follows:-

Seventeen murders were committed towards the end of the last century in Whitechapel. The victims were invariably women and their aggressor was obviously a madman, a madman, however, with some scientific skill, since each body bore a surgical operation. The horror of these murders drew detectives from all over the continent to try and discover the murderer. All, however, were signally unsuccessful, and the secret of his identity has remained unknown for more than a quarter of a century. To-day we are in possession of that secret, but a greater secret still remains for solution. Who was the real evil genius who presided over these hideous atrocities? And have Spiritualists any means of tracing him?

Empty Coffin at Funeral.

Soon after the seventeenth murder was committed the death was announced of a fashionable doctor in the West End of London. He was famous and well-loved by his patients who flocked in crowds to his funeral. They did not know that the coffin, however, was empty, and that the man whom they mourned was incarcerated in a madhouse. In that they were as ignorant as the warders who knew the physician as a number and as a dangerous homicidal maniac. In the study of these two personalities, contained in a single body of a man, lies the key to the mystery of "The Ripper".

The connection of Robert James Lees with the murders and with the final arrest of their perpetrator is one of the most extraordinary stories known to Spiritualism. Time and again did he foresee the commission of these crimes in clairvoyant visions, and time and again did he warn the police force, but he was always laughed to scorn as a maniac and was once actually threatened himself with arrest. Finally, however, he was listened to and trusted, thus becoming the means of putting an end to one of the most ghastly series of crimes in history. At the time of the seventeenth murder, Mr. Lees was dining with two friends at the Criterion. At eleven minutes to eight he suddenly exclaimed, "Great God! Jack the Ripper has committed another murder." Twenty minutes later the body of a woman was found in Crown Court, Whitechapel, bearing unmistakable signs of the Ripper's handiwork. Going to Scotland Yard immediately upon receiving this premonition, Mr. Lees actually arrived before the news of the murder had been reported. As it came through, however, in perfect corroboration of his evidence, the inspector decided to use him, and he was immediately taken to the scene of the crime.

There is the man you are looking for.

"There is something written on the wall," said Mr. Lees, on entering the dimly lighted court, and by the light of a constable's lamp the Ripper's signature was depicted written in chalk in the angle. Then began the man-hunt, lasting until four in the morning. The magnetic influence of the criminal worked upon the clairvoyant powers of the medium as the scent of a man to a bloodhound. Finally the cortege halted outside a fashionable mansion in the West End of London. Pointing to a dimly lighted window, Mr. Lees told the inspector to investigate.

"There is the man you are looking for," he gasped through his swollen lips, and the inspector remained incredulous.

The house in front of which they were standing belonged to one of the most fashionable of London doctors.

"Describe the interior of the hall and I will believe you," said the inspector, and Mr. Lees immediately proceeded to do so, ending with the picture of a mastiff lying at the bottom of the stairs.

The small band went away and returned when the maidservants were heard stirring. They were admitted into the hall which tallied with the medium's description, except that the mastiff was absent.

In enquiring from the maid as to its whereabouts, the inspector was told that it was out in the garden though it always slept in the hall until morning.

The doctor's wife was then questioned and she admitted that her husband was abnormal and that he had at times threatened both herself and her children. At other times he was the soul of good nature. His fits of cruelty seemed to come upon him suddenly and one night she had been horrified to find him in his study torturing a cat by burning. She admitted with agonised apprehension that whenever there had been a Whitechapel murder he had always been absent for the evening.

The doctor was then examined by experts and admitted that he had doubts as to his own sanity. There were intervals of time in his life, he told them, of which he had not the slightest recollection. Frequently he had found himself sitting in his study as though just recovered from a stupor, and once there had been a bloodstain on his shirtfront which he had attributed to nose-bleeding. On another occasion his face had been scratched.

Begged them to kill him at once.

When it was suggested to him that he might be responsible for the Whitechapel murders, the doctor expressed the utmost repugnance for the murderer "as though he had been quite another person," and "expressed every willingness to bring him to justice."

The house was searched and all the clothes seen by Mr. Lees in his clairvoyant visions were discovered. And now appears the saddest part of the story, for when finally convinced of his guilt "the unfortunate physician begged them to kill him at once as he could not live under the same roof as a monster." He was, however, taken off to a lunatic asylum where he developed into one of the most desperate and hysterical cases, though known only to the keepers as Number 124.

Was it a case of Obsession?

Whether or not Robert Louis Stevenson was aware of any of these facts will probably never be discovered, but surely no case could prove better the possibility of his thesis so vividly portrayed in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." That Jack the Ripper was an obsessing spirit and that this unfortunate physician was his victim, need hardly be doubted by any spiritualist. What, however, we must consider is how can such cases be dealt with, and such obsessions prevented in the future?

Jack the Ripper has not been exorcised and his spirit may still be amongst us. Not long ago a similar series of murders took place at Dusseldorf, in Germany, and only recently Blackheath has witnessed another example. Whether or not all these crimes have been caused by a common entity it is impossible to say, but the evidence is certainly in that direction. We owe it not only to the victims but to the unfortunates who are made to serve his purpose that all efforts are made to waylay him.

That there are spirits of mischief and cruelty waiting to possess the ignorant who have psychic powers without knowing it, is now becoming an axiom. There are few words to my mind so pitiful as those of the physician whom we have been discussing "he begged them to kill him at once as he could not live under the same roof as a monster," while the picture of this otherwise kind and benevolent doctor being slowly driven mad in an asylum is enough to horrify anyone. Once realise that when Christ "cast out devils" he was in actual fact restoring potential criminals to sanity, and you have the matter in a nutshell. The devils, however, must be prayed for as much as their unfortunate victims, they also are the victims of a delusion of the most hideous and pitiful variety.

M U R D E R ! ! M O S T F O U L

JACK THE RIPPER MIDNIGHT DOUBLE MURDER ANNIVERSARY TOUR
11.45pm Friday 29th September 1995

A Special Tour which follows in Jack's footsteps on the night and early morning of 30th September and the "DOUBLE EVENT".

The full Jack the Ripper tour will be given - visiting 7 sites in all. Two of the murder sites will be visited at EXACTLY the same time that Jack was there 107 years ago. The tour will end around 2.00 am.

After this THE TEN BELLS will be our last stop of the morning where we will indulge in liquid refreshments, and, for those who want to, watch a Jack the Ripper documentary or two.

Booking in advance is essential as places are limited. For more information and to request a booking form please ring LOUIS your host on: 0378 777026 or 0181-680 2317. Alternatively write to: P.O. BOX 4, BECKENHAM, KENT, BR3 4YE

THE KING PIN

by Dr John de Locksley

After Mark King's unannounced talk at the club's last meeting I decided to do a bit of digging myself. There must have been lots of men named Fleming around at the time of the murders and Mr King thought the Fleming he found was the man known to Mary Jane Kelly.

Kelly had known Joseph Fleming since coming to London. Kelly had lived in Ratcliff Highway and worked for a Mrs Buki in the area. At this point she met Joseph Fleming of whom little is known.

Julia Venturney alleged Kelly was frightened of a man unknown to her East End associates. And she conveyed to her friends that she was so afraid of the Ripper that she might leave London.

A little bit of digging came up with a man named Fleming whose father was the manager of the Globe and Pigeons in Ratcliff Highway. This man was John Fleming born 1842 and died aged 55 in 1897 of natural causes. In 1888 he was the manager of the Pelican Club at 21 Denman Street, Piccadilly and from 1891-97 he was manager of the Pugilist Club.

Jack the Ripper chose his name because it was his name; Jack is short for John. The killer will not be called Bill, George, Alfred etc but Jack, John, or something similar.

Roy Bloom the psychic and Pat Anotuer both claim that the killer's name ends "Emming", the beginning is muffled and they said it sounded like Demming, Jennings, Hemming. The christian name might have been Michael. And he had an accomplice, a coachman named Jeremiah Baines. A doctor Jennings worked at the London Hospital, Whitechapel.

Demming might have been misheard for Deeming? But they could all have been referring to Fleming!

John Fleming must have been some sort of V.I.P. to get himself into Fred Brose's Biography, but not from his record. Fleming managed pubs and clubs, hardly the sort of thing V.I.P.s are made of. However, if Fleming was noted for other things he might have been of the kind that did not go well in private?

We are told Fleming ill-used Kelly and bullied her. As she was a prostitute it's possible he wanted this brash young woman to work in his club. We can only guess at what might have gone wrong and led up to her murder. Fleming, Kelly's friend, is alleged to have been a Mason, but a Costermonger, as was his assumed trade, is not a Mason, so he must have therefore been a Freemason? The Pelican is a symbol of the sacred order Pelican and Eagle, the 18th degree of the Ancient and Accepted Chevalic Freemasonry. The degree is one of the highest. The holders of these titles outrank all grades of Freemasonry below them. The oath is that brother will help brother from the last drop of his blood to giving him the last shilling in his purse. How do I know? Because I too am a Knight of the Pelican and Eagle of the Silver

Star Chapter of the American Grand Forsyth Masonic Lodge. I have been a Mason for years and I know there are a lot of Masonic clues in the murders.

However, anyone can obtain Masonic books, but it is not impossible that the murderer could have been a very high-ranking Freemason. At such a degree he could have had all the police sacked and committed murder and got away with it. Perhaps he did?

The Juwes message does I think refer to three Masonic men and was in common use among both British and American Freemasons in 1888. The injuries could be part of a Masonic ritual and other Masons agree with me on this.

It is forbidden for any woman to see Masonic rituals, as they are guarded with the utmost secrecy. Had Mary Jane Kelly stumbled on one of these secret rituals or had she stumbled across or come into the possession of the "Rites" books? At the time public opinion was against the Masons.

The reason the Masons lost favour was because an initiate of The Palladium Masonic body went public and said it was Satanism. Much was made about it in a book by a Dr Bataille. The initiate was Diana Vaughan. She claimed sex rites and black masses were performed by the Masons. This all occurred around 1885. Later it was shown to be a hoax, but the Masons feared exposure by the press. Mary Jane Kelly might have been seen as another Diana Vaughan and was hunted down and killed with Masonic tradition?

Many high-ranking police officers and Dr Brown, George Lusk etc were Freemasons who could not fail to see the Masonic signs drawn to their attention by the killer (a noticeable fact absent from the letters).

The fact is that Commissioner Sir Charles Warren and Superintendent Arnold etc took it upon themselves to visit Goulston Street and rub out the Masonic message. Perhaps Fleming flashed a Masonic sign at Pc Watkins and so avoided arrest? I'm sure the truth lies somewhere in the Masonic connection, but Fleming's part will still need to be investigated fuller if it is to have any bearing on the case.

THE FISHERMAN'S WIDOW

by Adrian Morris

Recently I did some research into "The Fisherman's Widow". This was a print of a painting that was on Mary Kelly's wall in her Millers Court abode. "The Fisherman's Widow" is in fact a painting by the artist Frank Bramley (1857-1915).

Bramley actually completed the painting (real title, "A Hopeless Dawn") in 1888 - the same year as the Ripper atrocities, of course.

The picture itself is of a fisherman's wife waiting in vain for news of her lost husband, clearly lost at sea and never to return home.

The picture was painted at Newlyn, Cornwall. Indeed, like Walter Langley, Bramley was part of the Newlyn School of artists who wished to capture life in Cornwall in the late 19th century. The Newlyn school was open to other influential trends in art at this period, both artistically and theoretically. Bramley was no exception.

"A Hopeless Dawn" being of an almost religious flavour and Bramley's patronage from Ruskin, put him firmly under the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites and not that of the Camden School as with, say, Steer who painted similar scenes as Bramley. Sickert was also part of the Camden School, it might be worth noting.

Bramley's painting "A Hopeless Dawn" was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1888 and thus almost certainly would have been produced in print form to sell to those who came to see it, as is done today in most galleries. So Mary Kelly would have had no problem getting a copy from somewhere or other.

The painting "A Hopeless Dawn" can still be viewed today in the Tate Gallery, London, in Room 9.

Letters to the Editor...

From Patricia Cory.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your letter of 11th May enclosing the Cloak and Dagger Club Newsletter for May 1995 with your review of *An Eye To The Future*. I shall not produce anything further on the Whitechapel Murders as I feel this is a question without a resolution, that is insofar as those involved in the actual killings is concerned.

One small item which may be of interest to your members is the continuation of the "Masonic" involvement even in the relation to the murder of the Russian Royal Family in 1918. The "gang of twelve" mentioned in *An Eye To The Future* is reinforced in the Russian connection by an article entitled "The Executioner's Story" in *The Mail* for Sunday 23rd April 1989. It is a report from secret documents in the Soviet archives and states: "Twelve people were chosen, including seven Latvians with Nagant revolvers - one for each of those to be executed....."

I enjoyed the article by Geoffrey Fletcher but with regard to the murderer/s working by touch in ill-lit areas is it not possible they were carried out elsewhere? If on a dissecting table even the blood could be collected and transported to the scene of the crime (victims heads in the gutter to allow for blood loss) in order to confuse.

Andy Aliffe's article was also most interesting particularly his feelings concerning a Royal conspiracy. Perhaps this confirms yet again that an open door with the truth revealed is far less interesting than a closed door with very little behind it! I assume by "A Song for Mary" Andy Aliffe feels great sympathy for Mary Kelly. Personally I find it hard to believe in "A Singing Whore" in full song for well over thirty minutes even if in her cups. Perhaps her client enjoyed a song as part of the performance! The song of "Sweet Violets" also seems rather obviously for the ears of the flower seller. Mary Kelly's incorrect listing in *The Police News* as the seventh victim and not the fifth shows her as a hard faced woman and not a "delicate petal". However, to each his own!

The presence of a Maybrick lookalike in her company sets the scene for raising a note of the film to be made. An item in the press approximately a month ago was the first mention I had seen of this. The same item stated that the Maybrick Diary was a fake. Small wonder the film-makers intend to concentrate on the relationship between Maybrick and Florence!

I have the strongest suspicion that the red cigarette case may well be raised next, if not already, and tied to Maybrick; also that the handbill for "Frank Carter, 405 Bethnal Green Road" will surface. It will be interesting to see if this is so. Perhaps this letter will give rise to another line of discussion at your next meeting, if so I shall be well pleased.

REVIEWS

THE LODGER: THE ARREST AND
ESCAPE OF JACK THE RIPPER
by Stewart Evans and Paul
Gainey.
Century 1995. ISBN 0 7126
7625 2.
275 pp. £16.99. Illustrated.

Jack the Ripper was a quack
American doctor. That's the
latest theory being put
forward by Stewart Evans and
Paul Gainey.

They began to research their
suspect in 1993 when they
discovered a letter written in
1913 by Chief Inspector John
Littlechild, head of the
Secret Department (later to
become known as Special
Branch) in which Littlechild
names a Dr Francis Tumblety.

Tumblety was known to hate
women, especially prostitutes,
after one had tricked him into
marriage. It is also said
that he kept a collection of
women's organs cut from the
bodies of his victims.

At the time of the murders,
Tumblety was staying in Batty
Street, one street away from
Berner Street. Suspicion fell
on him when on 29th-30th
September, the night of "The
double event". Tumblety
returned home from carrying
out a murder, that of
Catherine Eddowes in Mitre
Square, only to discover to
his horror that a murder had
been committed on his very
own doorstep. That of Liz
Stride. It is interesting to
note that both Stewart Evans
and Paul Gainey believe Liz
Stride to have been killed by
her lover and not Jack the
Ripper. So this means that
there were only four murders.

Tumblety, seeing the influx of
police into Berner Street
panicked. He left the house in
Batty Street in a great hurry
and asked his landlady to wash
his blood soaked shirt. This
blood soaked shirt immediately
brought him to the attention of
the police.

He was arrested after the
murder of Mary Kelly and was
given bail until police could
gather more evidence to bring a
strong case against him. Two
complete strangers paid
Tumblety's £1,500 surety. He
jumped bail by taking a boat to
France and from there boarded a
boat bound for his native
America.

He was a strong enough suspect
for Scotland Yard to send a
Detective Inspector and two
Superintendents to America to
try and track him down. One of
the reasons why he has only now
come to light, is, it is said,
because the police staged a
cover-up after he escaped as
not to embarrass themselves in
letting the world know they had
lost Jack the Ripper. In the
Littlechild letter, Littlechild
says that "there is a large
dossier concerning him at
Scotland Yard." But no such
dossier has ever been found.
So was there a cover-up It
seems very likely that there
was. After he fled Britain
Tumblety went on to kill six
prostitutes in Managua,
Nicaragua.

Historically one cannot ignore
Tumblety. For Littlechild to
have even written the letter to
G.R. Sims shows I believe that
the Police had the strongest
suspicion against him. Tumblety
is a more likely suspect than
the fanciful theories of the
killer being the Duke of
Clarence or James Maybrick.
If only because he is mentioned
by a policeman who was involved
in the investigation in 1888.

I believe that any suspect mentioned by the police at the time is worth investigating.

However one looks at it, Tumblety does fit some of the descriptions of the Ripper at the time. Elizabeth Long seeing the Ripper with Annie Chapman outside 29 Hanbury Street on 8th September, described him as over forty, foreign and over five foot tall. He was also described as having a moustache. Tumblety had a moustache, he was a foreigner, he was an American, and he was over forty years old at the time of the murders.

Another person who also saw the killer was a John Lardy. He describes seeing a suspicious looking stranger outside the Grave Maurice pub, opposite the London Hospital. Lardy and a friend followed the man who they believed was Jack the Ripper to King Street. He disappeared into a house. When he reappeared he'd changed his appearance completely. When he went into the house he was wearing a sort of frock coat reaching only to his knees, but when he reappeared he had on a large overcoat which reached to within three inches from the ground. Lardy described him as between forty and forty-five years of age, 5ft. 11 in. to 6ft. high. Lardy also said that he had the appearance of an American. This is more than coincidence surely.

When one looks at this description, one immediately thinks of the statement George Hutchinson made to the police and the subsequent drawing that was produced. The drawing shows a man wearing a long overcoat with a dark felt hat and he has a slight moustache curled up at the ends and he has a pocket watch. Surely, this also points the finger of suspicion to Tumblety.

One interesting point to note is that when Tumblety died in St. Louis, in 1903 aged 70. An inventory was made of his personal property. It shows that he was very well off. Also it says that he owned a gold watch valued at \$10 and two "imitation rings" valued at \$3. These "imitation rings" are interesting. For the second victim, Annie Chapman, had been seen wearing three brass rings when she left Crossingham's lodging house. These had been pulled from her hand by the killer. So were these two rings in Tumblety's possession from the hand of Annie Chapman. Some serial killers are known to keep items belonging to their victims as trophies. Had Tumblety done this? After all it is documented that he kept women's wombs in jars.

Both Stewart Evans and Paul Gainey are to be congratulated for the vast ammount of meticulous research they have done. Paul Gainey went to America to trace Tumblety and discovered that Tumblety was a known woman hater in America and that he was even suspected as having taken part in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln some 23 years earlier.

The book contains photographs of the murder scenes taken by Stewart Evans in the 1960s. The foreword is by Nick Warren, Editor of "Rippererana" the Journal of Ripperology.

So have Stewart Evans and Paul Gainey finally discovered the true identity of Jack the Ripper? Well certainly the name Tumblety will be on everyones lips for sometime to come. And they have discovered some startling evidence which seems to point the finger at Tumblety. However, I would suggest you read the book and decide for yourself.

MG

THE ENIGMA OF JACK THE RIPPER

By Dr John de Locksley
1995. illustrated. Privately
published by Dr John de
Locksley and available from
him at 117 Fairmead Crescent,
Edgware, Middlesex HA8 8YR.
Price £2.50 p&p extra.

Having been honoured to
be appointed the Assistant
Secretary to the Club, I was
asked by our Editor to write
a piece on Dr John de Locks-
ley's account "The Enigma of
Jack the Ripper."

As many of you know, this
is very much a suspect-
orientated account of the
murders, an area which I have
lately lost track of, and one
which I am probably compari-
tively poorly versed. So I
was surprised but delighted
to be given the opportunity
to brush up my suspectology
and venture into "suspect
alley."

Dr de Locksley provides a
good objective review of
suspects. Enigma methodically
reviews the main theories of
the guilty parties without
intending to prove an
identity or offer a theory of
his own (yet!). It was
refreshing to hear that
modern day books disperse
commical theories after
destroying past theories, and
that here was an attempt to
give back some dignity to the
theories that have gone
before. Those that have been
ridiculed by writers to
booster their own flagging
theories yet contributed so
much to future researchers.

The Enigma opts out of
detailing each murder descri-
bing other author's details
of gruesome mutilations of
each victim as sick perva-
sion, but the graphic descrip-
tions of most books, which

may at first appear to the
beginner as unnecessarily morbid
have been argued by several
writers and most notably and
recently by Abrahamsen) as
central to exploring the motives
and mind of the murderer.
Nevertheless, this spares seri-
ous followers of the case who
are already well aware of the
nature of the mutilations. It
skips happily along all the main
theories, as well as an account
of the author being led by a
modern psychic who knew nothing
of the case, to Finsbury Square,
following the vision of a
psychic coach containing three
men from Miller's Court.
Surprisingly, under a section
entitled "putting the record
straight" I found some strong
challenges to conventional know-
ledge of current topography of
Ripper-territory. According to
Dr de Locksley, No. 29 Hanbury
Street still exists on the even-
numbered southside and hasn't
been built over by Trueman's
brewery extension in the 1960s!!
His support comes from accounts
of local people who were around
in the 1950s and who said the
brewery has always occupied the
same spot. He also says that
the newspaper cuttings on the
wall of the Ten Bells today have
been there since 1888!

I would appreciate anyone who
could correct me, but I've
always thought it was a widely
known fact that Millers Court
stood on the NORTH side of
Dorset Street, about 1/3 of a
mile west of Commercial Street.
Also that both the north and
south sides of the present
Duval Street occupy the same
line as the former Dorset
Street. This means that the
position of Millers Court is
now built over and does not
coincide with the middle of the
road of present-day Duval
Street.

Although not suitable for less serious Ripperologists, The Enigma is nevertheless a welcome brief summary for those who like to take regular books into the darkened misty windows of Suspect Alley.

Peter Whitby

WHO WAS JACK THE RIPPER?

A collection of Present Day Theories and Observations. Compiled by Camille Wolff. Grey House Books. 1995. The book contains the views and theories of most of the leading JTR experts and enthusiasts, as well as a consultant forensic psychiatrist, a Prof. of Social Research, a researcher on serial sex-killers, an American author and historic-document consultant, an ex-curator of the Black Museum etc. Each theory is preceded by a b/w photograph of the contributor; each piece has been limited to between 600-700 words. Out of the 53 contributors over 50 were able to sign the limited edition. Jeremy Beadle wrote the forward and has also signed the limited edn.

The first edition is limited to 100 numbered copies and is priced at £100. The first reprint has been published simultaneously and is priced at £30. The reprint is limited to 1000 copies, but is unnumbered and unsigned.

If you would like a copy of either book please contact Loretta Lay or Camille Wolff at GREY HOUSE BOOKS, 60 PORTOBELLO ROAD, LONDON W11 3DL. TELEPHONE (0171) 221 0269.

Andy Aliffe is making available a limited number of reproduction copies of TOM ROBINSON'S, Daisy Bank Publication, "THE WHITECHAPEL HORRORS, being an authentic account of the JACK THE RIPPER MURDERS".

This scarce item will cost £10, including p&p, coming in an original colour cover including a sepia picture of Tom Robinson. The cost also covers printing and design work. Please make cheques payable to Andy Aliffe. Foreign currency bills are acceptable. Please send to 10 Maybrook Gardens, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 6PJ.

About the CLOAK AND DAGGER CLUB



INFORMATION

The Cloak and Dagger Club was founded to study all aspects of Jack the Ripper and the Whitechapel Murders of 1888. It also aims to study and promote the history of the East End. The Club holds four meetings a year with guest speakers and produces a newsletter four times a year.

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN	Mark Galloway
VICE CHAIRMAN	Nigel Bartley
SECRETARY	Richard Turner
ASSISTANT SECRETARY	Peter Whitby

COMMITTEE

Martin Fido
Paul Begg

The Club meets at 8 p.m. on the first Saturday of January, May, September and December at The ALMA, 41 Spelman Street E1 5LQ. Annual Subscription is £10 (\$35) £15 (\$50) husband and wife. Visitors are always welcome at our meetings and pay £2.50p admission.

Cloak and Dagger Club

Editor: Mark Galloway, 52 Eastbourne Road, East Ham, LONDON E6 4AT

The views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Cloak and Dagger Club or its Committee. Authors retain copyright of articles published.

JOIN THE CLOAK AND DAGGER CLUB

To join the Club, fill in the form below (or use a separate sheet of paper) and send it with a cheque or postal order payable to The Cloak and Dagger Club.

To: Mark Galloway Esq., Hon Editor, 52 Eastbourne Road, East Ham, LONDON E6 4AT

I enclose £10 as subscription to the Cloak and Dagger Club

Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

In the fourth edition, the Cloak and Dagger Newsletter becomes Ripperologist with Mark Galloway as the honorary editor.

RIPPEROLOGIST

Newsletter of the Cloak & Dagger Club



Number 4

December 1995

WHAT HAPPENED AT MILLER'S COURT?

By Nick Connell

The circumstances surrounding the death of Jack the Ripper's final victim Mary Jane Kelly are almost as mysterious as the story of her life. Several witnesses made the attestation that they heard a cry of "murder" from the direction of Kelly's room (13 Miller's Court) shortly before 4 a.m. The findings of the post mortem indicated that death occurred before 8 a.m. but there were three sightings of Kelly after 8 a.m.

At Kelly's inquest Caroline Maxwell, the wife of a lodging house deputy from Dorset Street, claimed to have seen Kelly in Miller's Court at 8.30 a.m. where the following conversation took place:-

Maxwell - What brings you up so early?

Kelly - I have the horrors of drink upon me, as I have been drinking for some days past.

Maxwell - Why don't you go to the Ringers and have a half pint of beer?

Kelly - I have been there and had it, but I have brought it all up again (pointing to a pool of vomit).

Maxwell - I pity the feeling.



Maxwell further claimed to have seen Kelly at about 8.45 a.m. outside the Ringers (The Britannia) talking to a man who looked like a market porter. He was "a short man, dressed in dark clothes, and wearing a sort of plaid coat." (The Herts and Cambs reporter of 16.11.1888 named the man as Joe Barnet.)

Maurice Lewis, a tailor who lived in Dorset Street, claimed to have seen Kelly leave her room at around 8 a.m. only to return shortly afterwards (Lewis was possibly the unnamed witness reported in the Hertfordshire Mercury of 10.11.1888 who said that Kelly had left her room at 8 a.m. to buy some milk), and again at around 10 a.m. in the Ringers. An anonymous witness informed the police that she had definitely seen Kelly between 8 and 8.45 a.m.

Both Caroline Maxwell and Maurice Lewis appeared to have made their statements in earnest as to having seen Kelly alive after 8 a.m. on Friday 9th November. The possibility of Maxwell being mistaken as to the date when she saw Kelly was eliminated by the shopkeeper who had sold her milk after she had spoken to Kelly, (although he made no mention of Kelly buying milk as the witness claimed).

The course of events is complicated by subsequent press reports that, although self-admittedly unconfirmed, tell a remarkable story. The Herts. and Cambs. reporter on 16.11. gives the following details of the events of the 8th/9th November:-

"She had a little boy, aged about six or seven years, living with her, and latterly her circumstances had been so reduced that she is reported to have stated to a companion that she would make away with herself, as she could not bear to see her boy starvinga man who is described as respectably dressed, came up and spoke to the murdered woman Kelly and offered her some money. The man accompanied the woman to her lodgings, which are on the second floor, the little boy being sent to a neighbour's house. Nothing more was seen of the woman. On Friday morning, it is stated, the little boy was sent back into the house, and the report goes that he was sent out subsequently on an errand by the man who was in the house with his mother. Confirmation of this statement is, it is true, difficult to obtain, and it remains in doubt whether anyone really saw the unfortunate woman on the morning of the discovery."

The Hertfordshire Mercury on the 10.11 also suggests that there was someone else in Kelly's room, but "there is no evidence as to who was in the house with her."

The Herts. Advertiser & St. Albans Times on 10.11 describes Kelly's son as around 10-11 years of age and adds: "The story of the crime current among the neighbours is that this morning - what time cannot at present be ascertained, but at any rate

after daylight - she took a man home to her own room, presumably for an immoral purpose."

The report also adds another name to the equation. Mrs Hewitt of 25 Dorset Street "stated that a man - a drover - called on her some time ago. He asked her if a summons came in the name of Lawrence to accept it. This man Lawrence, she says, she believes lived with the dead woman. He was off and on in London, sometimes being absent for five or six weeks."

Two stop press reports of the Kelly murder offer tentative solutions as to the circumstances of her death. The Bristol Mercury (12.10) reports that, "seeing that it was contrary to Kelly's custom to take strangers to her room, it is believed that her destroyer offered some exceptional inducement." And the Eastern Post (10.11) suggests, "the cause of the dreadful crime was jealousy."

It has been suggested that another woman was murdered in Kelly's room, thus explaining the sightings of her on Friday morning but Joe Barnett's identification of the body was made confidently. Maxwell's claims can be weakened by the fact that she had not known Kelly for long and had only spoken to her on two previous occasions. The fact that neither the press nor the police took the claims seriously adds flavour to the belief that the witnesses were mistaken.

SOURCES

Jack the Ripper the Uncensored Facts - Paul Begg
The Crimes, Detection and Death of Jack the Ripper - Martin Fido
Herts. Advertiser & St. Albans Times 10.11.1888
Herts. & Cambs. Reporter and Royston Crow - 16.11.1888
Hertfordshire Mercury - 10.11.1888



From the Editor

We are now coming to the end of our first year of the Cloak and Dagger Club and this is our fourth Newsletter.

We very much hope that you have enjoyed being a member as much as we have enjoyed starting the Club and meeting you, and we thank everyone for their support. It's true to say that if it wasn't for you the Club wouldn't have survived.

We must of course thank Steve Kane, Landlord of The Alma for his kindness in letting us use his pub to hold our meetings and for providing us with sandwiches.

We have had some interesting speakers this year: Paul Begg, Paul Feldman, Nick Warren, the Editor of that interesting little Journal "Ripperana" and of course this month Martin Fido. We have some interesting talks lined up for 1996 including Stewart Evans talking about his suspect Dr. Tumblety, and Andy Aliffe talking about Dr. Donston.

In the Pilot Issue I asked members to send me articles they had written, or they would like to write. I was not disappointed and we have had some interesting articles. I would like to receive any more articles that you would like me to publish. I'm always looking for material I can use in the Newsletter.

When we decided to start the Club in 1994 we rushed into it and chose January 95 as our start date, but as there are

three months between December and January we have now made March the start of our 1996 programme, and it will remain this way. So, it will be the first Saturday in March, June, September and December.

Programmes for 1996 and subscription details will be sent out to you in the New Year.

Many of you will notice that the front of the Newsletter has changed slightly. I have decided to give the Newsletter a title. I thought it looked a bit dull and boring just being called "Cloak and Dagger Club Newsletter" so now I have decided to call it "Ripperologist" (although this is no way imitating "Ripperana" which I endorse). I know some people will disapprove of my using this title as they think it is tacky. I will be glad to receive any ideas for a title from members; if you think you have a catchy title then please send it to me and I will consider it.

In the meantime I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Committee and myself to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you in 1996.

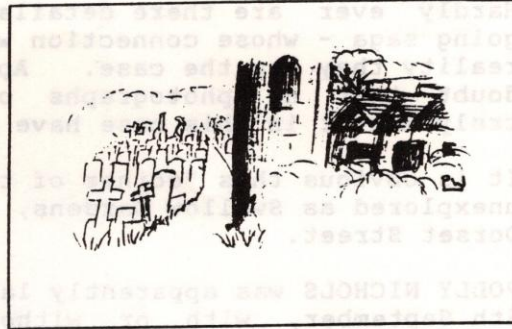
Mark Galloway
Hon. Editor



RESTING PLACES

Peter Whitby asks where are they now? And why so little is being done to find them

It is often said in Ripperology, most notably (but of course for different reasons) by the late Stephen Knight, that those poor unfortunate fateful five that had the misfortune to bump into the Ripper on those dark cold nights one hundred years ago, are as important and central to the killings as the killer himself (and indeed to everything that happened in the area during that Autumn)? So why do they receive such scant attention and research in comparison to the killer himself?



The pursuit of identity seems as endless, as foggy, and as black an abyss as any of the neighbourhoods the evil quatermille threw up. Year after year, fruitless theories emerge with apparently promising evidence, half-based on conjecture and the methodical taking apart of past theories akin to the dissection of a corpse, only to be superseded by the next on offer.

So why do we need to know, and why do we invent ever more outlandish theories? How little things have changed from that Autumn, when fresh theories and fears swept the squalid streets, powered by Whitechapel tom-toms, to form the very breath of the killer himself - and how he would have laughed.

So what about the five, whose miserable daily struggle for existence was savagely and abruptly cut short for everlasting notoriety. Almost destiny, it seems disrespectful that they have received so little attention, so little acknowledgement, and as in life, so much neglect.

Martin Fido has done much to sieve out many details of their morbid existence in this world, and helped to paint us a picture on such an unrevealing canvas - a picture which will now probably never be added to. And Mark Madden and John Morrison, probably the two leading experts on Mary Kelly, have contributed much to events surrounding her life and death.

So the backgrounds of the five are misty at best but at least we have one or two gaslights in that alley to light the way for us. But what about the deaths, the aftermath?

In every theory in every book, the author has often gone to great lengths and expense to trace former homes, hospitals and resting places of their "killers", across the country, complete with photographs, yet all this rests on their suspect actually being Jack the Ripper.

Hardly ever are there details of the real victims of this on-going saga - whose connection with the case is beyond doubt; in reality they are the case. Apart from Kelly's there is little doubt that no photographs of any of the resting places that truly matter in this case have been taken let alone published.

It is obvious this "corner of the neighbourhood" is as dark and unexplored as Swallow Gardens, Heneage Court or any alley off Dorset Street.

POLLY NICHOLS was apparently laid to rest at Ilford Cemetery on 6th September, with or without her famous Lambeth-workhouse-marked petticoat, in a polished elm coffin supplied by Mr H. Smith of Hanbury Street.

It was conveyed from Old Montague Street in a horse-drawn hearse, surrounded by H-division police to protect it from the horde of spectators.

Edward Walker, two of her children and a grandchild followed in another carriage. As yet, it seems we are still unsure of the exact whereabouts of her grave.

On Friday 14th September 1888 ANNIE CHAPMAN was taken through the green doors of the same Old Montague Street mortuary, at the corner of Eagle Street. (Her body was actually taken there in the same hearse used to take Polly Nichols a week previously.) She was buried the same morning at Manor Park Cemetery, arranged in utmost secrecy by the undertaker Mr H. Hawes of Hunt Street, Mile End.

Only members of her family attended. Recently I was shocked to learn from our Editor that as recently as 1993, the local council have dug up the older parts of the cemetery, and all the contents cremated and scattered on the Garden of Remembrance. So poor Annie may well have now, quite literally, been scattered to the four winds.

All we know of ELIZABETH STRIDE'S funeral is that it was sparsely attended, and she was buried in pauper's grave No. 15509 in East London Cemetery, West Ham, by Mr Hawkes, at the expense of the parish.

CATHARINE EDDOWES' remains were removed from the City of London mortuary in Golden Lane, at 1.15pm on Monday 8th October. She was interred near Polly in an unmarked grave No. 49336 at Ilford (City of London) Cemetery, just a stone's throw from Annie Chapman.

Mr Hawkes again met the expense for the elm glass-sided coffin, which was conveyed in an open hearse with a wreath on either side. Following the remains were two coaches filled with mourners, and at the rear of these, a large wagon crowded with women, the majority of whom (pompously recorded The Times) were attired in a style not becoming for the occasion.

Again, the exact whereabouts of these two graves are still outstanding.

It is unknown why comparatively more is known about MARY KELLY'S funeral and burial, but do we in fact know more?

St. Leonard's, Shoreditch is immortalised in the traditional "Oranges and Lemons" nursery rhyme, with the words "when I grow rich, say the bells of Shoreditch." The church clerk Henry Wilton paid for Mary's funeral.

At noon on November 18th its bells tolled, drawing a large crowd of locals which soon blocked the roadway and extra police were drafted in. As the coffin appeared at the main gate, borne upon the shoulders of four men, the crowd seemed suddenly agitated and when the coffin was placed in the open car, people rushed forward desperately trying to touch it. All the men had respectfully removed their hats and many women, tear-ridden, cried out "God forgive her."

It was a strange and remarkable burial for a common prostitute. The coffin was carried in the open horse-drawn car, followed by two mourning carriages carrying three and five people, including Joe Barnett and all her Miller's Court neighbours.

A floral tribute in the form of a cross lay on the coffin, from Leytonstone school, and there were two crowns of flowers, one each from The Ten Bells and The Britannia. Cards inscribed by her drinking-friends littered the wreaths. In deference to the French style in which she preferred to be known, someone had seen fit to have engraved on the coffin plate "Marie Jeanette Kelly died 9th Nov 1888 aged 25 years."

Her body was conveyed from the mortuary behind St. Leonard's, along Hackney Road, across Cambridge Heath Road, into Victoria Park Road, over Hackney Marsh and Leyton High Road, into Elmore Road (Langthore Road), and finally into St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cemetery. Father Colomban read the service by the side of her final resting place - an unmarked pauper's grave. Despite this, Mary Kelly was the only one of the five to receive a "decent" burial. The coffin plate would have been the last compliment, but as we know, her memory was to be commemorated nearly a century later.

Until recently, it was widely accepted that Mary was buried in St. Patrick's, in grave No. 16, row 67, a public plot in common ground which was reclaimed in the 1950s and subsequently used for other burials. Widely publicised, by efforts to preserve

her memory, John Morrison's erecting of a gravestone on 3rd December 1986 sparked much local controversy, and the stone "disappeared" not long after, Morrison himself becoming the target of visiting relatives to the cemetery.

But doubts have emerged, stemming from confusion more than anything else, as to Mary's exact current resting place.

In 1993, our Editor relayed an astonishing statement made to him by Martin Fido, considered by many to be the doyen of topographical Ripperologists, enquiring if he was aware that the spot discovered by Morrison in 1986 and widely taken as such since then, was not the actual spot. With so much historical contribution in pinpointing many East End localities related to the murders, it is difficult to ignore Mr Fido's claim, which is one which will receive due attention.

In the April 1995 edition of "DOCKLANDS NEWS," the newspaper for The London Docklands Development Corporation, there was an article by a Mr Jim Marsh entitled "The True Resting Place of Jack the Rippers Last Victim". Mr Marsh states that the location of Mary's grave is St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Leytonstone and disputed claims made in the March edition by the East London History Society that Kelly was in fact interred somewhere in The Old Tower Hamlets Cemetery, Bow and has been there ever since. They have yet to withdraw their claim, confidently including it in a visitor's leaflet.

The whole issue is complicated by two further facts. One is that another Mary Kelly lies in an unmarked grave, circa 1897, just yards from the previously universally accepted spot of Mary Jane; both are buried in the common ground to the right of St. Patrick's chapel. The other is that the law only protects graves from disturbance for 100 years after the burial. Since the expiry date has long since passed, the contents may have been moved or, like Annie Chapman, lost forever.

So is she within Leytonstone or Bow? and if in the former - where exactly? There seems little doubt she was initially interred at St. Patrick's. But the idea of being moved earlier on, or more probably later, after 1988, possibly as a measure to cut the constant trickle of sightseers to a grave which is reputedly the second most photographed of an "ordinary person" in Europe (behind Jim Morrison in Paris) still seems a touch too probable for comfort.

Such a measure would have undoubtedly received support from relatives of departed ones who lie near Mary, apparently disgusted at the attention received by a poor dead prostitute, and from the seemingly bothered, unhelpful staff at Langthorne Memorials. If she is still there it remains to be seen whether she lies in the "popular" unmarked spot to the right of the grave stone which has a statue of a boy playing football, or at the unmarked spot in John Morrison's book, which is actually 50 yards further up the common ground, to the right of Sarah

WHITECHAPPEL

Betton.

Hopefully soon, the cemeteries will be explored and the graves where all five of Jack the Ripper's victims were interred, whether they still lie there or not, will be ascertained for all posterity, before, like the very fabric of Whitechapel's old Victorian buildings, they are all gone forever.

Finally then, may the resting places of all five each receive the customary words - "Requiescat in Pace".



...to house, or from street to street, but still the East End Jews are always moving from place to place in search of the prosperity they hoped to find in London when leaving their country that had been their home.

In spite of the odds that a rolling stone gathers no moss, these human gophers very rapidly acquire a resting place, and become a fixture in the life of the...

English ring about ideas and which should suggest ideas and mind pictures other than those contained up by its mention at the present day. Whatever its suburban charm may have been in bygone years, nothing, or but little, remains to tell of vanished glories. Whitechapel, as now approached from the City, differs slightly from the adjacent parishes as regards its streets and buildings, but the testifies, ever, singing and by-throwing its highways and by-ways, present such a foreign appearance that, to all intents and purposes, one might have been transported by a magic carpet to a Judaea comprised within boundaries of Britain and mortar. It is one of the favourite haunts of the alien Jew, and there he may be studied in all his development, as the characteristics of each separate country of origin have modified the original stock. In this parish of 13,000 the Jewish population number some 15,000, of which the Russian Jew forms the majority. The Roumanians contribute largely to this total, and then Poles; but, in fact, almost every country in Europe is represented within a very restricted area. Extreme poverty is perhaps the most striking characteristic of this community, and then, upon closer acquaintance, tendencies, decided nomadic tendencies. Migrations may only be from

WHITECHAPEL

by Mary L. Cox

Illustrations by Amy Duckner

This first appeared in the Home Counties Magazine Vol. VII 1905

There is a particularly English ring about the name which should suggest ideas and mind pictures other than those conjured up by its mention at the present day. Whatever its suburban charm may have been in bygone years, nothing, or but little, remains to tell of vanished glories.

White-chapel, as now approached from the City, differs slightly from the adjacent parishes as regards its streets and buildings, but the restless crowds, ever surging and thronging its highways and byways, present such a foreign appearance that, to all intents and purposes, one might have been transported by a magic carpet to a Judaea comprised within boundaries of bricks and mortar. It is one of the favourite haunts of the alien Jew, and there he may be studied in all his developments, as the characteristics of each separate country of origin have modified the original stock. In this parish of 23,000 the Jewish population number some 18,000, of which the Russian Jew forms the majority. The Roumanians contribute largely to this total, and then Poles; but, in fact, almost every country in Europe is represented within a very restricted area. Extreme poverty is perhaps the most striking characteristic of this community, and then, upon closer acquaintanceship, decided nomadic tendencies. Migrations may only be from



house to house, or from street to street, but still the East End Jews are always moving from place to place in search of the prosperity they hoped to find in London when leaving the country that had been their home.

In spite of the adage that a rolling stone gathers no moss, these human pebbles very rapidly acquire a resting place, and become a fixture in the life of

East End London. With a working capital of a few pence the foreign Jew soon finds a means of turning it over, and advances from a street hawker to stall holder, shopkeeper, or factory owner. No trade comes amiss to this mercantile people, and businesses that employ many hands evolve from units that the English mind would deem unworthy of any consideration. The typical alien in his English career first finds a room, in which he and his family live and where he plies his trade. Once settled he then is anxious to find "hands" by which to increase the output. Dexterously avoiding the eye of the law, he is always on the outlook for fresh arrivals of destitute foreigners. To as many as he can possibly accommodate he offers food and lodging in return for their labour. These new comers, or "greeners," work from an early morning hour to late in the night, crowded together in a small space, miserably fed and miserably clad, but buoyed up in the hope that in their turn they may become likewise employers of labour. In the East End there is scarcely any trade in which the Jewish worker does not greatly outnumber the native, and even the Whitechapel coster is obliged to fight and shoulder his way the more fiercely in consequence. Many, many thousands of Jews never rise to any dizzy height on the social ladder, and a very large percentage, after years of labour, are only able to earn the merest pittance. However, an indomitable courage and perseverance keep them going during the years of weary labour, composed of working days the length of

which is left entirely uncontrolled by any Trade Union. This fact alone gives the clue to one aspect of the labour question, for no British workman will or dare compete in this particular; so long as the Jewish worker can procure work he will work, and not count the hours except as regards his time-bill. With this as a permanent condition in the East End labour market it is little wonder that the English workmen are beginning to realize that their livelihood is slowly but surely being taken from them. Whatever the social faults of the alien Jew he is generally a peaceful, law-abiding individual, temperate of habit, and living at peace with his neighbour. It is not in the Jewish streets that the



midnight rioting and drunken brawls take place, and the Jews as a whole carefully avoid all that would bring upon them the pressure of the law. The first money that is saved is frequently laid out in the formalities attached to naturalization, for it is the ambition of the Jew to become an English subject at the first opportunity. Even as far back as 1720 Strype mentions the fact of the predominance of Jews in certain localities of Whitechapel.

At the present time the influx

of Russian aliens is enormously increased owing to the Russian war. To escape military service in the Far East many a Russian subject is willing to incur untold hardships and privations in order to reach England and London. On the Russian frontiers the peasants address themselves to a smuggling agent



who undertakes for some £5 to arrange the journey to London. The money is realized by the sale of things in their own homes and the contributions of helpful relatives. Some days the influx of Russian Jews and peasants has reached the large figure of 800; they are chiefly aged from twenty to twenty-five years, and among the number are mechanics, clerks, and sons of well-to-do people. Their immediate needs upon landing are generally met by the system that prevails in the East End, i.e., some half-dozen inhabitants, their compatriots, make a house to house collection for the benefit of the immigrants, and a few pounds sterling are soon in hand with which to meet their immediate difficulties.

A few days later the immigrants go before the Jewish Board of Guardians in Middlesex Street, and are, if possible, passed on to

another country - America, Australia, or South Africa.

Others, again, too poor to contribute towards the expenses of this "passing on," are got to work, often to the exclusion of the Englishman.

The coster class, though in the great minority, presents interesting material for study. Though the necessities and exigencies of daily life compel the costers to work, and work hard and for long hours, the work is of a totally different character from that of their Hebrew neighbours. The foreign Jew works that the money gained may form a working capital which, in time, shall augment, and in augmenting bring its owner into higher social position; the East End coster works that he may spend, and apparently he cares little for the future. Life for him is so hard in any case, that, when once he has a few shillings, he is on the look out for the opportunity of spending them on pleasuring. One of their striking qualities is their ready sympathy and the material help they are willing to give each other, especially in the particular of adopting the orphaned children of friends who have gone to untimely graves.



Their love of finery is inborn, and even the masculine element does not scorn adornment, which, if less showy than the feminine fine feathers, is almost as expensive, an outlay for a holiday suit of "pearlies" costing large sums of money (For a time these suits were in some disfavour, but from a local authority it is understood that they are again "coming in".) An expensive item of dress for the women is the shawl, which when "put away" produces the considerable sum of fifteen shillings.

The fashion of "fevvers" has likewise suffered by the influence of the more practical sailor hats, and doubtless this fashion commends itself considerably when the cost of living and rents east of the City boundary has so greatly increased for the toiling masses. Perhaps in no part of London, one might say the whole world, is there a district in which there are so many agencies at work for ameliorating the lot of the workers as in the East End of London, and yet at the same time remains such a "terra incognita" to London as a whole.

For the antiquarian and genealogist there are treasures still undiscovered, and though so many of the parish churches stand as the centres of alien populations their various and individual histories are closely connected with many brilliant names and families of English history. Street after street at the present day is now occupied by teeming masses of

strangers of every nationality, ready and waiting to spread as opportunity affords further and further into the life of the nation; and who can say that the English nation, composite beyond all reckoning, may not be the richer for absorbing such of the alien element as by its own merits and pluck climbs steadily upwards, overcoming all obstacles it meets.

It is this very quality of never accepting defeat that has distinguished Englishmen of all ages, and if, as some would have us think, this national characteristic is on the wane, then it would be well to reconsider, with unbiassed opinion, this question of the immigrant Jew, and nowhere can such an area for investigation of the Jewish character be found as within the limits of the ancient London suburb, Whitechapel.

IN PURSUIT OF JACK THE RIPPER

by Mark Galloway

On the night of 29th to 30th September several members and I accompanied by 80 other willing victims went on the "Double Event" anniversary tour. This was the first of its kind, which was the idea of our guide Louis Ravensfield.

It was to be an all-night hunt for that man of blood, Jack the Ripper. We met at 11.45 p.m. outside Whitechapel Underground Station. Louis Ravensfield was known to me only by a couple of phone calls. When I finally met him I was surprised. A member of the Vampire Society, he looked resplendant in his costume. He was wearing a top hat, waistcoat, long coat, complete with a cane topped with a silver skull and carrying a lantern which he used to light our way. He reminded me of Gary Oldman in the film "Bram Stoker's Dracula" although he would have fitted in just as well in "David Copperfield", "Great Expectations" or some other Dickens classic.

We proceeded to make our way to Bucks Row. There he told us about the grisly deed that was done there. He then went on to explain what life was like for the average Whitechapel resident in 1888. We then made our way to George Yard (Winthrop Street) where the body of Martha Tabram was discovered with 39 stab wounds on the first floor landing of George Yard Buildings on Monday 6th August.

It was Louis Ravensfield's intention that night that we should reach both Berner Street and Mitre Square at the exact time that Jack the Ripper was slaying his victims. With this in mind we left Winthrop Street and continued to Berner Street. We arrived at 1 a.m. the exact time when Elizabeth "Long Liz" Stride was being silenced forever. We then darted



off as though we were the Ripper himself fleeing from the police and headed towards Mitre Square. We stopped at Bishopsgate police station, as did Catharine Eddowes when on that fateful night she was taken to the station to sober up after she was found to be drunk and imitating a fire engine outside 29 Aldgate High Street. She was released by the City police at 1 a.m. From here we followed in Catharine's footsteps arriving at Mitre Square at 1.30 a.m., five minutes before Joseph Lawende, Joseph Hyam Levy and Harry Harris saw her talking to the murderer in Duke's Place.

Book Reviews

After spending some twenty or more minutes listening to what the killer had done, a cry broke out, which made everyone turn their heads to see where it came from (very theatrical, Louis). With the cry still ringing in our ears and poor Kathy's body still warm we hotfooted it to the last two murder sites, Hanbury Street where Annie Chapman's body was discovered in the backyard of number 29, and Dorset Street where the Ripper's frenzy came to a climax when he murdered Mary Kelly in Miller's Court.

We then scrambled into our last port of call that night, The Ten Bells pub, where we rested our weary feet and indulged in some liquid refreshment and took part in a quiz. At 6 a.m. we all made for our various homes and bed.

Our thanks go to Louis Ravensfield for such an enjoyable evening, and for looking after us, making sure that we were protected from thieves, cut-throats, vagabonds, naughty ladies of the night and even the odd vampire; and to The Ten Bells' landlord Fyfe Johnston for making sure we had adequate refreshment.

Don't worry if you wished you'd been with us, Louis Ravensfield will be repeating this event in 1996. So watch this space.

If you would like to go on one of Louis Ravensfield's other Guided Walks around Whitechapel then please contact Louis on 0181-680 2317 or 0378-777 026 or alternatively write to P.O. Box 4, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 4YE for a leaflet.

Unlike most tour guides, Louis visits all five murder sites in order.

For anyone studying Jack the Ripper, Alexander Kelly's book is a must. It first appeared in 1973 and again in 1984. When it was first written in 1973 it was the first time anyone had compiled a list of everything that had been written about Jack the Ripper from 1888 onwards. This included newspaper reports and magazine articles. The whole book took Mr Kelly three years to compile.

With this fully updated version you can find just about anything you could possibly need to research the subject. This edition includes for the first time a "filmography" listing all the films and videos that have been made over the last 90 years. There are references to "Ripperiana" and to some of the most recent books including "The Diary of Jack the Ripper" which Mr Kelly says is an obvious post-1987 take and he can't see what all the fuss is about.

The book also includes autobiographies of some of the policemen who were involved in the investigation including Sir Charles Warren, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Robert

Book Reviews

JACK THE RIPPER: A BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE, by Alexander Kelly and David Sharp
The Association of Assistant Librarians 1994. ISBN 0 900092 90 4.
187 pp. £12.95

For anyone studying Jack the Ripper, Alexander Kelly's book is a must. It first appeared in 1973 and again in 1984. When it was first written in 1973 it was the first time anyone had compiled a complete list of everything that had been written about Jack the Ripper from 1888 onwards. This included newspaper reports and magazine articles. The whole book took Mr Kelly three years to compile.

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Anderson, who was the Assistant Commissioner and Walter Dew.

The whole book is fastidiously researched and contains more than 900 items. The book is divided into five sections: Contemporary records, Facts and theories, Biographies, Fiction and drama, Music, films and TV. Along with the "Jack the Ripper A to Z" this book should be on the shelves of every Ripperologist as it is a constant source of reference which one can return to again and again.

With so much new material being published let's us hope that it isn't another eleven or more years before we see it updated.

You can order the book from bookshops but the quickest way is to order it direct from A.A.L. Publishing, Remploy Bookbinding, Lightowler Road, Hanson Lane, Halifax HX1 5NB, Tel: (01422) 365575 or 350517 Fax: (01422) 346985. The person to contact is Jean Towriss who is the Senior Clerk. When ordering please do not send any money as an invoice will be sent with the book.

Book Reviews

***JACK THE RIPPER: ANATOMY OF A MYTH*, by William Beadle.**

Watt Tyler Books 1995. ISBN 0 952 448 904. 181 pp. £13.99

This book by William Beadle makes for interesting reading and I think that is all it is.

Jack, writes Beadle, was not a rampant raging Royal. He says he couldn't possibly be Kosminski the crazy Jew or even Montague John Druitt. He was none other than William Henry Bury who was hanged at Dundee Prison on 24th April 1889 after being found guilty of the brutal murder of his wife, Ellen.

William Beadle says that Bury who was a rag-and-bone man from Bow, and who was living in the district at the exact time of the murders was a squalid, sordid little man; drunk, dissolute and diseased. He killed his wife in a drunken stupor and the way she was murdered was very similar to that of some of the Ripper's victims. His wife incidentally had been making a living as a prostitute. When the Dundee police arrived at his basement flat they found the words "Jack the Ripper is in this cellar" scrawled on the wall.

The reason that Bury escaped the police on every murder, says Beadle, is that he used his horse and cart. This conjures up the 1988 Michael Caine TV programme with those unforgettable words "They're using a coach". If he was using a coach or be it a horse

and cart where did he keep it, most of the witnesses didn't see one.

Beadle also says that Bury fits the F.B.I.'s psychological profile. According to the F.B.I.'s profile, Jack the Ripper was Male, aged in his late twenties, employed, working class, lived in the vicinity and was single. Bury was employed, he was male, he was 29 at the time of the murders, he lived fairly close to the district and he was working class. But he was not single. This psychological profile points the finger at several men including, Kosminski and David Cohen, both of whom were single.

Beadle says that the intensity of the attacks increased as Bury sank deeper and deeper into an alcoholic haze that stifled any remnants of social restraint he had.

The book is divided into twelve chapters and does not contain the usual pictures that one is used to seeing in countless books. One complaint is that the book doesn't contain an index which I think is a useful aid. An index should be considered if this book is reprinted.

Someone recently said to me did I not think that this book should be put on the top of the pile. I said no, it's an enjoyable read but I don't think Bury was responsible for these murders. William Beadle says that Bury will trash all past theories and future ones.

Book Reviews

WHO WAS JACK THE RIPPER?

A collection of Present Day Theories and Observations. Compiled by Camille Wolff. Grey House Books. 1995. The book contains the views and theories of most of the leading JTR experts and enthusiasts, as well as a consultant forensic psychiatrist, a Prof. of Social Research, a researcher on serial sex-killers, an American author and historic document consultant, an excavator of the Black Museum etc. Each theory is preceded by a black and white photograph of the contributor; each piece has been limited to between 600 and 700 words. Out of the 53 contributors over 50 were able to sign the limited edition. Jeremy Beadle wrote the foreword and has also signed the limited edition.

The first edition is limited to 100 numbered copies and is priced at £100. The first reprint has been published simultaneously and is priced at £30. The reprint is limited to 1000 copies, but is unnumbered and unsigned.

If you would like a copy of either book please contact Loretta Lay or Camille Wolff at GREY HOUSE BOOKS, 60 PORTOBELLO ROAD, LONDON W11 3DL. TELEPHONE (0171) 221 0269.

THE WHITECHAPEL HORRORS

Andy Aliffe is making available a limited number of reproduction copies of TOM ROBINSON'S, Daisy Bank Publication, "THE WHITECHAPEL HORRORS, being an authentic account of the JACK THE RIPPER MURDERS".

This scarce item will cost £10, including p&p, coming in an original colour cover including a sepia picture of Tom Robinson. The cost also covers printing and design work. Please make cheques and postal orders payable to Andy Aliffe. Foreign currency bills are acceptable. Please send to 10 MAYBROOK GARDENS, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS HP13 6PJ.



NEW RELEASE



HEADLINE NEWS

JACK THE RIPPER: The Simple Truth BRUCE PALEY

Publication Date: 9 November 1995

Price: £10.99 Softback

"Not only is the book excellently written with style and panache, it deserves publishing as one of the most vivid portraits of Whitechapel in the 1880s that exists"

-Colin Wilson

The identity of the most notorious murderer of all time has long remained a mystery - until now. After twelve years of research, Bruce Paley has finally uncovered the real face behind the chilling murders of Jack the Ripper.

Bruce Paley presents a catalogue of compelling evidence against the man who became the most famous killer in history. Joseph Barnett was the ex-lover of Mary Jane Kelly, the final victim, and is the only suspect who not only precisely fits the contemporary mould of the Ripper, but also matches perfectly the profile of the 'typical' serial killer established by Robert K. Ressler, the former head of the FBI's Behavioural Sciences Unit, and the world's foremost authority on the subject.

JACK THE RIPPER: The Simple Truth brings those terrifying times vividly to life, taking you right into the doss houses and work houses, and out on the streets with the killer. It examines the causes of the devastating poverty and unemployment that crippled the East End and spawned the Ripper, and the difficulties faced by the police in capturing the first ever modern serial killer. Above all, Bruce Paley leaves the reader certain that the identity of Jack the Ripper has been revealed at last.

Bruce Paley is a true crime expert and former private detective. He lives in London.

About the CLOAK AND DAGGER CLUB



INFORMATION

The Cloak and Dagger Club was founded to study all aspects of Jack the Ripper and the Whitechapel Murders of 1888. It also aims to study and promote the history of the East End. The Club holds four meetings a year with guest speakers and produces a newsletter four times a year.

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN	Mark Galloway
VICE CHAIRMAN	Nigel Bartley
SECRETARY	Richard Turner
ASSISTANT SECRETARY	Peter Whitby

COMMITTEE

Martin Fido
Paul Begg

The Club meets at 8 p.m. on the first Saturday of January, May, September and December at The ALMA, 41 Spelman Street E1 5LQ. Annual Subscription is £10 (\$35) £15 (\$50) husband and wife. Visitors are always welcome at our meetings and pay £2.50p admission.

Cloak and Dagger Club

Editor: Mark Galloway, 52 Eastbourne Road, East Ham, LONDON E6 4AT

The views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Cloak and Dagger Club or its Committee. Authors retain copyright of articles published.

JOIN THE CLOAK AND DAGGER CLUB

To join the Club, fill in the form below (or use a separate sheet of paper) and send it with a cheque or postal order payable to The Cloak and Dagger Club.

To: Mark Galloway Esq., Hon Editor, 52 Eastbourne Road, East Ham, LONDON E6 4AT

I enclose £10 as subscription to the Cloak and Dagger Club

Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

In December 1996 we see Paul Daniel take over as editor.

RIPPEROLOGIST

Magazine of the Cloak & Dagger Club



Number 8

December 1996



And in issue 13, Adam Wood joins the staff as a sub-editor, marking the beginning of Adam's near 30 year association with the magazine.

RIPPEROLOGIST

Magazine of the Cloak & Dagger Club

Number 13

EDITORIAL

October 1997

Editor: PAUL DANIEL
Sub-Editor: ADAM WOOD

This is our thirteenth issue, and as alert Members will realise, that number has a pertinent significance within the bounds of Ripperology. Yes, the number of Millers Court at which Mary Jane Kelly's life was taken. And in tribute to the young Irish (?) lass, about whom so very little is known, we are dedicating this issue. We hope that the articles presented with a connection to Mary will be of interest, and may promote and encourage a further surge in research into her life and background with some fruitful results.

I don't believe anyone fully understands how much time and concentrated effort is needed in putting together and producing, for our Members, a magazine of some fifty-odd pages. And this is six times a year. It has become a continuous, almost full-time job. To help me lighten the load I have asked **Adam Wood** to be my Sub-Editor. He has already been of great assistance over the past few months, scanning photographs so they are adequately reproduceable for photocopying, proof-reading articles to a far higher standard and doing a considerable amount of research. It is only fair that Adam should have credit for his efforts in helping produce the bi-monthly **Ripperologist** on time. And by the same stroke I hope he will become even more involved in the magazine's production and the running of the **Cloak and Dagger Club**. I am very pleased to say that he has accepted my request and I know we will work well together to give you what we hope will continue to be a good, high quality magazine with enough variety of articles and topics (within the wide sphere of the 'Ripper' orb) to keep all our Members happy, satisfied and informed.

An apology! Or rather, two: first, to our Members who were not able to attend the April meeting we would like to say sorry for not including a *Proceedings...* summary for that meeting, and secondly to **Peter Turnbull**, who was kind enough to come down from Leeds at very short notice to give an extremely interesting talk based on the theories he expounded in his book **The Killer Who Never Was**, for not reporting on his talk and the evening in general.

The City Darts belongs to the chain of hostilities run by **Thorley Taverns** and we noticed in their last Newsletter a prominent box for the **Cloak and Dagger Club** evenings. For this, our Landlord **Paul** was responsible, and we would like to extend our thanks for this thoughtful inclusion.

The mail we receive at the **Ripperologist** office is now becoming a constant flow, and we try our best to reply to all letters. If we omit answering some of them it is simply because time presses in too hard, and we apologise, but hope you understand. Please do bear in mind that we are not a professional publication and the entire magazine (and, indeed, the whole running of the **Cloak and Dagger Club**) is done in our own private time, and completely unpaid, and bringing you the largest possible paper with the widest array of articles, reviews and comments takes precedence to all else.

Unjam the Anagram Solution: Bishopsgate

Solution to the Crossword

B	E	N	N	E	T	T			
	G							H	
M	A	T	T	E	R	S		A	
	N			V		K	I	N	G
		B		A		I			
		E		N		N		P	
	F	A	R	S	O	N		A	
		D				E		L	
		L			W	R	O	E	
O	D	E	L	L				Y	



Andrew Firth 2025

St. James's Passage, Mitre Square.