

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

Ripperologist

July 2021

No. 169

SLUMMING IN WHITECHAPEL

A JOURNALIST'S VISIT IN OCTOBER 1888



**PAT MARSHALL AND CHRIS PHILLIPS
MEL HOPKINS ■ JOE CHETCUTI ■ BRUCE COLLIE DONALD
NINA AND HOWARD BROWN ■ SWANSON ARCHIVE
VICTORIAN FICTION ■ THE LATEST BOOK REVIEWS**

RIPPEROLOGIST 169

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Editorial ROAMING RIPPER

ADAM WOOD, Executive Editor

Gravesend, Liverpool, Dublin. Ramsgate, Folkestone, New York. Gothenburg, Wolverhampton, Cardiff. We often think of the Whitechapel murders in the context of that area of East London; as if the killer and his victims, and potential witnesses, were encapsulated as existing solely in the East End. Yet every day people obviously came into the area from elsewhere in the country or even overseas, and left for new horizons. And as reports of the murders became more sensational, provincial newspapers began running their own accounts, sometimes from syndicated articles and also from their own 'special correspondent'. Had the Ripper moved to your town? Was he responsible for the threatening red-inked letter received by the kindly widow in the Cornish cottage?

In this issue of *Ripperologist*, Welsh history writer Melfyn Hopkins takes a welcome look at how the Autumn Terror affected those in the Valleys, and influenced their behaviour towards the local community. You'll even learn the Welsh language version of 'Dear Boss'!

Staying in Wales, we have an article by Pat Marshall and Chris Phillips, whose dedicated research into the life of Merionethshire-born Elizabeth Weston Davies – suggested by her descendant Wynne as the real identity of the woman known as Mary Jane Kelly murdered in Room 13 of Miller's Court – proves that, in this as in many cases, truth is stranger than fiction.

Also from the provinces was a female writer from Ventnor, on the Isle of Wight, who in time would become the first woman to be admitted as a member to the National Association of Journalists, in May 1888 aged just 25; in October that year, on behalf of the *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph*, she visited Whitechapel following the murders of Elisabeth Stride and Kate Eddowes, being accompanied around the murders sites by a friend of a City of London Police detective. Her subsequent report, featuring detailed descriptions of the people, places and smells of the East End, makes for fascinating and harrowing reading, and we are pleased to reproduce it here in full.

Much more strongly associated with the case is Chief Inspector Donald Swanson, running the investigation from the very centre of London's police district – Scotland Yard – yet also from the provinces, in his case from the extreme far north of Scottish and Thurso, Britain's most northerly town. We report in these pages of the new exhibition which recently opened titled 'Daring Detectives and Dastardly Deeds', which includes a display of some of the hundred and more objects from his personal collection which have been loaned to the National Emergency Services Museum by the Swanson family. Now you, too, can see for yourself the very faint pencil annotations in the detective's personal copy of *The Lighter Side of My Official Life* which name the suspect and reveal his fate.

With another insight into the often hilarious world of Dr Francis Tumblety from Joe Chetcuti – bearing possibly the finest article title to grace the pages of *Ripperologist* – and welcome additions by our regular columnists Nina and Howard Brown, Bruce Collie and Eduardo Zinna, not to mention the latest book reviews from Paul Begg and David Green, we're sure you'll agree that this edition of the magazine is the perfect summer accompaniment, whether you're in the capital, the provinces or overseas.

Enjoy the read!

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Back issues from 62-167 are available in PDF format on our website.

An index to *Ripperologist* magazine can also be downloaded.

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We welcome well-researched articles on any aspect of the Whitechapel murders, the East End or the Victorian era in general.

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THE REAL ELIZABETH WESTON DAVIES

TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION

By PAT MARSHALL and CHRIS PHILLIPS

In 2015 a book by Wynne Weston-Davies (WWD below) entitled *The Real Mary Kelly: Jack the Ripper's Fifth Victim and the Identity of the Man That Killed Her* was published.¹ It told the story of the author's great-aunt, Elizabeth Weston Davies, and her husband, a London journalist named Francis Spurzheim Craig. They were married at Hammersmith in 1884, but Elizabeth left Francis soon afterwards. It was later said that Francis had made many efforts to find her, but had heard nothing more of her.²

That wasn't quite true, because in 1886 he filed a petition for a dissolution of the marriage, claiming that Elizabeth had committed adultery with various men at different addresses, and had been living in a house known to the police as a brothel.³ But nothing more came of it and the marriage was never dissolved. It seemed that Elizabeth had vanished.

Seventeen years later, Francis's life came to a tragic end. In March 1903 he cut his throat with a razor, but failed to inflict an immediately fatal wound and lingered in hospital for four days before dying. A verdict of "suicide whilst of unsound mind" was returned at his inquest. A note was found that suggested the motive was ill health.⁴

But WWD claimed there was a dramatic secret story behind these events. According to him, Elizabeth Weston Davies had adopted a new identity as a prostitute in the East End of London. The new name she chose was Mary Jane Kelly, and her life was ended at 13 Millers Court on 9 November 1888, as Jack the Ripper's final victim. Not only that, but the murderer was her husband, Francis Spurzheim Craig. He had tracked down his wife and killed her, after murdering four other women in the same district. His own suicide was the final act of the Whitechapel tragedy.

The book conveys an air of absolute conviction that all this really happened, but others were less convinced. Soon after the publication of the book, WWD had contact with the crime author Patricia Cornwell. She had written a book herself about Jack the Ripper, claiming that he was the artist Walter Sickert, and had tried to use DNA analysis in her search for evidence. Now she offered to commission a report on the feasibility of exhuming Mary Kelly's body and testing WWD's theory by a DNA comparison. The

report was written by academics from the University of Leicester including Professor Turi King, who had led the team that identified remains found in a local car park as those of King Richard III.⁵

The report not only identified formidable practical problems in locating and exhuming Mary Kelly's remains, but also stressed the doubts over the proposed identification of her as Elizabeth Weston Davies. It emphasised that there might be many reasons for the failure to find Elizabeth in records after the 1880s. Thus, information was often misrecorded at the time or mistranscribed later, names were sometimes changed, and people

might be omitted altogether if – for example – they had no fixed abode. All of that is undoubtedly true. But was Elizabeth really impossible to find in the records?



1 Blink Publishing. Later issued in paperback as *Jack the Ripper: A True Love Story* (2016).

2 *West London Observer*, 13 March 1903.

3 National Archives, J 77/354/692.

4 Weston-Davies, *The Real Mary Kelly*, pp. 225-229.

5 The original version of the report was completed in May 2016. A revised version was produced in February 2017, and later republished as "The Mary Jane Kelly Project", by Turi King, Mathew Morris, Kevin Schürer and Carl Vivian, in *Rip* 168, pp. 23-36 (November 2020).

BACKGROUND

Elizabeth Weston Davies's history before she went to London is not hard to trace. She had been born in Merionethshire as plain Elizabeth Davies. (Later, she used the middle name Weston, as did at least two of her siblings. Her brother John had it from birth, and among his descendants – including WWD – the name became double-barrelled.)

Elizabeth's parents were Edward Davies, who came from Llanwrin near Machynlleth in Montgomeryshire, and Anne Hurst, from Benson in Oxfordshire.⁶ According to WWD, at the age of 19 – which would be around 1844 – Anne had become a lady's maid to Mary, the daughter of Sir John Edwards,⁷ a wealthy landowner whose seat was at Plas Machynlleth, on the outskirts of the town. In August 1846 Mary Edwards married George Vane-Tempest, later the Marquess of Londonderry,⁸ and in October Anne Hurst married Edward Davies at Penegoes, another village near Machynlleth.



*Plas Machynlleth, 2021
Courtesy Paul Begg*

It seems that soon after their marriage Elizabeth's parents moved for a while to Tredegar in Monmouthshire, where a daughter and a son were born. But around 1850 they returned to the neighbourhood of Machynlleth – to Corris in the parish of Tal-y-llyn, Merionethshire. Elizabeth was born – the sixth child in the family – on 24 July 1856, at Cae-côch just outside Corris, where there was a small slate quarry. A few years later (by 1864)⁹ the family moved a short distance to Aberangell in the neighbouring parish of Mallwyd.

At his marriage, her father Edward had described himself as a servant, but afterwards he worked in the slate quarries, and by 1871 described himself as a quarry agent. According to the obituary notice of another of his daughters, he became the overseer of the estate of the wealthy landowner Sir Edmund Buckley of Dinas Mawddwy, and opened the Hendre Ddu quarry.¹⁰ But in

October 1874 he died, aged only 52.¹¹



*Aberangell
Courtesy Paul Begg*

Within a few years of Edward's death, the family had dispersed. His widow remarried, to David Evans, a local draper and grocer.¹² The youngest daughter died, and three other daughters married – in Liverpool, Wrexham and London.¹³ The younger son John went to London, and in 1881 was living with his married sister Mary in Islington.¹⁴ The only one of the children who remained in Aberangell was the elder son Edward, who followed his father in the slate quarrying business.¹⁵

As for Elizabeth, she was still in Aberangell in August 1878, when she appeared (as Elizabeth Weston Davies) as a witness at Machynlleth magistrates' court in a poaching case.¹⁶ At some point after that she went to

⁶ Census returns: HO 107/2511, f. 102; RG 9/4317, ff. 71v, 72; RG 10/5688, f. 15v.

⁷ Weston-Davies, p. 30.

⁸ *Burke's Peerage* (1949 edition), p. 1248.

⁹ When the birth of Elizabeth's brother John was registered.

¹⁰ *Y Gwilydydd*, 17 December 1908. This newspaper report was discovered by Debra Arif in 2018.

¹¹ The certificate gave the cause of death as "Diabetes 3 years Effusion on the Brain 15 Days". The immediate cause of death is now usually called "subdural effusion". It can occur as a complication of meningitis, usually in young children. It can also be caused by a blow to the head, but there's no indication of an injury on Edward's death certificate.

¹² Census returns: RG 11/5544, f. 22; RG 12/4641, f. 12.

¹³ See indexes of registrations of marriages and deaths; *Y Gwilydydd*, 17 December 1908; census returns: RG 11/5567, f. 63v; RG 11/253, ff. 90v, 91.

¹⁴ Census return: RG 11/253, ff. 90v, 91. He was recorded in the census as "John N. Davies", a cabinet maker, aged 16 and born in "Wales". The relationship is given as "Brother", which should really be his relationship to Mary's husband John Evans, who was the head of the household. But given the details – including the occupation, which matches that of Elizabeth's brother – there seems no doubt that the middle initial "N" is an error for "W" for Weston, and that "Brother" should be "Brother-in-law".

¹⁵ *London Gazette*, 27 November 1900, p. 8051; census return: RG 13/5252, f. 15v.

¹⁶ *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 9 August 1878.

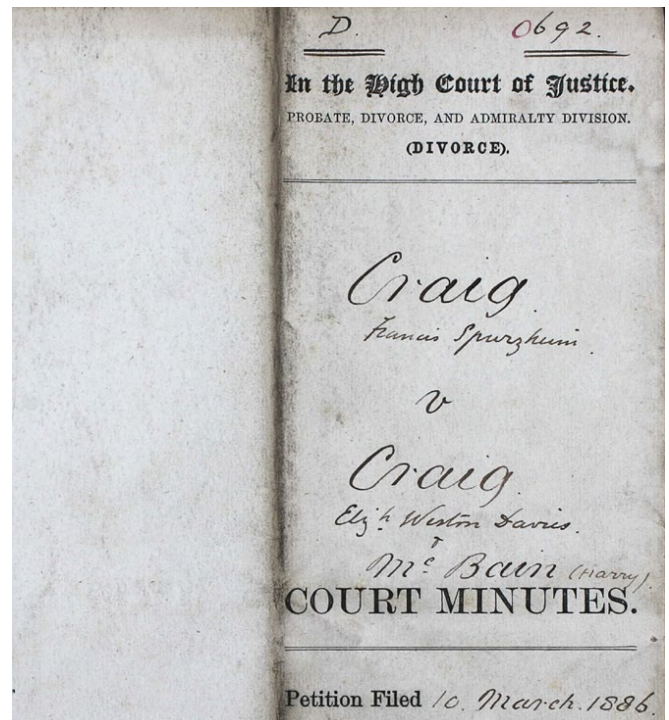
London, perhaps with her brother John and her sister Mary, who married there in July 1879. WWD suggests that by 1881 Elizabeth may have followed her mother in becoming lady's maid to Mary Edwards, who by then had inherited her father's estate and had become Marchioness of Londonderry.¹⁷ But Elizabeth doesn't appear in the Marchioness's household in the census of that date, either at Plas Machynlleth or at Londonderry House in Mayfair, her London residence.¹⁸

Intriguingly, in the same part of London in 1881 there was a young, unmarried woman named Davies, who had been born at Corris and was recorded as being just two years older than Elizabeth would have been. She was a kitchen maid in the household of the Earl of Dalhousie in Carlton Gardens, St James's. But her name was given as Hannah, not Elizabeth.¹⁹ Corris is a very small place, and neither the birth registration indexes nor the transcribed census records for 1861 or 1871 contain anyone named Hannah Davies born there in the 1850s (apart from Elizabeth's sister Hannah, who by 1881 was married and living in Caernarvonshire²⁰). Could this be Elizabeth under a different name? Without further evidence it must remain only a possibility. But if so, it would be far from the last time that she would use a different name.²¹

The first definite record of Elizabeth in London is her marriage on Christmas Eve, 1884 to Francis Spurzheim Craig at Hammersmith Register Office. She described herself then as a widow and gave her name as Elizabeth Weston Jones. In his petition for a dissolution of the marriage, Francis said this was a false description. Certainly no previous marriage of Elizabeth to a man named Jones has been discovered by researchers, though if she married as plain Elizabeth Davies it would be difficult to find. In any case, her father's name was given correctly (though without any indication that he was dead), and in a newspaper announcement of the marriage she was described as "Lizzie Weston, youngest daughter of the late Edward Davies, Aberavon House, Aberangell, N. Wales".²² (We have found no mention of the grand-sounding Aberavon House elsewhere, and it may have been an embellishment on Elizabeth's part.)

Nearly everything else we know about Elizabeth's marriage comes from the petition for a dissolution of the marriage, which Francis filed in 1886. This says that the couple had lived together at three different addresses – 3 Andover Road, Hammersmith, 7 Lemon's Terrace, Stepney Green, and 12 Argyle Square. It then says that on 19 May 1885, Elizabeth was seen to enter a private hotel at 53 Tonbridge Street with a young man at 10pm. Confusingly, it then refers to a letter she wrote to Francis on 10 January 1885 from the Monmouth Hotel and Coffee House, 161 Drummond Street, Euston Square, in which

she said she had been living there since leaving the East End. It adds that this house was known to the police as a brothel. (Perhaps this has been misdated, as the sequence of events would make more sense if the letter was written in June.)



Divorce petition of Francis Spurzheim Craig and Elizabeth Weston Davies

- 17 Weston-Davies, pp. 30, 31. Elsewhere, WWD has said that while there is good evidence that Elizabeth's mother had been lady's maid to Mary before her marriage, the suggestion that Elizabeth later held the same position is speculative (*Rippercast* podcast, 15 August 2015).
- 18 Census returns: RG 11/5477, f. 26; RG 11/96, ff. 16v, 17. Among the numerous servants at Londonderry House there were two ladies' maids, one German and the other Swiss.
- 19 Census return: RG 11/330, f. 47.
- 20 Elizabeth's sister Hannah had married David Price in 1876; see index of registrations of marriages and 1881 census return: RG 11/5567, f. 63v.
- 21 The census also listed an Elizabeth Davies, aged 20, born in North Wales, recorded as a lady's maid at 62 Park Street, St George's Hanover Square. WWD thought this might be Elizabeth Weston Davies, despite a discrepancy of four years in the age (*Rippercast* podcast, 15 August 2015). The census return for this address listed only three servants, and it has even been suggested that it might have represented members of the Marquess of Londonderry's household who were living at a different address (RG 11/94, f. 64v). In fact, 62 Park Street was the London residence of the Misses Lousia and Frances Wynne, who were visiting Penrhyn Castle at the time of the census (*Debrett's Peerage*, 1881, p. 48; RG 11/5577, f. 21). It is not impossible that this is Elizabeth Weston Davies, but the Misses Wynne also had a Welsh residence at Craig Lledr, Betws-Y-Coed, Caernarvonshire, and it seems more likely that their maid would have been recruited from that locality. Another possibility in the West End of London in 1881 is Elizabeth Davis [sic], aged 25, born in North Wales, who was a housemaid in Lower Grosvenor Place (RG 11/101, ff. 63, 63v).
- 22 *Middlesex Independent*, 31 December 1884.

After that, the petition alleges that she committed adultery with various men between June and 17 August, in the house [sic] or apartments occupied by "Mrs McLeod" in Campbell Street (presumably an error for Campbell Road), 9 Marcellus Road and 40 (later corrected to 80) Orpingley Road, Holloway. Then there is a more specific claim that she had committed adultery with one Harry McBain, a baker, at the same houses or apartments. McBain is the only man actually named in the petition, and he is cited as the co-respondent (his name is misspelled "McBlain" in the endorsement of the petition). The petition concludes by saying that on the nights of 17 and 18 August Elizabeth committed adultery with McBain at 26 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross.

WWD suggested that it was the endorsement that was correct, and the petition itself and the accompanying affidavit that were wrong. He identified the co-respondent as a wealthy retired ship-owner and timber merchant named Henry McBlain who lived in Camden Town – the description of him as a baker in the petition also being an error.²³ However, a likelier candidate is an Edinburgh-born baker named Henry McBain who was recorded, aged 47, living in a lodging house in Holloway in the 1891 census. The lodging house was actually at 47 Campbell Road, Upper Holloway, apparently one of the streets mentioned in the petition.²⁴



Campbell Road, Islington following the end of the Great War

Campbell Road later developed a terrible reputation, and Jerry White wrote a book about it entitled *Campbell Bunk: The Worst Street in North London Between the Wars*.²⁵ White identified the opening of the lodging house at number 47 – for 90 men in 1880 – as a turning point in the street's progression from respectability to notoriety.

As for the Mrs McLeod mentioned in the petition, WWD identified her as Ellen Macleod (née Maundrell), who he says operated a "string of middle class brothels" in the 1880s. He suggests that after the death of the Marquess of Londonderry in 1884, Elizabeth became a prostitute in one of these establishments, and that she may have met Francis through the designer William Morris, who knew Francis's father and may also have known Ellen Macleod.²⁶ These suggestions seem to be almost entirely speculative. The wording of the petition suggests to us that Francis was not even aware of the first name of the Mrs McLeod named in the petition. WWD suggests further that when Francis obtained permission to strike out the paragraph mentioning Mrs McLeod, it was part of a deal he had made with her for information about Elizabeth's whereabouts.²⁷ But a simpler explanation would be that he was simply uncertain about the accuracy of his information, as suggested by his vagueness about "houses or apartments", his correction of one of the house numbers and the error over one of the street names.

One other crucial detail about the failure of the marriage comes not from the petition, but from a press report of Francis's inquest 18 years later, where a witness said, "his married life was a brief one, his wife being a drunkard".²⁸ Sadly, that would be amply confirmed later on.

DEATH IN DOLGELLAU

No trace of Elizabeth Weston Davies has previously been found after 1885. That isn't necessarily very strange. At her birth she had been registered as plain Elizabeth Davies, and that is also how she was recorded in the 1861 and 1871 censuses. Elizabeth Davies was a very common name – in 1856, the year of her birth, there were 176 other

23 Weston-Davies, p. 56.

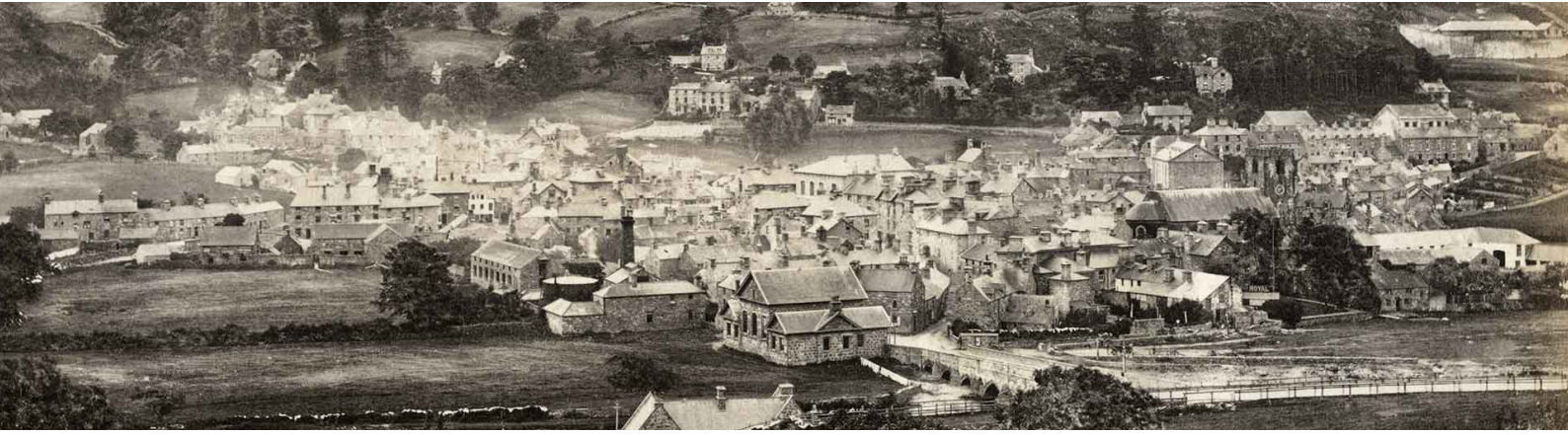
24 RG 12/149, f. 113v. Henry McBain also appears in the admission and discharge books of Islington Infirmary in the Spring and Autumn of 1887 (Ancestry.com, database of London Workhouse Admission and Discharge Records, 1764-1930, held by London Metropolitan Archives, not including document reference numbers).

25 Routledge and Kegan Paul (1986).

26 Weston-Davies, pp. 31-35.

27 Weston-Davies, pp. 69-71.

28 *West London Observer*, 13 March 1903.



Dolgellau
Courtesy dolgellau.wales

births registered under that name in Wales alone. If she had reverted to the surname she married under, Jones, the situation would have been even worse. Elizabeth would not necessarily have been easy to find, even if she had made no particular effort to conceal herself.

Even if she had used the distinctive middle name “Weston”, things might not be easy. For example, between the third quarter of 1910 and the first quarter of 1969, the index of death registrations in England and Wales doesn’t include the full middle name, but only the initial. There are 15 death registrations for women indexed as “Elizabeth W. Davies” up to 1956 – the centenary of the birth of Elizabeth Weston Davies.

But one entry looked as though it would be worth investigating. It was from the first quarter of 1929, and was for a woman aged 73, whose death was registered at Dolgelly (now usually called Dolgellau). The age was about right – exactly right going by the years alone rather than the months – and the registration district included Corris, where Elizabeth Weston Davies was born, and the part of Aberangell where she grew up.

This is what the death certificate said:

Registration District DOLGELLY.
1929. DEATHS in the Sub-District of BARMOUTH
in the County of MERIONETH.
No. 456
When and Where Died. Ninth March 1929.
Llwyn View Dolgelley. U. D.
Name and Surname. Elizabeth Weston Davies
Sex. Female
Age. 73 Years.
Rank or Profession. of no fixed place of abode.
spinster Hawker. daughter of Edward Davies a Police
Constable (deceased).
Cause of Death. I(a) Syncope (b) Arterio Sclerosis NO
P. M.

Certified by John Jones. L. R. C. P.
Signature, Description and Residence of Informant.
K. Rees Evans. Occupier Llwyn View Dolgelley.
When Registered. Twenty first March 1929.
Signature of Registrar. [?]W Lloyd. Registrar.

So this was indeed the death of an Elizabeth Weston Davies, and her father’s name gave us confirmation that this really was the woman we were looking for. Not only that, but additional confirmation came from the description of her father as a police constable. Although he had usually been said in documents to be a slate quarryman, a quarry agent or a land surveyor, on the birth certificate of his son John in 1864 he had been described as a police officer.²⁹ It’s not known in what capacity he served. No record has been found of his having been employed by the Merionethshire Constabulary, which was founded in 1857. But in some places unpaid part-time parish constables continued to serve alongside professional officers as late as the 1870s.³⁰

We had been lucky that Elizabeth’s death certificate included her middle name, Weston. If it hadn’t, her death would have been very difficult to find. The certificate also gives a clue to why she might have been absent from some other records. A hawker of no fixed abode would leave fewer traces than most people. Where had Elizabeth been between the 1880s and the 1920s?

29 Information kindly supplied by Wynne Weston-Davies.

30 D. J. V. Jones, “The New Police, Crime and People in England and Wales, 1829-1888”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, **33**, 151-168 (1983). WWD suggested alternatively that he might have served on one of the slate railways, which had their own police forces.

ST JULIAN'S WOOD

A century ago, beside the winding road that ran from Newport, Monmouthshire, to the little town of Caerleon on the Usk, lay St Julian's Wood. Only a couple of miles from the centre of Newport, it was a popular place for picnics. Just across the road was a pub, the St Julian's Inn, where the picnickers could refresh themselves. One afternoon in June 1914, the son-in-law of the licensee heard cries coming from the wood and went to investigate. He was shocked to see a woman sitting on the grass, almost naked, in tears and bleeding from the mouth. Nearby a man was standing under a tree, with the woman's clothing lying close to him on the ground. "He has nearly murdered me," said the woman. The man claimed she had stolen a sovereign from him, and said he meant to get it back.



*The St Julians, Caerleon Road
Courtesy John Grayson*

But others had also heard the commotion. A man named Anderson, who worked nearby, punched the man in the face, calling him a coward for treating a woman like that. Some others joined in and gave him a "thrashing", but he managed to get away. Later he was arrested in Newport, and charged with robbery with violence and attempted criminal assault.

The woman gave the name Laura Weston Davies, and the man was Richard Farmer Yates, described as a "big, burly labourer". Later in court the woman and the man told different stories about what had happened. According to her, that morning she had had half a pint of stout in a pub in Dock Street, and overheard some people there – including Yates – joking about the name of a racehorse. She didn't speak to him in the pub, but afterwards took a tramcar and got into conversation with him when they both got off at the terminus. Then they walked together towards Caerleon, where she was going to try to find an acquaintance. Evidently she was looking for financial assistance, because he told her he knew that on the right-hand side of the road lived some religious people

– or according to another report the very acquaintance the woman was looking for – who would be able to help her. So she foolishly went into the wood with him. Once they were there, he first said "improper things" and then assaulted her, hitting her in the face, dragging her into the undergrowth and gripping her by the throat. Then he threatened to kill her, kicking her, hitting her again and tearing off her clothes. She was saved only when three or four men ran up and stopped him. Then she lay there, naked and exhausted, until a police constable arrived.

Yates's version of events was very different. He said he had seen the woman offering laces for sale in the taproom of the King's Head in Dock Street. He bought her a drink and she asked him to go back with her to her lodgings (which were also in Dock Street). He didn't, but he went with her by tramcar to St Julian's. After they got out, she complained she had got sprigs in her boots, and they went into the wood together. Sitting down under a tree, she produced a bottle from her basket with some rum in it, and drank about half of it. Then she removed her boots, took her hat off and loosened her other clothing. After that she finished the rest of the rum, and he had a drink of beer. Then she slept for an hour, using his coat as a pillow. When she woke up she wanted another drink, and he gave her the bottle of beer. But things turned sour when he realised his money had gone, and a fight broke out between them. She hit him with the bottle and struck at him with a hatpin. In return for that, he admitted giving her "a few blows", but seemed indignant at the suggestion that he had kicked her. During the struggle, she pulled the arm of his shirt off and her dress "came off" too.

Yates's story was supported in part by other witnesses, and the doctor who had examined her said she smelled strongly of drink, though he also said her eyes, lips, cheeks and chin were swollen. There was a small laceration over one eye and she had scratches on her body. But Yates was also said to have marks on his face. When the case was heard at the Quarter Sessions, it seems the jury believed him rather than her, and found him not guilty in spite of the violence he had used against her.³¹

Who was this "Laura Weston Davies"? The newspaper reports give some more information about her. She is described as a widow aged 58 (or 56 in one report) hailing from Machynlleth. According to the police she was a pedlar, and she was lodging in a furnished room in Dock Street, Newport. Evidently she had a lot in common with Elizabeth Weston Davies. There is the uncommon middle name Weston. There is the closeness of age – Elizabeth

³¹ The main newspaper reports of the case are in *Western Mail*, 22 and 24 June and 2 July 1914, *Glamorgan Gazette*, 26 June 1914, and *Abergavenny Chronicle*, 3 July 1914.

would turn 58 in July 1914. There is the place of birth – Machynlleth was the nearest town to Corris, only about 4 miles away. And there is the occupation – to all intents the same as “hawker” on Elizabeth’s death certificate.



Could this be Elizabeth Weston Davies under another name? Two more details prove that it was.

The incident was unusual enough to be reported by some London newspapers, and according to one of them Laura Weston Davies was “the widow of a London editor”.³² That is very specific, and it’s exactly what Elizabeth Weston Davies was. Francis Spurzheim Craig had been born in Acton, then outside London, and had since lived in various places, but in the 1870s he and his parents had settled in London, and he had remained there for the rest of his life. And in 1875 he had been the editor of the *Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News* – albeit briefly, before being sacked for plagiarism.³³

The second detail must have seemed fanciful to many readers in the context of Laura’s tale. She said that she was going to Caerleon “to look for a lady who had gone out to India as a missionary with her (complainant’s) sister.”³⁴ But Elizabeth Weston Davies’s sister really had gone to India on missionary work. She belonged to a family of devout Calvinistic Methodists. An obituary of her sister Hannah spoke of the religious education she had received under the Methodists of Aberangell. Hannah had gone on to marry the brother of a minister, and had been a noted temperance campaigner.³⁵ Elizabeth’s brother John had married the niece of a minister.³⁶ And her sister Matilda had married another minister, Griffith Hughes, who was a missionary. After their marriage he went back to India, accompanied by Matilda, to continue his work in the Khasia Hills and Sylhet, and they remained there between 1876 and 1886.³⁷

Evidently “Laura” was really Elizabeth Weston Davies.

One of the reports tells us a little more about her movements. It says she had been “for some time in service with a well-known medical man and his family at Bridgend” and adds “She has excellent references from a Calvinistic Methodist minister in the same locality.”³⁸

Five years later she was back at Bridgend, and was involved in an incident that was remarkably similar to the one in St Julian’s Wood. But this time she was the accused. In July 1919, as “Laura Davies”, a widow aged 64, of no fixed place of abode, she appeared at Bridgend magistrates’ court, charged with stealing £2 in notes and a watch and chain from William Hughes, a labourer from Chepstow. According to Hughes, he had met Laura in Bridgend one afternoon and after drinking a “few flagons” in two pubs they went off together to a hayfield off Cowbridge Road. After falling asleep, the man woke to find Laura gone. Also gone were his money, his watch and his chain. Not a halfpenny had been left behind. “Laura” was later arrested at the “model lodging house” and at first tried to claim she knew nothing about it. Later she said it had happened “through the drink”. In court she claimed the watch had been a gift from Hughes. But she was convicted and sentenced to a month in prison.³⁹

When “Laura” went to Caerleon to look for her sister’s former missionary companion, she had been hoping that lady might be able to help her. Perhaps she had originally gone to Bridgend for a similar reason. In 1906, her brother Edward’s daughter Mary (known as May) had married a Bridgend solicitor named John Thomas Howell, and in 1911 the couple were living in Park Street, Bridgend. John’s brother, David William Howell, was a Calvinistic

32 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 June 1914.

33 Weston-Davies, pp. 40-46.

34 *Glamorgan Gazette*, 26 June 1914.

35 *Y Gwilydydd*, 17 December 1908.

36 John married Lizzie Jane Griffith, who was the niece of the Rev. Mr Owen Hughes, who officiated at their wedding (namely, the daughter of his sister Anne). One newspaper report of the marriage mistakenly said he was the uncle of the bridegroom, rather than the bride (*North Wales Chronicle*, 8 August 1891). See also indexes of registrations of births and marriages; census records: RG 9/4349, f. 25v; RG 10/5715, f. 24; RG 11/5565, f. 14; RG 12/4675, f. 112.

37 Biographical articles on Griffith Hughes and his first wife Elizabeth are included in “Vehicles of Grace and Hope: Welsh Missionaries in India 1800-1970”, edited by D. Ben Rees, pp. 62 and 65 (2002).

38 *Glamorgan Gazette*, 26 June 1914. At her later court appearance at Bridgend in 1919, perhaps referring to the same period, she said she had previously been there for years: “I lived at the Mission Hall, and then I was in the little cottage near the slaughter-house for two years, with Mr. James.”

39 *Glamorgan Gazette*, 18 July 1919.

Methodist minister at Pencoed nearby. It's possible he was the minister who had provided "Laura" with the "excellent references" mentioned after the incident in St Julian's Wood. Sadly Mary died in 1916, but two years later John married her sister Matilda. So "Laura" would still have had a niece living in Bridgend at the time of her later visit in 1919.⁴⁰

"DRINK HAS BEEN MY DOWNFALL"

We had been lucky that at her death the full name of Elizabeth Weston Davies had been recorded – and also that in 1914 she had given her unusual middle name and her original surname, even though she had used a different forename. As it turned out, she didn't usually give her middle name, and often she didn't use any of the names her parents had given her.

But we had another stroke of luck. On two occasions – in 1908 and 1910 – she had committed more serious offences that were classed as felonies, and had been tried in the Assize Court. After such trials, calendars of prisoners were prepared, which included not only the details of the case being tried, but also the previous criminal record.⁴¹ Three of the convictions were under the same name – Laura Davies – that she used in 1914 and 1919. And there can be little doubt that this was the same "Laura", because one of these crimes took place on the familiar ground of Caerleon, and actually ended with the culprit being arrested after she was discovered lying down in a field at St Julian's!

But on other occasions she had used aliases – three other names as well as Laura Davies. And in none of the court appearances listed had she used her original name of Elizabeth Davies. Here is what the calendar of prisoners said in 1910:

Laura Davies, 52, Hawker
41s. 6d. or 14 Days, Pontypridd Petty Sess., 4th Sept., 1901 (stealing 10s.), as Laura Smith.
2 Mos., Newport Borough Petty Sess., 12th Feb., 1904 (stealing umbrella and money boxes), as Rhoda Weaver.
1 Mo., Penarth Petty Sess., 24th April, 1907 (stealing two watches and gold chain).
7, 7, & 14 Days (consecutive), Caerleon Petty Sess., 14th Sept., 1905 (stealing a shawl, box of starch, and cigarettes).
1 Mo., Glamorgan Assizes, 14th March, 1908 (stealing purse and money), as Nora Pearce.
6 Wks., Newport Borough Petty Sess., 16 Nov., 1908 (stealing nine bagatelle balls), as Rhoda Weaver.
5 summary convictions:- drunkenness and disorderly prostitute, 1902 to 1906.
[In 1910 committed by] Howell Rees, Esq., Petty Sessions, Barry.

[Warrant dated] 4th Feb.

[Received into custody] 31st Jan. (on remand)

[Offence] Feloniously did steal, take, and carry away a hat, the goods and chattels of Lucy Cookerley, on the 25th January, 1910, within the Parish of Barry.

[Tried before] Mr. Justice Coleridge, 16th March, 1910.

[Verdict] Guilty

[Previous convictions] 16th Nov., 1908

[Sentence] 5 months hard labour.

With the help of this information and newspaper reports of her trials, we were able to piece together the story of Elizabeth's criminal activities between 1901 and 1910.

Pontypridd, Glamorgan, September 1901

At Pontypridd magistrates' court, as Laura Smith, she was found guilty of stealing 10 shillings, and sentenced to a fine of 41 shillings and sixpence or 14 days of hard labour.

April 1902-July 1906

She received five summary convictions – four for drunkenness and one as a disorderly prostitute.

The calendars don't give the exact details of the summary cases. But probably most if not all were at Barry, Glamorgan, under the name Laura Davies. There are six newspaper reports of warrants issued or sentences given there, either for drunkenness, for being drunk and disorderly, or for soliciting.⁴²

Newport, Monmouthshire, February 1904

At Newport magistrates' court, as Rhoda Weaver, she was found guilty of stealing various items from the Hastings Beerhouse in Commercial Road, and sentenced to two months of hard labour.

A newspaper report described her as a middle-aged widow, and she told the court she was a hawker. It seems that after having half a pint of stout in the pub the previous night she had hidden on the premises. Early the next morning she was seen leaving by a side door and challenged by a police constable. When the landlady

40 *Welsh Gazette and West Wales Advertiser*, 28 June 1906; *Glamorgan Gazette*, 2 June 1916 and 22 March 1918; RG 14/32569, registration district 591, sub-district 4, enumeration district 1, number 82; RG 14/32585, registration district 591, sub-district 4, enumeration district 17, number 109.

41 After-trial calendars of prisoners: National Archives, HO 140/263, Glamorgan, Winter Assizes, March 1908, nos B 75 and 76, and 140/279, Glamorgan, Winter Assizes, March 1910, no B 39.

42 *Barry Dock News*, 21 March and 2 May 1902, 4 November 1904, 16 June 1905 and 5 January 1906; *Barry Herald*, 21 March, 2 and 30 May 1902 and 5 January 1906.

B 38	Albert George Brasington, 27, Railway Signalman 4	1st Feb...	surrendered in Court, 16th Mar.
	Bailed at Police Court, 1st February, 1910.		
B 39	Laura Davies, 52, Hawker 3	4th Feb.	31st Jan. (on remand)
	41s. 6d. or 14 Days, Pontypridd Petty Sess., 4th Sept., 1901 (stealing 10s.), as Laura Smith.		
	2 Mos., Newport Borough Petty Sess., 12th Feb., 1904 (stealing umbrella and money boxes), as Rhoda Weaver.		
	1 Mo., Penarth Petty Sess., 24th April, 1907 (stealing two watches and gold chain).		
	7, 7, & 14 Days (consecutive), Caerleon Petty Sess., 14th Sept., 1905 (stealing a shawl, box of starch, and cigarettes).		
	1 Mo., Glamorgan Assizes, 14th March, 1908 (stealing purse and money), as Nora Pearce.		
	6 Wks., Newport Borough Petty Sess., 16th Nov., 1908 (stealing nine bagatelle balls), as Rhoda Weaver.		
	5 summary convictions:—drunkenness and disorderly prostitute, 1902 to 1906.		
* B 40	Patrick Slavin, 28, Labourer 2	8th Feb.	8th Feb.
	14 Days, Cowbridge Petty Sess., 29th July, 1902 (stealing a bottle of whiskey).		
	1 Mo., Cardiff Petty Sess., 12th June, 1903 (stealing a pair of boots).		

Laura Davies' appearance in the 1910 calendar of prisoners

of the pub was aroused, she found the following items were missing: "a shawl, two articles of underclothing, an umbrella, two children's money-boxes, containing about 7s., a couple of shillings in coppers, and half-a-dozen bottles of stout." The police also stated that "Rhoda" was wanted in Cardiff for the alleged theft of sailors' clothes. In court she said, "I am ashamed to acknowledge it, but drink has been my downfall".⁴³

Caerleon, Monmouthshire, September 1905

At Caerleon magistrates' court, as Laura Davies, she was found guilty of stealing a shawl, a box of starch and two boxes of cigarettes, and sentenced to a month of hard labour.

A newspaper report described her as a tramping pedlar of no fixed abode. The stolen items had been taken from the Hanbury Arms, Caerleon. The shawl belonged to another customer, and had disappeared while the owner went upstairs to see her mother. She reported it to the police and a constable found Laura lying down in a field at St Julian's, with the shawl around her shoulders and the other stolen items with her. When she was charged, she claimed she had bought the shawl and the box of starch, but could offer no explanation of how she'd got the cigarettes. But in court she pleaded guilty and explained she'd been drunk and she didn't know what had possessed her to do such a thing.⁴⁴

Barry, Glamorgan, April 1907

At Penarth magistrates' court, as Laura Davies, she was found guilty of stealing watches, a gold chain and money, and sentenced to a month of hard labour.

Newspaper reports described her as a Barry prostitute, and said she had stolen a gold Albert watch chain, a locket, silver and metal watches (worth six pounds, seven shillings and sixpence) and between five and eight shillings of silver, from the person of a (ship's) fireman.⁴⁵

Cardiff, Glamorgan, February 1908

At the Glamorgan Assizes at Cardiff, in April, as Norah Pearce, hawker, she was found guilty of feloniously stealing – with William Pearce – a purse containing about three pounds, and sentenced to a month of hard labour.

A newspaper report explained the circumstances. She and William Pearce were travelling umbrella and china repairers. Pearce is described in the calendar of prisoners as a tinker, and he had a violent history, with one conviction for assaulting a woman, another for aggravated assault and three for assaulting police officers. The two of them called at the house of a Mrs Moss to return a china bowl that Pearce had repaired. After she had paid them, the woman put her purse on the table. "Norah" then distracted her by asking if she had any unwanted clothes she could give her, and when she went to look for some, the thieves took the purse. The victim realised the purse was missing only after they had gone, and told the police, who arrested the couple in Newport.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Evening Express*, 12 February 1904.

⁴⁴ *Pontypool Free Press*, 22 September 1905

⁴⁵ *Evening Express*, 24 April 1907; *Barry Dock News*, 26 April 1907.

⁴⁶ *Cardiff Times*, 29 February 1908; *Evening Express*, 7 April 1908.

Newport, Monmouthshire, November 1908

At Newport magistrates' court, as Rhoda Weaver, she was found guilty of stealing nine billiard balls, and sentenced to six weeks in prison.

A little more light is shed on this strange crime – though only a little – by a newspaper report, which mentions that she was of no fixed abode and explains that the balls were the property of an antique dealer. “Rhoda” was unable to explain it. She could only say, “My mind is a complete blank on the matter.”⁴⁷

Barry, Glamorgan, January 1910

Finally, at the Glamorgan Assizes at Cardiff, in March, as Laura Davies, hawker, she was found guilty of feloniously stealing a woman's hat, and sentenced to five months of hard labour.

The hat, worth 30 shillings, was missed by the owner from the umbrella stand at her home in Barry. We're not told how “Laura” got hold of it, but afterwards she sold it to another woman for two shillings and sixpence, telling her it had been a gift to her from a Cardiff clergyman, but she was selling it because she was starving and had nowhere to sleep. When she appeared at the magistrates' court she appeared “very distressed and penitent”, but it seems she was still denying her guilt, and saying another woman had given it to her to sell. But again she was convicted.⁴⁸

“Laura” was released from prison on 9 July 1910, according to a register of habitual criminals compiled by the Metropolitan Police.⁴⁹ She told the authorities she intended to live at 30, Lee Road, Cadoxton, now a suburb of Barry. But she had already moved on by the time the census was taken early the following year. The same register also gives a physical description. She was 5 feet, 3 inches tall, with a swarthy complexion, grey hair and blue eyes. The list of distinguishing marks reflects a hard life: “scar over left eyebrow, each side face and blue scar left cheek”.

OTHER POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS

The calendars of prisoners take Elizabeth's history back securely as far as 1901. They show no convictions before that date, but throughout the period they cover she was moving around and using assumed names, so it may be there were earlier convictions she hadn't admitted to. This leaves a 16-year gap between the last sighting of her in London in 1885 and the first known conviction at Pontypridd in 1901. Although we haven't found anything else definite, there are some other possible sightings, both in this period and afterwards.

For example, in September 1903 the police were looking

for a woman calling herself Miss Laura Davies, who had passed off worthless cheques to several tradesmen in Hereford and a jeweller in Shrewsbury, in exchange for goods and cash. The cheques came from a book that had been lost (or more likely stolen) in Builth, in Breconshire. Perhaps this could be Elizabeth, taking advantage of a lucky opportunity. But these crimes were some distance from her usual South Wales haunts, and this Laura Davies sounds like rather a different character. She is described as a fashionably dressed woman of smart appearance, appearing to be in her late 30s – rather younger than Elizabeth – and apparently travelling around by train.⁵⁰

Earlier the same year, another Laura Davies had appeared in the magistrates' court at Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorgan. An N.S.P.C.C. inspector had seen her near the railway station with her daughter, who was aged 9 or 10, and blind. The child was holding out a tin mug and asking for money. The inspector and a colleague questioned the mother, and she said they had come to Merthyr five weeks earlier. She told them she was a married woman living apart from her husband, and it seems she had two children – though not by her husband – the other having been taken to one of Dr Barnardo's Homes. Sadly, the Merthyr magistrates ordered that her remaining child should also be taken away from her, and sent to a home for blind children in Liverpool (probably the Royal School for the Blind).⁵¹

Could this “Laura” have been Elizabeth? There is no other indication that Elizabeth had children. But given what we know, it's plausible that she could have done, and that they could have been taken into care. But there is nothing definite to confirm it.

Ten years before this, in October 1893, at the Quarter Sessions at Usk, Monmouthshire, a woman called Elizabeth Jones had been convicted of a crime with some familiar elements. She had met a miner in a pub at Newbridge, Monmouthshire. Both of them had already been drinking. Some “larking” went on, and he bought her some beer. But after she had left the pub he discovered his watch was missing. He went looking for her and found her in the neighbouring village of Crumlin. However, when he asked for the watch she screamed “murder”, and as he wasn't sure she had taken it, he let her go. But later he reported

47 *Evening Express*, 16 November 1908

48 *Evening Express*, 4 February 1910; *Barry Herald*, 11 February 1910.

49 National Archives, MEPO 6/21.

50 *Worcestershire Chronicle*, 26 September 1903; *Hereford Journal*, 26 September 1903; *Bromyard News*, 1 October 1903.

51 *Weekly Mail*, 30 May 1903; *Cardiff Times*, 30 May 1903; *Merthyr Express*, 13 June 1903.

the theft to the police, and they arrested Elizabeth and eventually got her to admit she had taken the watch. But she claimed the miner had given it to her because he owed her money for prostitution. At the Quarter Sessions she was sentenced to six weeks of hard labour.

Of course, Jones was the surname under which Elizabeth Weston Davies had married in 1884. A newspaper report described Elizabeth Jones as “a well-known character”, and according to the calendar of prisoners she had many previous convictions – one at Pontypridd magistrates’ court in 1890 for stealing clothes and 69 other summary convictions “for drunkenness, &c” (a newspaper report said 30 convictions at Cardiff and 60 at Blaina). Her age was given as 39 – just a couple of years older than Elizabeth Weston Davies would have been. The offence sounds very much like Elizabeth’s later escapades, even down to some of the details, but again there is no proof that it was Elizabeth.⁵²

The likeliest sighting is the earliest one – only a couple of years after she was last recorded in London. In April 1887 a young woman from Merthyr Tydfil named Elizabeth W. Davies found herself in the magistrates’ court at Stroud in Gloucestershire. She had been arrested four days before, after a police constable encountered her in the street one evening. Her face was bruised and she was “behaving in an extraordinary manner”, to the extent that the constable thought she was an “imbecile”. As it turned out, she was just very drunk, and when she sobered up she seemed perfectly sane. In court she said she was very grateful for the kindness of the police, and the magistrates discharged her.⁵³

This certainly sounds like Elizabeth Weston Davies, and it suggests she had gone to South Wales very soon after the events described in the dissolution petition. If so, she may well have stayed there for at least the next 30 years.⁵⁴

Why should Elizabeth have moved to South Wales, rather than going back to the area she came from? It may have been simply that the urban south offered more opportunities than the rural north-west. But there may have been a more personal reason. In the mid-1880s, around the time when Elizabeth is lost sight of in London, her elder brother Edward Hurst Davies seems to have been living in the parish of Ystradyfodwg in Glamorgan, where his son John was born in 1886.⁵⁵ Ystradyfodwg was a large parish to the south-west of Merthyr Tydfil, covering roughly the same area as the present-day district of Rhondda, and stretching from the Vale of Neath to the outskirts of Pontypridd. It was very close to the places where Elizabeth may have left traces in the 1880s and 1890s, and to her first definite appearance in Pontypridd in 1901. Perhaps when Elizabeth left London she went to Glamorgan in the hope that her brother could help her.

CONCLUSION

The reaction of Ripper researchers to WWD’s book was sceptical on the whole. But the story of Elizabeth Weston Davies, as presented in the book, did have some striking resemblances to the accounts Mary Kelly had given of her past. That tempered the scepticism, and it’s probably fair to say that the verdict was “not proven” rather than one of outright dismissal, at least as far as the suggested identification of Mary Kelly was concerned.

But we believe the information in this article shows beyond any reasonable doubt that Elizabeth Weston Davies did not die in 1888, but survived for another 40 years. Her story was a tragic one, but it was not the story of Mary Kelly. As for Francis Spurzheim Craig, the only reason for connecting him with the Whitechapel Murders was the theory that his wife was one of the victims. That theory was incorrect. Craig met a tragic end, but he was not Jack the Ripper, and there is no evidence to suggest he harmed anyone but himself.

Elizabeth was laid to rest on 15 March 1929 in Dolgellau Cemetery.⁵⁶ The place-name Dolgellau is said to mean “the dale of the hazel groves”. We hope that, after a tempestuous life, Elizabeth is now at peace in the dale of the hazel groves, near her childhood home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We have benefitted from reading the discussions of WWD’s book at both jtrforums.com and casebook.org, and we acknowledge the contributions of all those who took part in them. We are grateful to Wynne Weston-Davies for his comments on this article and for kindly sharing with us information about the family. We are also grateful to the staff of Meirionnydd Record Office for providing details of the burial of Elizabeth Weston Davies and a plan of Dolgellau Cemetery.

52 After-trial calendar of prisoners: National Archives, HO 140/147, Quarter Sessions, Usk, October 1893, no 13; *Pontypool Free Press*, 13 Oct 1893; *Monmouthshire Beacon*, 21 Oct 1893.

53 *Gloucester Citizen*, 19 April 1887.

54 After the incident in St Julian’s Wood, she was asked when she had last seen the lady she was looking for at Caerleon, who had gone to India with her sister. She said it had been about 22 years before (*Western Mail*, 24 June 1914). She didn’t say where, but if it was at Caerleon that would place her in South Wales in the early 1890s.

55 RG 12/4641, f. 12v. Edward must have gone to Ystradyfodwg in or after early 1883 – when his daughter Anne Maria was born in Cardiganshire – and he was back in Aberangell by late 1887 [*The Cardigan Bay Visitor*, 7 September 1887].

56 Information kindly provided by Meirionnydd Record Office in Dolgellau. The burial plot is numbered D-155.



Top: Dolgellau Cemetery, with the buildings of the workhouse where Elizabeth died behind the wall on the left
(Courtesy www.martin-nicholson.info/cemetery/cemeterydolgcm.htm)

Bottom: The site of her burial ringed

PAT MARSHALL grew up in London and went to school in Stepney in the early Sixties. She used to pass Henriques (Berner) street every day without a thought. Since retirement she has delved into her family history and found some amazing facts. When she discovered that her great-great-uncle Henry Cox, a City detective, was involved in the Whitechapel murders her research began to focus on the investigation.

CHRIS PHILLIPS was trained as an applied mathematician, but later metamorphosed into a medieval genealogist. He also has an interest in the Whitechapel Murders and other criminal cases, and recently published a book, "Hanged for the Word If", about a miscarriage of justice: the execution of Mahmood Hussein Mattan for the murder of Lily Volpert in Cardiff in 1952. He lives in South London.

A RESPONSE FROM WYNNE WESTON-DAVIES

First of all may I say that Pat Marshall and Chris Phillips have done an amazing job, and that I unequivocally accept their findings and agree that the murdered woman found in Miller's Court in November 1888 could not have been Elizabeth Weston-Davies. When my book, *The Real Mary Kelly*, was published in 2015 it was the culmination of more than twenty years of genealogical research in which I had attempted to trace the 'missing' member of my father's family, and my conclusion that she was Mary Jane

Kelly was a genuinely held belief. At the time that I did my research, resources for genealogical research were much more limited than they are now, and I had been totally unable to find a death certificate for an Elizabeth Weston Davies or an Elizabeth W. Davies that matched her credentials. For the same reason, it has been only fairly recently that I have been able to find the death certificate of her brother, my grandfather, John Weston Davies.

Having said that, there is another possibility that may be worth considering. The young prostitute who arrived in Pennington Street in late 1885 or early 1886 and lodged first with Mrs Boeku (or Buki) and later with Mrs McCarthy in Breezer's Hill disappeared for some months before meeting Joe Barnett on March 8th 1888 and moving in to Miller's Court. It was by no means certain, either then or now, that they were one and the same person, and that assumption seems to have been made largely by reporters after the final murder. It is possible that the person who arrived in Pennington Street was Elizabeth Weston-Davies and that she later decided to return to Wales, and another woman with a similar background, calling herself Mary Jane Kelly, later turned up in Spitalfields. If so, it remains for Pat Marshall and Chris Phillips, or another dedicated researcher, to find out who she was, something that has eluded Ripperologists for more than half a century.

Finally, whilst the new findings now make Elizabeth's husband Francis Spurzheim Craig a less likely Ripper suspect, I do think that he is deserving of much more study. Craig was in the area for the whole period of the Whitechapel murders, living in the Mile End Road as the editor of the *Tower Hamlets Gazette and East London Advertiser*. He had a definite personality disorder (later cutting his own throat). He was a skilled anatomist and dissector. He was always free on the nights of the murders, as the weekly paper was 'put to bed' late on Friday afternoon leaving him free from early Friday evening to Tuesday morning. He had all the credentials of the man the police had profiled – a respectable middle-aged man, living alone and free at the relevant times. He also had reason to dislike prostitutes. He left the area a few weeks or months after the last killing. It is also noteworthy that for the whole time that he was editor of the *Advertiser* and writing most of the copy, it never once used the words 'Jack the Ripper', at a time when most other newspapers in the world were using them almost daily.

Be all that as it may, I offer Pat Marshall and Chris Phillips my sincere congratulations on an amazingly thorough piece of research and would like to add that, although their discoveries concerning my great aunt make harrowing reading, I am genuinely pleased that hers was not the body discovered in Miller's Court, and pleased that I and other members of the family finally know where she was laid to rest and will now be able to visit her grave.

JACK THE RIPPER: THE REACTION OF THE WELSH PRESS AND SOCIETY

By MELFYN HOPKINS

The tragic events of the autumn murders in Whitechapel in 1888 had a profound effect on the inhabitants of the East End. Through the popularity of the newspapers, news of the murders reached other parts of Britain within a day. News of the incidents reached Wales soon after the events took place, and through a study of the Welsh press in both the English and Welsh languages we can see how the news affected people and in some cases influenced their behaviour towards others within their community. They give an insight to the social attitudes and behaviour of people far removed from the events in the capital.

THE WELSH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

The Welsh language press particularly used the murders to make wider political points in a series of strongly-worded attacks on the policy of the government towards Irish Home Rule and Egypt. Some of these criticisms were highly charged.

The 1880s was a period of social and political change in Wales. It was a period of transition from a mainly rural society to a society heavily based on the heavy industry of coal and steel in the south. Larger steel working appeared in 1886 at Morriston in Swansea and coal mining continued to expand, and reached one of its highest outputs in 1888 of 300 tons per miner.¹ The decade was the last period where unemployed rural workers could be absorbed into the industrial heartlands of the south, bringing with them their cultural heritage: nonconformity, the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Wales, language and Eisteddfodau.²

The Welsh language was widely spoken in 1888; in the 1891 census – the first census to record the ability to speak Welsh – showed that 54% of the population could

speaking the language. This ranged from over 89% in the counties of Anglesey, Caernarvon and Merionethshire to a mere 6% in Radnorshire and 13% in Monmouthshire.³

Rural Wales had its issues as well. Many farmers felt that landowners raised the rent excessively, and linked with disestablishment was the tithe question. Many farmers felt unhappy in having to pay a tithe; most were nonconformists, and it was seen as a way of bolstering the unpopular Anglican Church in Wales. This led to some agricultural workers taking militant action against the authorities. An anti-tithe league was formed in 1886 to oppose the charge, and an influential Welsh language newspaper of the day, *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, led by its influential editor Thomas Gee, used its editorials to oppose the tithe. *Baner* was widely read in Welsh speaking areas.

In June 1887 a meeting held at Mochdre to oppose paying the tithes led to widespread violence: fifty people were injured, including thirty-four police. In Welsh history it is known as 'Rhyfel y Degwm' (The tithe wars).⁴

Politically, by 1888 Wales was the heartland for the Liberal party. At the General Election of 1886 twenty-five seats went to the party, and by the 1892 election they were to win all but three of the thirty-four Welsh parliamentary seats.

1 Evans, Gareth E. *The History of Wales 1815-1906*. University of Wales Press (1989) p.190.

2 Evans, Op. cit p.187.

3 See www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/EW1901GEN/13 accessed March 8th 2021. For a concise analysis and a detailed study in Parry, G. and Williams, M. *The Welsh Language and the 1891 Census*. University of Wales Press (1999)

4 Morgan, K.O. *Wales in British Politics 1869-1922*. University of Wales Press (1980) p.85.

The 1880s saw a new, more radical group of young Welsh Liberals emerging, such as Tom Ellis and David Lloyd George.⁵ It was the Liberal Party agenda which dominated the political landscape in Wales and its press from 1886: temperance, education, tithes, land reform, home rule and disestablishment.⁶

The Local Government Act of 1888 established County Council elections, and in 1889 the Liberal party dominated the local political agenda as well. The local landed gentry, who had dominated local politics, were almost wiped out in a peaceful social revolution.⁷



David Lloyd George

Added to the social change there were political expressions of Welsh culture and nationality. A Welsh political movement, 'Cymru Fydd' (Wales Will Be), was established in London in 1886 to promote the idea for Home Rule for Wales. When David Lloyd George became an MP in 1890 he supported the movement, but it was short-lived and by 1896 had lost its momentum.⁸ Some commentators went further: Michael D. Jones – who was to comment about the murders in a forceful polemic – and Emrys ap Iwan advocated full independence for Wales.⁹

Michael D. Jones was a hugely influential figure, a Christian minister and editor of the Welsh language newspaper *Y Celt*. Both he and Emrys ap Iwan supported the establishment of a Welsh colony in Patagonia in 1865,

which continues to this day. When Jones was elected a county councillor in 1889 he was appalled that he was not allowed to speak Welsh in council meetings.¹⁰ They were, however, very rare figures, and as K.O. Morgan commented, 'most Welsh radicals were essentially British Liberals rather than Celtic nationalists.'¹¹

The social and political scene in 1888 was therefore highly charged, and it was well served by a range of newspapers. It has been seen as a golden age for Welsh publishing.¹² The industrial areas of South Wales were well served with *The Western Mail*, *South Wales Echo*, *South Wales Daily News* and *The Cardiff Times*. Most Welsh language newspapers had a radical view of events, and included *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* ('The Banner and Welsh Times'), *Y Celt* ('The Celt'), *Y Dydd* ('The Day') and *Y Drych* ('The Mirror', which was published in the USA). Radical voices therefore had a choice of publications to express their opinions. It was in this febrile atmosphere that the first reports of the Whitechapel atrocities filtered through.

COVERAGE IN THE WELSH PRESS

English language newspapers in Wales referred to the killer as 'Jack the Ripper'. Welsh language newspapers gave their own names to the killer, but all were variations on the English name 'Jack', and a literal translation of 'Ripper'. *Baner* used 'Jack y Rhwygwr'.¹³ 'Jac y Rhwygwr' was also used by a number of newspapers.¹⁴ There was even a 'Sion y Rhwygwr'.¹⁵ Some commentators were very unhappy using the Welsh language for someone so barbaric.

5 Morgan, K.O. *Wales 1880-1980*. Oxford University Press (1980) p.29, and Jones, Gareth E. *Modern Wales a Concise History*. Cambridge University Press (1994) p.245.

6 Evans, Op. cit p.304.

7 Morgan, K.O., Op cit. p.52.

8 See Hughes, D.R. *Cymru Fydd*. University of Wales Press (2007), a Welsh language history, but also Jenkins, P.A. *History of Modern Wales 1536-1990*. Longman (1992) p.334-7.

9 Jones, Tudur R. *Michael D. Jones A Thynged y Genedl in Cof Cenedl*. Gomer Press (1986) p.95-125.

10 Jones Op. cit p.114.

11 Morgan. K.O. Op. cit p.113.

12 Hopkins, M. For an overview of the period see wordcatcher.com/was-the-19th-century-a-golden-age-for-Welsh-publishing-mel-hopkins accessed March 7th 2021.

13 *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, October 16th 1888 p.6 and November 7th 1888 p.10.

14 *Y Dydd*, November 2nd 1888 p.4; *Y Werin*, October 13th 1888; and *Y Llan*, November 2nd 1888 p.1.

15 *Y Celt*, November 16th 1888 p.7.

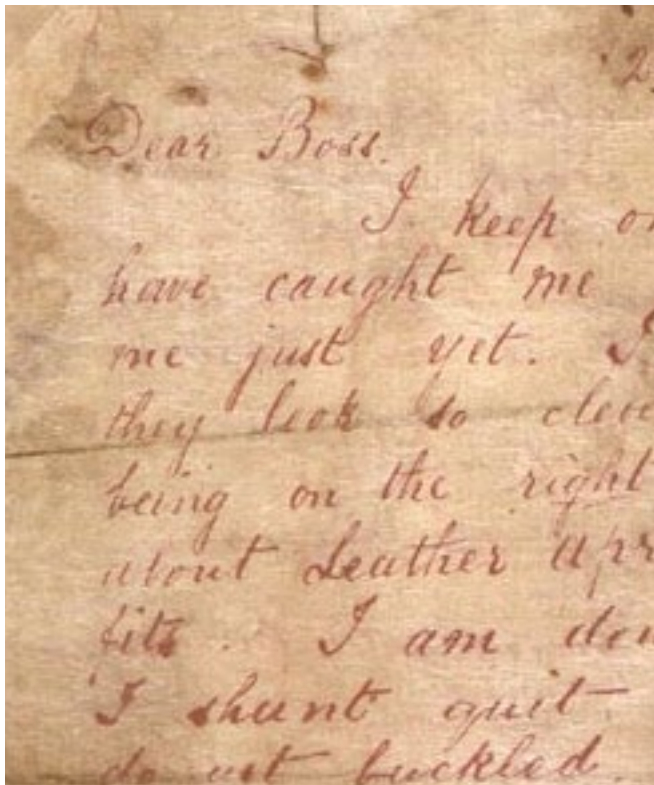
A correspondent complained that

‘Sion y Rhwygwr’ —an oratorical nickname given by the (writer) to the London murderer. For our part, we would leave him in his English guise, ‘Jack the Ripper’, and keep the Welsh language far away from him.¹⁶

Both languages reported the murders in detail and there were graphic descriptions of the murder scenes, particularly at Mitre Square and Miller’s Court, the scenes of Elizabeth Stride and Mary Kelly’s deaths.¹⁷ Detailed maps of the murder sites were published, informing the reader of the environment of the killer. Plans of Mitre Square and Goulston Street¹⁸ and Dorset Street were printed.¹⁹

The newspaper publication of images of the suspects and copies of the letters allegedly sent by Jack the Ripper had an impact on the Welsh public. The first suspect images were based on Mathew Packer’s description of the man he had seen shortly before Elizabeth Stride’s murder, and appeared in several papers.²⁰

The contents of the myriad of letters sent to the police and other agencies were translated into Welsh for consumption by an eager public. The ‘Dear Boss’ letter sent to the Central News Agency was reported widely.²¹ The Welsh language papers gave helpful translations: ‘Y Boss Annwyl’ (literally ‘Dear Boss’), although some words within the letter were not translated and were kept in English: job, ginger beer, sport and glue.²²



‘Y Boss Annwyl’: the ‘Dear Boss’ letter

The ‘From Hell’ letter to George Lusk was also quoted and commented upon and translated, however, the ‘Catch Me When You Can’ sign off was not translated in every newspaper.²³

Reports of match girls from the Bryant and May factory were reported under the headline ‘MATCH GIRLS THREATENED’. The report stated that Messrs Bryant and May had received a letter threatening the girls working there. They had been in the news in July, when many of the women had gone on strike. The letter received stated that:

I hereby notify that I am going to pay your girls a visit. I bear that they are beginning to say what they will do with me. I am going to see what a few of them have in their stomachs, and I will take it out of them, so that they can have no more to do on the quiet. (Signed) John Ripper. P.S.: I am in Poplar to-day.²⁴

These were some of the first letters to be reproduced in the newspapers, and as they were so well known by the public it led to many copying key phrases in them to settle local scores or disputes.

Early reports of the Goulston Street graffito recorded the message chalked at Wentworth Model Dwellings with little indication there was any dispute regarding the actual wording. As *The Cardiff Times* recorded:

After killing Katherine [sic] Eddowes in Mitre Square the murderer, it is now known, walked to Goulston Street, where he threw away the piece of the deceased woman’s apron upon which he had wiped his bloody hands and the knife. Within a few feet of this spot he had written upon the wall –“The Jews shall not be blamed for nothing.” Most unfortunately, one of

- 16 *Y Drych*, December 12th 1888 p.2 “Sion y Rhwygwr”—enw olesurol y mae’r prifathro yn ei roddi ar y llofrudd Llundainig. O’n rhan ein hunain, buasem yn ei adael yn ei wisg Seisnig, “Jack the Ripper,” ac yn cadw’r Gymraeg lan yn bell oddiwrtho.
- 17 Elizabeth Stride: *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, October 3rd 1888 p.14 and Mary Kelly: *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, November 14th 1888 p.4; *Seren Cymru*, November 16th 1888 p.5.
- 18 *South Wales Echo*, October 1st 1888 p.3.
- 19 *South Wales Echo*, November 12th 1888 p.3.
- 20 *South Wales Echo*, October 6th 1888 p. 3 *South Wales Daily News* October 8th 1888 p.3, *The Cardiff Times* October 13th 1888 p.7.
- 21 *South Wales Echo*, October 1st 1888 p.4.
- 22 *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* October 3rd 1888 p.14.
- 23 *South Wales Echo*, October 19th 1888 p. 4 *Y Llan* October 26th 1888 p. 1 translated as : Daliwch Fi Pan y Gellwch
- 24 *South Wales Daily News*, October 8th 1888 p.3. For more about the links between the match girls and Jack the Ripper see Saint, F. review of *Strike a Light* in *Ripperologist* 119 p.102-105.

the police officers gave orders for this writing to be immediately sponged out, probably with a view of stilling the morbid curiosity which it would certainly have aroused, but in so doing a very important link was destroyed, for had the writing been photographed a certain clue would have been in the hands of the authorities. The witnesses who saw the writing, however, state that it was similar in character to the letters sent to the Central News, and signed Jack the Ripper, and though it would have been far better to have clearly demonstrated this by photography.²⁵

The Welsh language press also records the words of the writing in translation, 'Not for nothing the Jews will be blamed.'²⁶ *Y Werin* wrote: 'On the wall these words were written, and those who saw it said that the handwriting was exactly similar to that belonging to Jack the Ripper.' From a very early stage, newspapers were surprised that the writing had not been recorded permanently.

THE WELSH VICTIM

A great deal of interest was shown in the Welsh press regarding Mary Kelly and her possible links with Wales. Some early press reports added that Mary Kelly had a 6 or 7-year-old child. Kelly had recently been existing in very limited circumstances, so much so that she is reported to have told her a friend that she would put an end to her life, as she could not tolerate looking at her starving boy.²⁷

However, the *South Wales Echo* had reported earlier that further inquiries showed that the boy who stayed with Kelly was not her child, but that of a woman who had stayed with her on several occasions. Reports also stated her parents still lived in Cardiff.²⁸

The Welsh language newspapers debated whether she was a Welsh speaker. *Y Genedl Gymreig* reported:

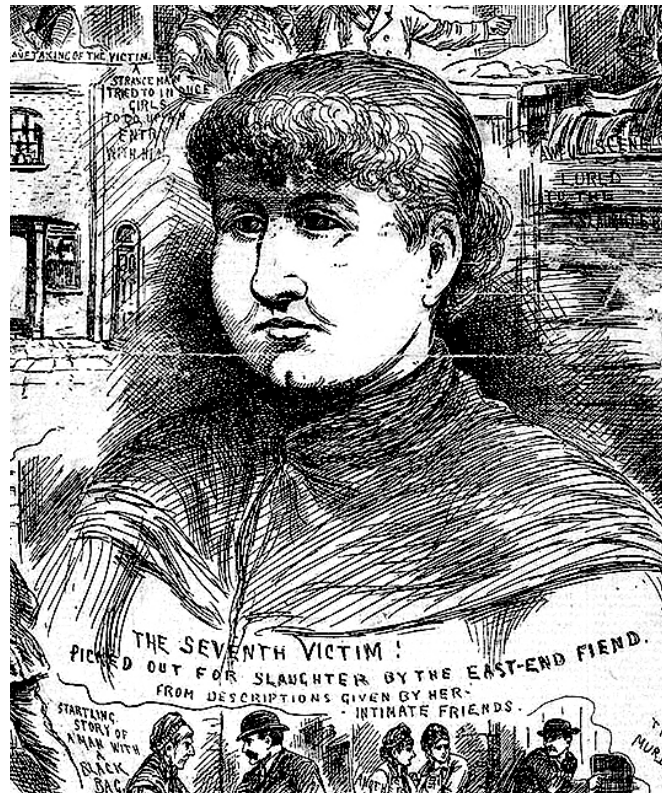
It is said the victim was Welsh, others of her neighbours testify that she could speak Welsh fluently.²⁹

Seren Cymru reported:

She is said to be a Welsh speaker, having lived in Carmarthenshire and Cardiff, but she was an Irishwoman unquestionably.³⁰

References were made to the fact that she was Welsh in headlines; 'DIWEDD TRUENUS CYMRAES' ('Welsh woman's tragic end') ran one.³¹

The early life of Mary Kelly with her links with Cardiff and Swansea has been researched in detail by Paul Williams, who suggests that the biographical details of Mary Kelly may not be the most accurate, based on Joseph Barnett's testimony.³²



The Welshness of Mary Kelly has also played a part in linking two suspects to her, both of whom were Welsh speakers: Lizzie Williams, and her husband John Williams. One theory suggests Lizzie spoke Welsh to Mary Kelly. The theory explains why in Caroline Maxwell's testimony at the inquest she claimed to have spoken with Mary on the morning of November 9th 1888 a few hours after her estimated time of death. Maxwell stated Kelly had told her, 'Oh Carrie, I feel so bad.'³³ The published theory

25 *The Cardiff Times*, October 13th 1888 p.7.

26 *Y Werin*, October 13th 1888 p.3 Nid am ddim y caiff yr Iddewon eu beio.

27 *Y Dydd*, November 16th 1888 p.4. Yr oedd Kelly yn ddiweddar wedi bod mewn amgylchiad cyfyng iawn yn gymaint felly fel yr adroddir iddi ddweud wrth gyfeilles iddi, y byddai iddi roddi terfyn ar ei hoedl, am nas gallai oddef edrych ar ei bachgen yn newynu also reported in *Flintshire Observer*, November 15th 1888 p.2.

28 *South Wales Echo*, November 10th p.3.

29 *Y Genedl Gymreig*, November 14th 1888 p.5. Dywedir mai Cymraes ydoedd y drancedig, a thystiai rhai o'i chymydogion ei bod yn gallu siarad Cymraeg yn llithrig.

30 *Seren Cymru*, November 16th 1888 p.5. Dywedir ei bod yn siarad Cymraeg, ac wedi bod yn byw yn Sir Caerfyrddin, ac yn Nghaerdydd, ond Gwyddeles oedd yn ddiamhew.

31 *Y Llan*, November 16th 1888 p.5.

32 'The Welshman who knew Mary Kelly' in *Ripperologist* 160 p.2-7 and 'From Limerick to London via Cardiff' in *Ripperologist* 149 p.15-25.

33 Evans, S. & Skinner, K. *The Ultimate Jack The Ripper Sourcebook*. Robinson (2001) p.413.

suggested that the lady was Lizzie Williams dressed in Mary Kelly's clothes, and uses the word 'cariad' ('my love'), not 'Carrie.' Maxwell admitted she had not met Kelly often.³⁴ Lizzie's husband Dr John Williams was also named as a possible perpetrator of the crimes.³⁵

ERRORS IN WELSH REPORTS

Most of the newspapers after Mary Kelly's death in November 1888 referred to the murderer as having killed seven victims.³⁶ In addition to the canonical five victims, Emma Elizabeth Smith and Martha Tabram were added.

There was some confusion in naming the victims. *Y Celt* refers to the first victim as 'Mrs Osbourne at Wentworth Street, Whitechapel', who was killed on 'the last holiday' which would have been August, but there was also a Bank Holiday on April 2nd, which presumably led to the error. It was a reference to Emma Elizabeth Smith, who was attacked on Osborn Street in the early hours of April 3rd.³⁷ Another report refers to Smith being murdered 'last Christmas week'.³⁸

One Welsh language newspaper, as early as October, refers to Martha Turner (Tabram) as the first victim of Jack the Ripper.³⁹



MISTAKEN IDENTITIES

The description and illustrations of the suspects at the beginning of October led to many innocent people being harassed and threatened for being the murderer. One incident illustrates this point clearly. Under the headline, 'Alleged Jack the Ripper at Cardiff', a report in the *South Wales Daily News* recorded that

Excitement was caused in that usually calm retreat known at Cardiff as Tiger Bay by a report that 'Jack the Ripper' was in the neighbourhood and prowling about for prey.⁴⁰

The reporter added 'imagination seized upon the statement.' A rumour spread that the man had a long glittering blade hidden in his coat, and his face had a 'diabolical glare'. An innocent man walking in the area was swooped upon by a crowd of two hundred men, women and boys who then proceeded to chase, hit and stone him, and then threw him into the canal several times. The unnamed man was able to seek refuge in the local police station.

Another incident in Cardiff was reported in the *South Wales Echo*⁴¹ under the headline 'EXCITEMENT AT ROATH.' The event occurred just after Mary Kelly's death was reported, and there was a renewed awareness of the murders. The article reported that at a hairdresser's salon, a stranger appeared there announcing he could cut a woman's throat without any blood getting on his clothes. The man then fled, but rumours spread that he was Jack the Ripper causing much anxiety in the area.

The mere name 'Jack the Ripper' was included in headlines to capture readers' attention, whether there was a link to the murderer or not. Under the headline 'PLAYING AT JACK THE RIPPER', there followed a story

34 The Lizzie Williams theory is covered in Morris, J. *Jack The Ripper: The Hand of a Woman*. Seren (2012).

35 This theory is discussed in detail in Williams, T. & Price, H. *Uncle Jack*. Orion (2005).

36 *South Wales Echo*, November 12th 1888 p.3; *Y Celt*, November 16th 1888 p.7; *Cronicl y Cymdeithasau Crefyddol* Vol XLVI no. 547, November 1888.

37 Eddleston John L. *Jack the Ripper: An Encyclopaedia*. Metro (2010) p.4-5.

38 *South Wales Echo*, November 10th 1888 p.3. They stated an unknown woman but locate it at near Osborne and Wentworth Streets.

39 *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, October 3rd 1888 p.14.

40 *South Wales Daily News*, October 8th 1888 p.3.

41 *South Wales Echo*, November 12th 1888 p.3.

about Thomas Coleman, a 'rough looking fellow', charged with being drunk and sleeping on a canal towpath in Church Street. He became very violent towards a police constable when he tried to apprehend him. His wife later complained that Coleman had said he would play 'Jack the Ripper' with her, implying he showed violence towards her.⁴²

At Neath, a man was nearly lynched. Under the dramatic headline 'JACK THE RIPPER AT NEATH',⁴³ a man of 'exceedingly rough exterior' appeared at the Falcon Inn in Neath claiming to be Jack the Ripper. He brandished a glittering weapon, and threatened to cut up a woman called Nancy Bull. The *Baner* added he

showed a large knife, twisting it round his head and threatened to disembowel a woman known by the name Nancy Bull.⁴⁴

PC Jones tried to take him to the police station, but was followed by a 'large crowd' who wanted to lynch the prisoner. The police station was then surrounded by the mob, and it was difficult for the policeman and prisoner to enter. The prisoner was named as Henry Vann of no fixed abode.

42 *South Wales Echo*, November 12th 1888 p.3.

43 *South Wales Echo*, October 29th 1888 p.4.

44 *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, November 7th 1888 p.10. A dangosai gyllell fawr, gan ei throï oddi amgylch ei ben, a bygythiai dynnu allan ymysgaroedd benyw a adnabyddir wrth yr enw Nancy Bull.

In North Wales, the fear of Jack the Ripper was also very real. In Wrexham, charges were brought against John Mack and Thomas Owen for attacking Mrs Richards of the Blossoms Hotel in the town after Mr Richards refused to serve them. John Mack attacked Mrs Richards, and threatened to act 'Jack the Ripper' towards her. Mack was sent to prison for four months' hard labour.⁴⁵

Even locations of great distance from Whitechapel were gripped by the fear caused by the murders. The anxiety was very real, and it is clear that rumours and panic could spread easily and quickly. Many reports refer to the rough appearance of many of the men, which could have caused them to be singled out as potential suspects.

COPYING THE RIPPER LETTERS

There are a number of reports in Wales which illustrate how the public employed the language of the letters to threaten or warn others. One such case took place in Aberdare under the dramatic headline 'JACK THE RIPPER AT ABERDARE. A PIECE OF STUPID FOLLY' Miriam Howells of Penrhiwceiber was accused of 'feloniously and

maliciously' sending letters, 'threatening to kill Elizabeth Magor and Margaret Smith'. The wordings of the letters are interesting as they clearly copied the format of the letters reported in the press.

The letter to Mrs Magor read:

Dear Mrs Boss, I mean to have your life before Christmas – I will play a _____ (word omitted in the report) of a trick with you, old woman. I played a good one on the last, but this will be better. Aint I clever? Believe me to remain yours for ever, JACK THE RIPPER. Beware.

The letter to Miss Smith read;

Dear Miss Boss. Before Sunday night I mean to have your life. I shall be upon you without your thinking. I will play a better trick with you than I did with the last on and that was clever. – Yours truly, JACK THE RIPPER. Beware.

The letters clearly showed the writer knew the marital status of the two women. Mrs Howells admitted the letters were sent by her as a 'lark'. Her friends Polly Peak (who lived with her) and David Davies had posted them for her. Mrs Howells' behaviour was described by the court as 'unwomanly'.⁴⁶

Another contemporary report gives more detail. Mrs. Howells asked Davies if he could keep a secret. He said 'Yes', and then she told him that she had written a Jack the Ripper letter as a joke. Both women who received the letters were worried, but Miss Smith had 'a laugh about it' when she found out.

Mrs Howells was a neighbour of Mrs. Magor. Mr. Magor was annoyed with the prank and asked Mrs. Howells for an apology. She gave a written apology, and paid one guinea to the Public Institute. News of the letters soon reached the press and it escalated quickly. Mrs. Howells was very upset by this, and when the local policeman PC Rees spoke to her she burst into tears. He arrested her a few days later, and in the police station she admitted writing the letters, and that Davies and Polly Peek were with her and assisted her. They had a copy of the *Echo* on the table, with 'Jack the Ripper's letter in it', and she admitted copying it off that.⁴⁷

The end of the case was reported under the headline 'THE 'JACK THE RIPPER' SCARE. TERMINATION OF THE CASE AT ABERDARE'. Mr North, the stipendiary magistrate,

45 *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, November 3rd 1888 p.5.

46 *The Cardiff Times*, November 24th 1888 p.7.

47 *South Wales Echo*, November 27th 1888 p.3.

announced that they had had to consider if Mrs. Howells had sent the letters to the women threatening to murder them. The magistrates had to decide whether they should send her for trial to the assizes; if so, she would have been liable to be sent to penal servitude for life. The magistrate stated that Mrs. Howells clearly had not thought of the effects the letter would have on the recipients. She was dismissed, and Polly Peak and David Davies were seen to be as complicit in the ill-judged prank.⁴⁸

The local newspaper in Aberdare wrote almost proudly of the matter, 'THE CASE OF JACK THE RIPPER THAT IS OUR JACK THE RIPPER HAS BEEN ADJOURNED FOR ANOTHER WEEK.' It gave the reasoned opinion that

We hardly believe that the magistrates want to send her for a trial; and yet they want to nip this sort of thing in the bud. It was of course shown that the whole affair was only intended for a lark but larks of this kind are not at all pleasant. They have been troubled so much with one real 'Jack the Ripper' in London, and so much with so many pretended ones, that we do not want to hear the name in this part of the country.⁴⁹

Although initially the story seemed trivial it illustrates how the press reporting had captured the people's attention. It was also a warning how quickly pranks could get out of hand. Several newspapers gave the story coverage, and it is clear that Mrs. Howells was fortunate not to receive a harsher sentence.

Other letters were sent to right perceived wrongs in the Welsh community. A tragic case was a report of a daughter accused of writing a threatening Ripper letter to her own mother.⁵⁰ Again, a gripping headline was added to the story: 'JACK THE RIPPER AT SWANSEA'.

Ruth John (Pugh) had summoned her own daughter, Elizabeth Ann Davies, for sureties of the peace. The mother stated that her daughter had threatened her with a 'Jack the Ripper' letter in her daughter's handwriting, which stated:

Dear Ruth, – you take care of yourself. I am on your account before Sunday week. You have heard of 'Jack the Ripper,' I will rip you open in the lane close to the house. Mind yourself, I am going to call on Mrs Pugh. I am down on _____ [missing from the newspaper report, but the word could be 'whores' if following the 'Dear Boss' letter] you as you do hear. I will poodle Mrs Pugh first, as she is fresh. There will be no more about the both of you in a fortnight. – Yours, JACK RIPPER.

Mrs Pugh confessed she had been at loggerheads with her three daughters, and that the police had frequently been called to intervene. As there was no evidence to prove that the letter was written by the defendant, the

bench dismissed the summons. The choice of vocabulary clearly followed that of the 'Dear Boss' letter that had been published in the press by this time.

G. JACK THE RIPPER AT SWANSEA.

[SPECIAL TELEGRAM TO THE "S.W."] – At the Swansea police-court to-day—before Dr J. G. Hall, Mr Cady, Mr Thomas Phillips, Mr J. Clarke, Richardson, and Mr E. Daniel—Ruth John, Brynhyfryd, summoned her daughter, Elizabeth Ann Davies, for sureties of the peace. The complainant said defendant threatened her on Saturday week. She received a letter written in a hand-writing very much like his daughter's. The letter was in the following terms:—
"Dear Ruth,—You take care of yourself. I am, on your account before Sunday week. You have heard of 'Jack the Ripper,' I will rip you open in the lane close to the house. Mind yourself, I am going to call on Mrs. Pugh. Yours, JACK RIPPER."

Another headline, 'JACK THE RIPPER IN THE RHONDDA, A SINGULAR LETTER', recounted the case of John Jones, of Tonypandy at Pontypridd Court House, who was committed to prison for two months with hard labour for disobeying an affiliation order made against him by Mary Lewis of Tonypandy. It was a threatening letter sent by Jones regarding the parentage of a child. During the hearing Mr Rosser, who appeared for the complainant, said that the defendant had written the following letter to her:

Novr. 26th, 1888. London Town. I hav hear that you are going hon same same has these Girls That i do Rip up In London. But if you honte be quaited and leve John Jones alone, has he his not your chirl his Father, because you cannot tell who his the Right Father, and i Hear enything of you agin, i will come and Rip up next Week. sing by JACK THE RIPPER. Will come to Court st.⁵¹

He received no sympathy in Wales. Under the headline 'SERVE HIM RIGHT', a North Wales newspaper reported that

In the Rhondda Valley, on Wednesday, a collier who had sent a 'Jack the Ripper' letter to a young woman who had summoned him for disobeying an affiliation order, was sent to prison for two months.⁵²

48 *South Wales Echo*, December 4th 1888 p.3.

49 *Aberdare Times*, December 1st 1888 p.4.

50 *South Wales Echo*, December 12th 1888 p.3.

51 *South Wales Echo*, November 29th 1888 p.4.

52 *North Wales Chronicle*, December 1st 1888 p.5.

The Welsh language press were particularly horrified by a letter sent to a nonconformist chapel at Hope Street in Wigan. One report wrote that the secretary of the buildings committee had received a letter adorned with a picture of his 'satanic majesty,' and dated from the 'home of that gentleman.' The letter was printed in a Welsh translation:

Hades, Sir, if you want to know who took the money, and who demolished the stone in your evangelism tent, it was I, Jack the Ripper, but if you think you can catch me, you will fail because I am in league with the old man. You will hear from me again before your chapel is built.⁵³

As late as January 1889 letters were still being sent to individuals. A Mrs. Stephens received a threatening letter, and the report stated that 'the contemptible person who sent it meant to frighten Mrs. Stephens.' The letter itself was reproduced:

Jan 13 1889. Dear sir i have took the pleasure of writing those few lines to you, I mean to Do a murder in Willam street llanelly on Monday or Saturday next about 10:30 to 4 o'clock about the half moon. Please report it to the Papers yours truly signed by Jack the Ripper.⁵⁴

In 1888 many letters were sent throughout Wales, as in other parts of Britain, using a similar vocabulary to the Ripper letters; the words 'I will rip' appear in quite a few, and the senders knew the anxiety receiving the correspondence would have had. They were a sure method of upsetting and causing fear. No copycat letters so far have been discovered written in Welsh; this may be because the original letters were written in English, but the Welsh language press had also provided translations of the letters.

LOCAL PANICS

Even carrying a black bag was considered dangerous, such was the state of tension in Wales as in other parts of the country. At Saundersfoot near Tenby, the town was thrown into 'a state of great consternation by the appearance of a stout, athletic man carrying a black bag of a highly suspicious nature.'⁵⁵ The report continued,

Conjecture was on the alert regarding him, especially as he seemed to court privacy, and as descriptions of the so-called 'Jack the Ripper' of notorious fame, have been so well posted up everywhere, people became in consequence very wary in going out.

It is significant that the reporter mentioned that posters were publicising the murders over 230 miles from

London, and that it had affected people so much it had made them reluctant to venture out at night. The police appeared on the scene and at once proceeded to secure the individual, whose mere presence had caused such panic. He was placed in a cell until correct information could be obtained regarding his character and intentions. The reporter added for good measure,

Speculation was rife as to the contents of the black bag, and the dire uses they might have been put to but for the brave conduct of our Sergeant.

The local paper was clearly very proud of the sergeant's swift actions, and recommended him to replace Sir Charles Warren in the vacant position as Commissioner of Police.

Tensions even reached Holyhead in North West Wales, some 285 miles from London. It began with rumours that Jack the Ripper had sent a letter to the police in Dublin threatening a murder would be committed there in the east or west of the city, and he wanted to 'do away with unfortunates' because his sister had joined them.⁵⁶ Holyhead was on the main route from London to Ireland, and the local press reported that 'the monster was timed to visit this part of the country one evening last week on his visit to Dublin.'⁵⁷ Fortunately, the report praised the new lamps of the town as they were too bright for the murderer, or that he didn't fancy his chances with the local policeman, a Sergeant Toohill. However, the mere rumour kept many people indoors for days in the town, again reflecting what an anxious time it was for so many people in this period.

JACK USED TO SELL STORIES

As has been seen, the mere name 'Jack the Ripper' was added to a headline to capture the attention of the reader even when the story bore no link with the murderer.

A headline, 'VIOLENT FREAKS OF A DRUNKEN MAN. WAS HE JACK THE RIPPER?', was followed by a story bearing no relation to the headline. Charles Rowlands was charged with assaulting Florence Meadmare. He had run into her, knocking her to the ground, and assaulted her. When Mr. Dorey, a butcher, intervened, Rowlands smashed his scales to pieces. Rowlands was fined £2 for assault and £1 for damages.⁵⁸

53 *Y Gwyllydd*, October 24th 1888 p.7.

54 *Llanelli Star*, January 17th 1888 in Hughes, Gareth A. 'A Llanelli Chronicle' Llanelli Borough Council (1984) p.195.

55 *The Tenby Observer*, November 29th 1888 p.4.

56 *The Cardiff Times*, October 12th 1888 p.7.

57 *The Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent*, October 19th 1888 p.3.

58 *Pontypridd Chronicle*, October 11th 1888 p.5.

The same paper also reported of Charles Court, who was chased for being drunk and shouting he was Jack the Ripper of the Rhondda. He smashed everything in his house with a hatchet and assaulted his wife.⁵⁹

Another headline unrelated to the murderer, 'JACK THE RIPPER AT PENARTH' was used by the *South Wales Echo* in relation to a story about 15-year-old Robert Tanner, who was charged with hacking the ornamental trees growing in Beach Road in the town.⁶⁰ He was seen by Henry Adams with a small hatchet, wilfully hacking at the trees, while walking along. Adams remonstrated with him, but only received 'impudence for his pains.' A lady, also noticing the damage he was doing to the young trees, spoke to him. His only reply was, dealing another tree a blow with a flourish of his hatchet, 'now you see Jack the Ripper.' The damage was 5 shillings, and the magistrates ordered him to pay a fine of £2 and costs.⁶¹

WELSH HUMOUR

The Welsh language press also used the name 'Jack the Ripper' as a humorous comparison in a particularly unique Welsh way. An early joke, and one that came before Mary Kelly's murder, appeared in *Y Genedl Gymreig*.⁶² In Welsh poetry, writers often use a pseudonym and here Yng Ngwyneb Haul a Llygad Goleuni (in the face of the sun and eye of light) criticises a fellow bardic critic, Y Gwir yn erbyn Y Byd (The Truth Against the World) for his criticism of the awdl (a long poem) by Tudno called *Peroriaeth* ('music'). Yng Ngwyneb Haul a Llygad Goleuni details Y Gwir yn erbyn y Byd's criticism of Tudno, claiming he is

a wretched slave of the goddess of cynghanedd (a form of Welsh metrical poetry), who 'dominates him to such an extent that he is forced to sacrifice senses and poetry at the altar of his vacant genius.' The viciousness of the criticism makes the writer comment, 'well, that's an instant kill and flaying. It is clear that 'Jack the Ripper' is found somewhere closer to us than Whitechapel.'

It showed how the murderer had entered the lexicon within weeks of the atrocities, and was beginning to be used as a reference to any form of slaughter – even in this case a literary one.

One critic, D. Oliver Evans, wrote, after witnessing the various respectable persons standing for seats on the county council,

I wouldn't exchange one sparrow for them. It would be the same as placing 'Jack the Ripper' as a conductor in a 'Cymanfa' (a highly respectable Welsh hymn singing festival) than placing many of these men to govern us.

A stinging comparison of two polar opposites: the horror of the murderer with the puritan respectability of Welsh chapel hymn singing.⁶³

SPIRITUALISTS

A well known incident during the murders was the appearance of a middle-aged lady at Cardiff Central Police Station who claimed to be a spiritualist. The *South Wales Echo* was pleased to report:

The centre of the interest which is attached to the terrible London tragedies of the past few weeks has been transferred from Whitechapel to Cardiff.⁶⁴

Before adding,

To accomplish this remarkable state of affairs some occult agency was evidently required.



59 *Pontypridd Chronicle*, October 30th 1888 p.6.

60 *South Wales Echo*, November 19th 1888 p.3

61 *South Wales Daily News*, November 20th 1888 p. 3

62 *Y Genedl Gymreig*, October 31st 1888 p.7

63 Reported in *Seren Cymru*, December 14th 1888 p.2 and *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, December 14th 1888 p.4. Ar ol llygadu ar amryw o bersonau urddasol a ymgeisiant am seddau ar y Cynghor Sirol, ni roddwn i un o adar y to yn gyfnewid amdanynt. Buasai yr un peth gosod Jack the Ripper' yn gadeirydd mewn cynhadledd gymanfa a gosod llawer math o ddynion i'n llywodraethu.

64 *South Wales Echo*, October 10th 1888 p.3. Other spiritualism reports relating to Jack the Ripper are discussed in Paley, B. *Jack the Ripper: The Simple Truth*. Headline(1996) p.156.

The account continued reporting that she, along with five others, contacted the spirit of Elizabeth Stride at Godfrey Street in Newtown, Cardiff, who revealed the killer's name as Johnny Donnelly, who lived in 12 Commercial Street or Road (the spiritualists couldn't hear clearly because of the excitement) and was part of a gang of twelve who were committing the murders.

The Welsh press didn't give the story much credence, and the *South Wales Echo* referred to a case of spiritualism in Bolton as, 'more spiritualistic nonsense.'⁶⁵ The Welsh language newspaper *Y Dydd* reported it likewise, writing 'That's the story for the reader as we received it, but you probably won't believe it any more than we do.'⁶⁶

POLITICAL REACTION

There was much criticism of the police's handling of the murders,⁶⁷ and criticism in the Welsh language press was highly-charged. Many supported Irish Home Rule and were critical of the expansionist policy of the British Government overseas. Comparing the Jack the Ripper murders with Ireland, *Seren Cymru* wrote:

The Government is too busy killing the Irish and imprisoning the Irish Members to protect our citizens. The fact that those who are killed [by Jack the Ripper] belong to the unfortunate class is not one reason for this negligence or weakness.⁶⁸

Two highly-critical articles appeared in the Welsh language press at the height of the murders. Both were by the arch-Welsh nationalist the Rev. Michael D. Jones.⁶⁹ What is significant is his forceful criticism of both the Liberal and Conservative administrations; accusing them of far worse atrocities than Jack the Ripper. Jones was an early supporter of Welsh independence and an influential figure in Welsh politics, supporting the establishment of a Welsh colony Y Wladfa (The Colony) in Patagonia. He was highly critical of the establishment, and wrote that the courts were places where 'the biggest thieves punish the lesser thieves.'⁷⁰

Jones compared the crimes of Jack the Ripper with the criminality of the state. Under the striking headline 'LLEIDDIAID DYNION' (Assassins of Men), he was appalled that a Welsh woman had been murdered in Millers Court.⁷¹ He described Mary Kelly's injuries in some detail, and wrote that Jack was rightly condemned for his unreasonable cruelty but asked where the same condemnation was when the government firebombed Alexandria under the Gladstone administration? Jones stressed this was also a crime against the rules of civilization killing so many innocent people.⁷²

Jones wrote that

not eight nor eight twenties of innocent men, women, and children were killed in Alexandria and the Egyptian wars, and it was in this respect that Gladstone had led sufficiently over Jack the Ripper.⁷³

He added that six hundred people were killed a few weeks earlier by Tory armies in Tibet,⁷⁴ and Salisbury had pretty much beaten Jack the Ripper, with close to a hundred for everyone he killed.⁷⁵ The criticism continued:

Balfour – with the help of Hartington and John Bright –⁷⁶ is killing and enslaving the Irish, if they do not bow to the oppressive arrangements of their repressive laws. Balfour has imprisoned over two thousand patriotic Irish, killed others in Mitchelstown,⁷⁷ and tortured and abused John Mandeville in prison.⁷⁸

65 *South Wales Echo*, October 10th 1888 p.3.

66 *Y Dydd*, October 12th 1888 p.2. Dyna'r chwedl i'r darllenydd fel y cawsom ni hi, ond fydd ef ddim parotach i'w choelio nag ydym ninau, mae'n debyg iawn.

67 There was particular criticism of Charles Warren; see Robinson, B. *They All Love Jack: Busting The Ripper*. 4th Estate (2015) p.225-228.

68 *Seren Cymru*, November 16th 1888 p.5. Y mae y Llywodraeth yn rhy brysur gyda lladd y Gwyddelod a charcharu yr Aelodau Gwyddelig i amddiffyn ein dinasyddion. Nid yw fod y rhai a leddir yn perthyn i'r ddosbarth anffodus yn un rheswm dros yr esgeulusdod neu y gwendid hwn.

69 Michael D. Jones is a fascinating figure in Welsh History. Most biographies of him are in Welsh; see: Michael D. Jones a'i Wladfa Gymreig Gwasg Carreg Gwalch (2009), but also en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_D._Jones, accessed March 19th 2021.

70 *Y Drych*, December 20th 1888. p.2. Mai lleoedd oeddynt i'r lladron mawrion i gosbi'r lladron bychain.

71 *Y Celt*, November 16th 1888 p.7.

72 A reference to the bombardment of Alexandria by the British fleet in July 1882.

73 *Y Celt*, November 16th 1888 p.7.

74 In 1888 British troops had attacked a Tibetan army in the Sikkim expedition. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikkim_expedition accessed March 17th 2021.

75 Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister on three occasions, from 1885-6, 1886-1892 and 1895-1902. He was also Foreign Secretary for ten of those years.

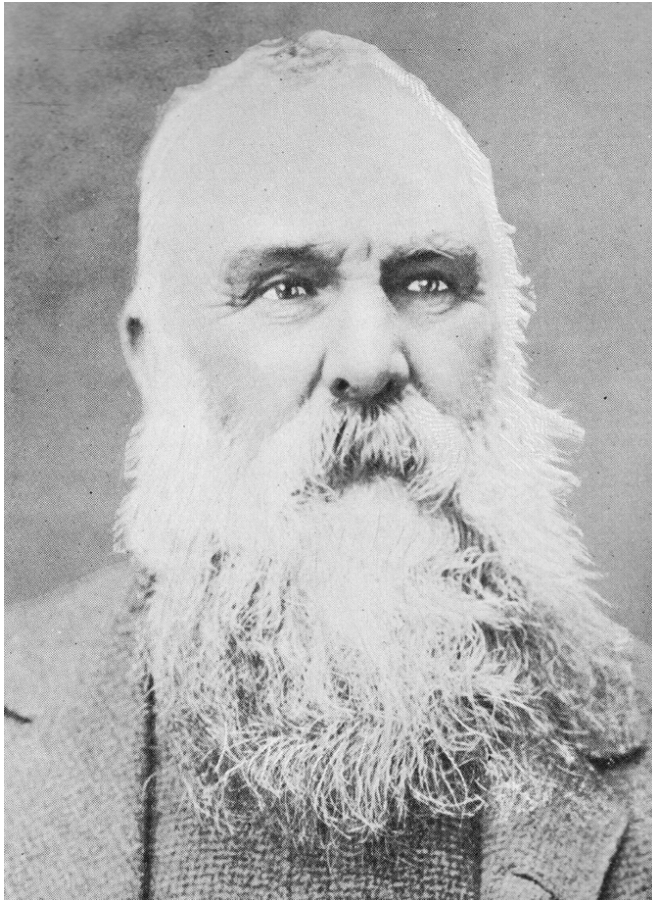
76 Alfred Balfour, the Irish Secretary of State from 1887, Marquis of Hartington who believed violence in Ireland had to be repressed and Joseph Chamberlain who campaigned against Gladstone's Irish reforms and John Bright who opposed Gladstone's proposals for Irish home rule.

77 At a demonstration at Mitchelstown three men were shot and killed by the police at the hearing of John Mandeville.

78 John Mandeville, an Irish Fenian, and three farmers were killed at his hearing by the police. This may have embarrassed Balfour. Mandeville was given a two month sentence. In prison he was kept in solitary confinement, with a poor diet and remained in unsanitary conditions. He was stripped of his clothing and left for a day semi-naked in the extreme cold.

Jones believed that it was an example of the Government diverting attention from the real atrocities being committed by them. He argued that it is Jack the Ripper, the human assassin, whose murders commanded everyone's attention. He commented that Jack the Ripper only

...kills a class of women who pollute society, but Balfour imprisons and kills the very best of society, and Ireland's foremost patriots. An act changes nothing in its moral quality because it is done according to law.



Michael D. Jones

Jones believed that Mandeville's suffering was far worse, because a corpse could not feel the additional injuries on the body, whilst

a respected living man like John Mandeville felt the insult of forcing him to wear prison clothes, and the body of any living man would feel the cold of the cold prison cell in the winter with only a thin blanket for the sake of decency to conceal his nakedness, and if John Mandeville had been killed immediately, instead of slowly torturing him to death, his death would have been less cruel.

Jones attacked the Government for its mistreatment of the Irish, and claimed that if the murders had taken

place in Dublin the Tories would have used it as an excuse to highlight how unlawful the Irish were. One English language newspaper commented,

The Rev M.D. Jones also shrewdly remarks that the Tories would have turned the Whitechapel atrocities to excellent account had they only been perpetrated in Dublin.[79]

The Reverend argued that Balfour's planning to deal with Ireland was as cold as Jack the Ripper's treatment of his victims. Jones then warned that, at the day of judgement, Salisbury and Balfour would receive exactly the same justice as Jack the Ripper. He wrote that on that day, Jack the Ripper's blood would have the same worth as Salisbury's and Balfour's, and the three were all chillingly calm in their different crafts.⁸⁰

He continued his attacks on people in power in another strongly worded editorial titled TRAI S EIN LLYWODRAETHWYR ('Our Government's Violence'),⁸¹ making a comparison that

'Jack the Ripper,' who lests an occasional drop of blood from Whitechapel prostitutes, is only a small sinner alongside of the bloody offenders who let seas of human blood cover large portions of the earth.

He added a poetic flourish:

And yet it is these towering chimneys with the soot of generations gathered within them that call black kettle on Jack the Ripper's pot.⁸²

The English language press also commented on Michael D. Jones' views, and gave translations of his writing while expressing their view that Jones was his usual incisive self.⁸³

Some readers were, however, appalled by the forcefulness of his opinions, and were upset by his descriptions of the murders. One writer under the pen name 'Bismark' responded to the article accusing Jones of double standards. In *Y Drych* he wrote

I remember he [Jones] sent the church out of Llanuwchllyn chapel mid-Sunday, because most of it was too Calvinistic in his ministerial view; that was fine by him; but to evict the Irishman for not paying the rent – heaven forbid!⁸⁴

'Bismark' criticises Jones for supporting Gladstone in the election, and by saying Gladstone was immoral and for voting for him he was as bad as Jack the Ripper according to Jones' own argument. 'Bismark' argued that the government had tried to reason and find solutions to the Irish problem, but the Fenians and Jack the Ripper were

conspiring for blood without reason or law or warning before attacking. 'Bismark' considered the article entirely unworthy

of a place in our literature, and especially in the pages of the peaceful and erudite Drych and we hope that this writing's unclean influence will be washed away very quickly from the minds who read it. We should be thinking of virtuous matters to elevate us as a nation.⁸⁵

CONCLUSION

The experience of the Welsh press was no doubt replicated in other parts of the country. The events highlighted the influence the press had on public opinion, and how behaviour could be influenced by the publication of the suspect images and the letters. In Wales, as elsewhere, those of a 'rough-looking' appearance could be attacked or mobbed.

People throughout the country were in a state of heightened anxiety; rumours spread quickly, and even in areas well away from Whitechapel people were still hesitant to venture out at night.

The political situation in Wales meant the criticism surrounding the murders were not confined only to the police but could reflect issues relating to foreign policy. The Irish question led many commentators to use the murders as another way to criticise the Government's policies.

Welsh language newspapers particularly commented on Mary Kelly's nationality and ability to speak the language, which would have made the murders seem somewhat closer to many in Wales.

Most newspapers referred to the women as 'unfortunate' or 'fallen'. However, an opinion piece in *Seren Cymru* reflected a rare sympathetic tone regarding the victims:

The most useless of life demands protection, and demands greater protection because of its weakness and dangers.⁸⁶

79 *South Wales Daily News*, December 6th 1888 p.3.

80 *Y Celt*, November 16th 1888 p.3. Mae cystal gwaed yn Sion y Rhwygwr ag sydd yn | Salisbury a Balfour, ac y mae y tri yn arswydus o bwylllog yn eu gwahanol grefftau.

81 *Y Celt*, November 30th 1888 p.1.

82 *Y Celt*, November 30th 1888 p.1. A'r simneiau tyrawl hyn, ag y mae parddu cenhedlaethau wedi ymgasglu ynddynt, sydd yn gwaeddi tinddu ar grochan Jack the Ripper.

83 *South Wales Daily News*, December 6th 1888 p.3

84 *Y Drych*, December 20th 1888 p.2. Coffa yn dda am anfon yr eglwys allan o gapel Llanuwchllyn ar ganol ddydd Sul, am fod y rhan fwyaf o honi yn rhy Galfinaidd yn eu golygiadau gan y gweinidog; y mae hyn yn iawn gan y Prifatho; eithr am evictio'r Gwyddel am nacau talu'r rhent gwarchod pawb!

85 *Y Drych*, December 20th 1888 p.2. Yn hollol annheilwng o le yn ein llenyddiaeth, ac yn enwedig o ddalenau y Drych heddychlawn a boneddigaidd; a gobeithiwn y bydd i hyn o ysgrif olchi ei dylanwad aflan oddiar y meddyliau a'i darllenodd, a'n tueddu i feddwl am rywbethau rhinweddol er ein dyrchafu fel cenedl.

86 *Seren Cymru*, November 16th 1888 p.5. Y mae y bywyd mwyaf diwerth yn hawlio amddiffyniad, ac yn hawlio amddiffyniad mwy oherwydd ei wendid a'i beryglon.



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THE HAVANT BOY RIPPER THE MURDER OF PERCY KNIGHT SEARLE

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THE NIGHT OF THE EGGS

By JOE CHETCUTI

In the early months of 1875, the *Liverpool Leader* waged a campaign to run the future Jack the Ripper suspect, Francis Tumblety, out of town. The newspaper warned of the fraud that was occurring at his 177 Duke Street business address in Liverpool, and it reported on the deaths of two patients who quickly succumbed due to the poor treatment they had received there. The self-proclaimed Great American Doctor was targeted by the newspaper, and the ultimate goal of the editor was to affect the closure of the Duke Street medical office.

In the March 6, 1875 issue of the periodical, a letter to the editor was printed, and the letter writer, who was a former resident of St. Johns, New Brunswick, enlightened the people of Liverpool about the grave suspicion that had been cast upon Tumblety by the St. Johns coroner in 1860. The writer revealed how the quack had “cleared out” of Canada before any arrest warrant could be issued for a manslaughter charge. The letter impressed the editor, and he responded by openly inviting others who had previously met Tumblety in Canada to supply additional stories involving this notorious charlatan. By the following week the offer had been taken up, and a lengthy two-page text appeared in the March 13, 1875 issue. It was entitled:

THE GREAT AMERICAN DOCTOR:
FURTHER REVELATIONS.
BY A CANADIAN.

The anonymous Canadian was given free rein to write his account, with the focus being on his remembrance of Tumblety’s antics in Montreal. His recollections flowed smoothly, then he eventually settled his thoughts on the evening of Monday, November 16, 1857. After reading this firsthand witness account of what transpired, and then viewing additional information about the story that was recently discovered by Mike Hawley, I think it is accurate to entitle this escapade in Tumblety’s life as having been *The Night of the Eggs*.

The Canadian writer set the scene well:

A Montreal gentleman whom I knew very well wrote a burlesque called “Columbus,” and one of his

characters was a famous medicine man “Stumblehi,” which burlesque was acted in the Theatre Royal, Cote-street. I was present at the first performance, and well recollect the appearance in it of McDonough as “Stumblehi.” At first sight I thought it was the veritable “Doctor,” so wonderful was the “get up”, and that this was a new advertising dodge, until I perceived the original in the dress circle. No-one who was present will forget that night.

Tumblety was an avid fan of the stage, so it made sense that he was detected in the audience on this Monday evening to view the premier of ‘Columbus’. The Theatre Royal was a top-notch Montreal venue in those days, with the lessee of the establishment being John Buckland. His wife, Kate Horn, was a popular actress. This talkative lady won praise for her great sense of timing and comical skills. Mr. Buckland and his wife combined to manage the Theatre Royal for many years, and the place was a success under their leadership.



Kate Horn



Theatre Royal, Montreal

Kate Horn's talent for comedy fit in nicely on this particular stage, especially because of the theater's reputation of conducting humorous satire on its fellow Montreal citizens. Of course, Tumblety's name was often in the local newspapers in the autumn of 1857 because of his arrest on suspicion of trying to procure a miscarriage and all the proceeding courthouse battles that ensued from it. His name was well known, and when you combined that with his eccentric behavior you ended up with perfect fodder for satire.

The problem with all of this was Tumblety's vengeful resentment of being ridiculed. His consistent attendance at the theaters, along with his knack for keeping a close ear to the ground, enabled him to foresee that the Theatre Royal was prepared to mock him on stage in the 'Columbus' skit. The wealthy charlatan had come to the theater well-prepared on the night of the premier, and it certainly looked like he brought his hired boys with him. The 'doctor' stationed his recruits at various seating sections inside the building, and they were armed with eggs. One particular young punk of his, John O'Brien, was of a violent nature, and he was positioned in a seating area called the pit.

The Canadian writer continued on with his account of McDonough's stage performance of 'Stumblehi'. He recalled that the initial lyrics went pretty well:

*I'm the famous medical man as everybody knows,
I make pills from the lily, and blister with the rose,
Stumblehi.*

There was no need for Tumblety to give the signal to fire away after hearing that harmless verse. But his blood pressure was about to rise. The next lyrics were sung by McDonough and the war was on.

*Quack, quack, nothing but quackery.
I can cure every disorder;
Quack, quack, all the last quackery,
I've imported from over the border.*

The signal to retaliate apparently was given at that moment. The Canadian writer vividly recalled the bombardment that promptly commenced:

...rotten eggs rained upon the stage from every part of the theater. Pit, gallery, dress circle, and private boxes showered rotten eggs upon the unfortunate actors. Poor McDonough got it hot, and his blue tail

coat with brass buttons, Tumblety's style at that time, was literally covered with eggs! Buckland, the lessee, rushed on to the stage to quell the disturbance, and was struck on the forehead. The blood ran down his face, and Mrs. Buckland, who was dressed as a kind of Miami, came rushing into his arms... This is not fiction; every thing happened as I relate it, and was duly reported in the papers of the day... The author, who had been trembling all evening in a side box, scribbled a few lines and an attendant rushed the stage, crying as he kicked the property egg off:

*Oh take this horrid object from my sight,
I'm sure we've had enough eggs to-night.*

Buckland survived the egg attack, but he soon noticed that O'Brien was causing a disturbance in the pit. He approached and the trouble escalated. The *Toronto Globe* reported the following in their Saturday, November 21, 1857 issue:

At the Recorder's Court, on Tuesday last, a young man named John O'Brien was charged with having committed an assault on Mr. Buckland, of the Theatre Royal, in the pit of that establishment, on Monday evening last. It appears from the evidence, that on the night in question, the visitors to the above theatre were treated to a burlesque on Dr. Tumblety. This aroused public indignation, and a curious scene ensued, in which the usual run of matters were reversed, the audience being the actors, and the pit the stage.

The Toronto article revealed that the actors and actresses were forced to exit the stage due to the aerial assault. Finally, the article went on to explain that after Buckland had descended to the pit, he was struck in the eye by O'Brien. A police constable took O'Brien into custody, and the prisoner was brought before the court the next day.

The *Montreal Herald* also wrote of this wild night in its Wednesday, November 18, 1857 issue:

ROW AT THE THEATRE.

The Manager of the Theatre Royal has lately brought out a new local drama entitled 'Columbus', in which personages who have recently figured in this city are severely caricatured. It seems that amongst these is Dr. Tumblety, and that the travesty of the Doctor on the stage gave such offense to certain persons that they, on Monday night, attacked the players with eggs and other missiles. Mr. Buckland, going into the pit with the intention of restoring order, was violently assaulted. The affair came before the Recorder yesterday...

As you would imagine, McDonough was irate when he received an egg shower during his performance of

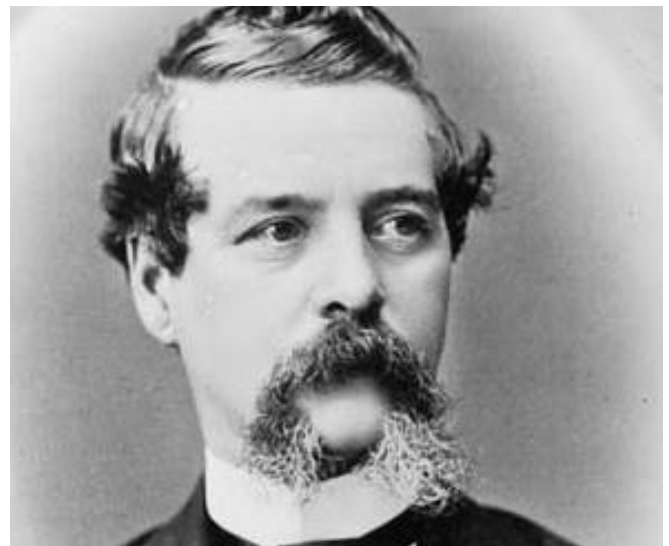
'Stumblehi'. The stage actor knew that this small army of egg throwers was under the command of a vindictive quack who sat in the dress circle. So McDonough decided to pay a little visit to Tumblety at his medical office the following day. The Canadian writer in the *Liverpool Leader* reported that McDonough brought along another member of the Theatre Royal with him, and they angrily confronted Tumblety. He wrote:

The next morning, McDonough and Price, two of the actors, called upon Tumblety, and threatened to do for him.

The November 21, 1857 *Toronto Globe* provided further details of this encounter, and revealed that there were actually three men from the Theatre Royal who got in Tumblety's face. The third man was an actor named Blake. The Canadian writer in the *Liverpool Leader* had recalled in 1875 that McDonough and Price went to threaten Tumblety, but the *Toronto Globe* stated their names to have been McDonald and Prior; quite similar sounding. Here is how the *Toronto Globe* described it:

Next morning [Tuesday, November 17, 1857] three actors presented themselves at the office of Dr. Tumblety, and who figure in the bills as Blake, Prior, and McDonald. The latter gentleman is the Pistol of the party, and threatened to knock the doctor down, break his head, cowhide him, etc. etc.; but did not do it. Next morning he, with his companions, found themselves before the Recorder.

The Canadian writer in the *Liverpool Leader* declared that it was Tumblety who had the men summoned to the Recorder's Court after hiring the services of his attorney, Bernard Devlin, to handle the matter. The previous month, Devlin helped save Tumblety from the serious charge of trying to procure a miscarriage.



Bernard Devlin

So what was the final court ruling in regards to all this Theatre Royal trouble? It turned out that Tumblety's youthful troublemaker, John O'Brien, was given the choice of a 5 pound fine plus costs or a prison sentence of two months. McDonald, Prior, and Blake were required to hand over 50 pounds each to the court as a form of collateral. Supposedly they would get their money back if they could avoid a repeat of their threatening misbehavior for the next six months. An 18 pound bail amount was assessed to each of the two sureties for them. McDonald, Prior, and Blake apparently handed over their money to the court, but this development did not stop Buckland from continuing on with his nightly presentation of 'Columbus'. According to the *Boston Globe*, Prior was the next man to do the honors of portraying Tumblety on the Theatre Royal stage. The 'Stumblehi' nickname was removed, and 'Tumble Tie' took its place:

James B. Prior was at the Theatre Royal... Prior appeared in a burlesque of the eccentric doctor, and with the doctor's own dog, which he had beguiled into the theatre, standing at the tails of his absurdly grotesque claw-hammer, he sang a topical song of which the doctor himself was the subject. The first stanza went something like this:

*I am the famous medicine man.
My name is Tumble Tie.
And I can cure all diseases
In the twinkling of an eye.*

The grotesque claw-hammer that was mentioned in the Boston article was a tailed coat. In an interesting development, the *Boston Globe* proceeded to allege that Tumblety paid thugs to attack Prior in retaliation for doing his 'Tumble Tie' act. The thugs were said to have attempted an assault on Prior while he was in company with another man (who may have been Buckland). But the onrush backfired on the instigators:

[Tumblety] deeply resented the insult [of being mocked on the stage], and it is said he hired toughs to waylay Prior one night. But Prior was not alone. The property man of the theatre was with him, and together they gave the sluggers a slugging.

This was a unique story, but the main point that emerged from it was the vindictive nature of this future Ripper suspect. His recruitment of egg throwers showed that he wasn't afraid to initiate an assault in public. It also showed his ability to coordinate and execute a planned attack. Another point of note is that the three actors, who went to Tumblety's medical office the next morning to threaten him, had quickly figured out who the mastermind was behind the Theatre Royal violence. The three men did not go after the hired egg throwers, but rather, they

abruptly approached the plotter of the attacks.

Mid-November 1857 was a hectic time for Tumblety, and in the midst of it, his medical pamphlet was denounced by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montreal. Mike Hawley discovered this denunciation, and he will report on it in the future. Perhaps the Montreal Bishop's action was the last straw. Tumblety was pretty much done with the city of Montreal by the end of January 1858.

Before I end this article, I'd like to briefly review a short item in the *Liverpool Leader* of January 16, 1875. Two Liverpool lads went to the office of that newspaper and cautioned the editor that Tumblety was fully aware of the campaign that the *Leader* was waging against him. The editor wrote:

Two gentlemen, both well dressed, both plausible, both apparently sincere, but both extremely juvenile, have come to us urging us to desist from these attacks, partly because they liked the "Doctor" and partly because they feared he would hurt us... Neither assumed to be his messenger, yet both of them knew that he had doomed the *Liverpool Leader* to ruin if it did not retract all it had published about him.

It is apparent that the same vengeful attitude that Tumblety possessed in Montreal in 1857 was later brought over to Liverpool. The attorney, William P. Burr, may have said it best while assessing Tumblety in the December 2, 1888 issue of the *New York World*:

He had a superabundance of cheek and nothing could make him abashed... he struck me as one who would be vindictive to the last degree.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Appreciation goes out to Mike Hawley for sharing the Montreal and Toronto newspaper articles. A big thanks also goes out to Chris Phillips who helped me years ago in digging up the items in the *Liverpool Leader*.

INTERNET SOURCES

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NEWSPAPER SOURCES

Montreal Herald, November 18, 1857; *Toronto Globe*, November 21, 1857; *Liverpool Leader*, January 16, March 6 and March 13, 1875; *Boston Globe*, November 27, 1888; *New York World*, December 2, 1888.



JOE CHETCUTI has contributed his articles to Ripper journals for over fifteen years. He is a retired hospital worker who resides in northern California.

CENTRAL NEWS

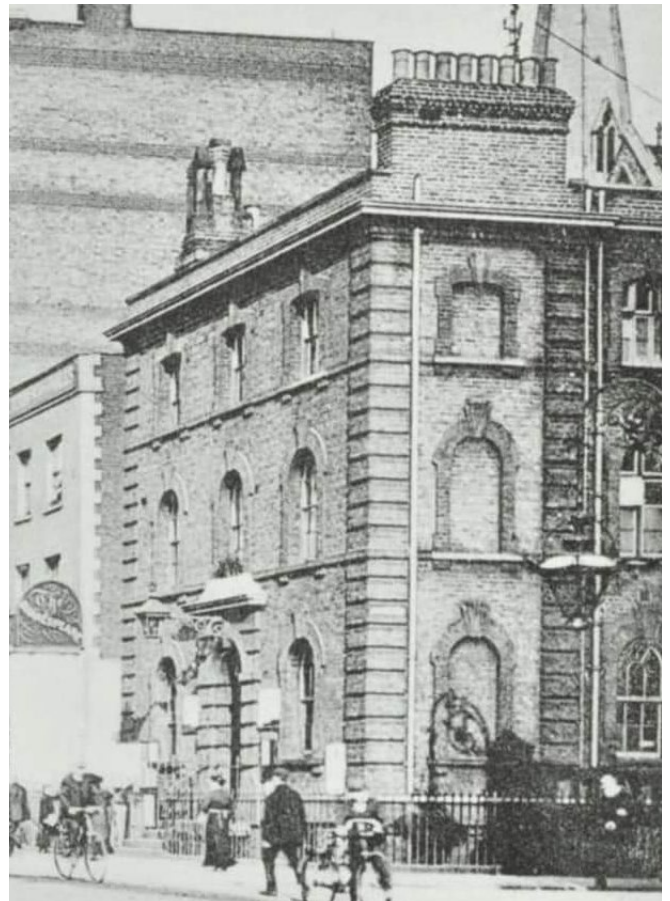
EXTRAORDINARY CASE OF CHILD STEALING

By BRUCE COLLIE

While looking through the online British Newspaper Archive some time ago the headline above caught my eye. However, it slipped my mind until recently, when I was reminded of it while reading about a similar case. I went back and searched for the article. Typing the headline into the search bar, I was amazed at the amount of similar cases and how 'child stealing' was such a common occurrence, all over the country. Below is the story that started with this original article.

At the Worship Street Police Court, before Mr Bushby, Mary Ann Ingram, (38) married, lately residing in Wellington Road, Bethnal Green, was charged on remand with having stolen an infant named George Selling aged seven months. It will be remembered that the mother had been left a widow in September last, the infant the subject of the present charge having been born in February of the present year. As she had to go out to maintain her children, she entrusted the care of the youngest to a little girl named Scott who, on taking it to the park, was accosted by the prisoner, and was sent by her to make a trifling purchase. On the girl's return the woman and the child had disappeared. The evidence adduced this afternoon was to the effect that a woman residing opposite, who had read a report in the newspapers of the theft of a child, and a description of the clothing of the woman who stole it, had her suspicions attracted to the prisoner, and on informing the police she discovered the girl Scott and another girl who had accompanied her to the park. Along with the two girls and Police Constable Armstrong 480K she knocked at the prisoner's door, and on its being opened by the prisoner, the two little girls at once recognised the prisoner. The latter, however, refused them admission to the house on the ground that her husband was asleep. The Constable then forced his way in, and the child was discovered. The prisoner, when arrested, protested that the child was her own, but subsequently she acknowledged that she had stolen it. Detective Sergeant Beall, of the K Division, on searching the room found the clothes which the child had worn when carried away. This completed the case, and the magistrate was about to

commit the prisoner for trial, when a most painful sensation was caused in court by Inspector Wildey, rising from his seat and informing the magistrate that they had just discovered, on searching the prisoner's house, a child which had been stolen from its parents by a trick exactly similar six years earlier. The child had been handed over to their care. On hearing this announcement the prisoner, who had evidently been unprepared for it, gave a low wailing moan, and said that the child was her own. She then fainted, and would have sustained severe injury by her head coming in contact with the top rail of the dock had not the officer swiftly caught her when her head was within an inch of it. She was then further remanded



Bethnal Green Police Station

and led out of the court in an almost unconscious state.¹

The second remand hearing at the Worship Street Police Court gives us some more details, especially regarding the first abduction which had taken place six years earlier. The name of the child was Alice Dannage. Her mother, Elizabeth Dannage, must have gone through Hell since the day she had been taken, on 11th September 1878.

Elizabeth and her husband, a boot finisher, now lived at 75 James Street, Bethnal Green. Elizabeth had given Alice, only months old, to a young girl called Henrietta Briggs to take out. As she walked down the Cambridge Heath Road she passed a public house called The Three Colts, at which point Ingram spoke to her. She requested Henrietta to go on an errand for her, to the Chandler's shop. Asking to hold Alice, she handed Henrietta a penny as payment.



Map showing Three Colts Lane, and on the right-hand end, the Three Colts public house (PH) where Mary Ann Ingram spoke to Henrietta Briggs

Henrietta returned to the corner of Three Colts Lane to find the prisoner and child had gone. She ran to James Street, and told Mrs Dannage what had happened. Elizabeth, although understandably upset, quickly made her way to Bethnal Green Police Station to inform officers of the abduction.

Officers staged an identity parade, and fortunately Henrietta was very observant. Although it had been six years, she had noticed at the time that Mary Ann Ingram had a wart on her eyelid, but it was a face she would never forget and she quickly picked her out from the eleven women present.

Inspector Wildey took Elizabeth Dannage to Bethnal Green Police Station in September 1884. She sat in a room and the now six year old child found in the possession of the prisoner was taken in, and she confirmed it was her daughter Alice. Mary Ann Ingram, however, continued to claim that the child belonged to her. When the child was

taken into court Ingram became very excited, and called out "My child, my child!" The child responded and said "Mama, Mama," and held out her arms.

Witness Charlotte Taylor of the Commercial Road was called, and confirmed that the prisoner had rented a room at her house. She had suddenly appeared with a second child, which the witness did not believe it to be hers.²

Harriet Garrett, of 2 Gauber Street, Bethnal Green, was the prisoner's mother. She had not seen her daughter for several months when she appeared at her house with a new child. The mother was suspicious of her daughter, as she had known her to tell lies. When she enquired how she had obtained the child, Mary Ann had told her that all its friends had perished in the *Princess Alice* disaster, and she had taken great care of it, and the child was now hers. She had also said it was her own. She had been living with a man called Ingram for over six years. She repeated the *Princess Alice* story on several occasions, to many different people.

The case would go to the Central Criminal Court, the charges being stealing two children and their clothing.³

THE CHILD STEALING CASE

At the Central Criminal Court on Friday before the Common Sergeant, Mary Ann Ingram (38) was indicted for stealing two children under the age of fourteen, with intent to deprive their parents of the possession of them. Mr Poland and Mr Montagu Williams appeared for the Public Prosecutor. The circumstances have already been published. The Jury found the prisoner Guilty, and she was sentenced to six months' hard labour.⁴

When you consider some of the sentences handed down at the time to children who stole, and for people who were convicted of the theft of personal belongings, the sentence seems very lenient – especially when you consider the pain and suffering she must have caused. Although Mary Ann Ingram had lived in Bethnal Green and visited her mother there, so did the victims – it is unfortunate that their paths had never crossed.

1 *Globe*, 28th September 1884.

2 *Globe*, 1st October 1884.

3 *Worcester Journal*, 4th October 1884.

4 *Hackney and Kingsland Gazette*, 27th October 1884.



BRUCE COLLIE is an administrator on a number of Facebook groups debating the Whitechapel murders case and police history in general. He has been interested in Victorian crime and policing for several years, and enjoys combing the 19th century press for reports of interesting crimes and their investigation, and various photographic archives for rarely-seen images relating to Victorian crime. Bruce has assisted authors, television reporters and journalists with research for books, programmes and articles.

PRESS TRAWL

SLUMMING IN WHITECHAPEL

In 1888, at the height of the Ripper scare, a series of four articles appeared in the *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph* under the title “Slumming in Whitechapel”. Published weekly between 27 October and 17 November, they recounted the experiences of an anonymous female reporter who was escorted around Bucks Row, Hanbury Street, Berner Street and Mitre Square by a friend of ‘Inspector R-----’ of the City of London Police shortly after the murders of Elisabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes. With no author name given, the first two instalments were signed “A Protected Female”, and the final two “An Amateur Detective.”

Now, thanks to research by Marianne Van Remoortel and Fien Demarée,¹ we are able to name her as Lillie Harris (1863–1921), who moved to the north of England after spending her formative years on the Isle of Wight, in time writing columns and short stories for the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.

The fact that Harris was still employed on the *Newcastle Chronicle* may be the reason that ‘Slumming in Whitechapel’ appeared in the *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph* anonymously, but there can be little doubt that she was actively seeking new opportunities. In May 1888 the *Dundee Courier* reported that Lillie Harris, aged just 25, had become the first woman to be admitted as a member to the National Association of Journalists; in December that year, two months after the publication of ‘Slumming in Whitechapel’, the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* announced that it had been “fortunate in securing the services of Miss Lillie Harris as lady editor to the *Weekly Telegraph*.”

She later moved to London to take up the position as editor of the newly-established *Woman’s Life*, founded by George Newnes in 1895, albeit for less than two years, for in 1897 she emigrated to South Africa with her second husband, William Chapman, a journalist and editor, who would report as war correspondent for the *Daily Chronicle* during the Boer War. For her own part, Lillie wrote for the *Lady’s Pictorial* about her life as an Englishwoman in South Africa, and contributed to the likes of the *Penny Illustrated*

Paper.

In 1899 the *Liverpool Courier* said of her:

“She writes everything well. Her fashion articles are readable even to men, whilst her general writings are characterised by a marvellously clear insight into human nature; her wit is keen, her satire cutting. She is an enemy of cant and humbug. One of the pluckiest things she ever did was to visit the worst slums of Whitechapel at the time of the Jack-the-Ripper scare and write a realistic series of articles on her experiences.”

Here, we’re pleased to present Lillie Harris’s account of her visit.



SLUMMING WHITECHAPEL. By a Protected Female.

Perhaps there is no locality in the United Kingdom which at the present time is so notorious as Whitechapel. The horrible tragedies so recently enacted there in such rapid succession have sent a thrill of indignant fear throughout England, while in the neighborhood itself the panic still lasts, and will do so as long as the bloodthirsty monster remains unknown and uncaptured.

These murders have cast a lurid side-light on the life endured by the East End poor. The revelations concerning the lodging houses – where no questions are asked, providing the requisite fourpence or eightpence are forthcoming, and which are the hotbeds of prostitution and crime – are sufficiently startling to ordinary decent folks; but when also read of a wretched female who cannot

1 Marianne Van Remoortel and Fien Demarée, “‘Slumming in Whitechapel’ with Lillie Harris (1863–1921): Disembodiment, Power, and the Female Investigative Journalist”, thesis for Ghent University, published in *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Volume 53, Number 4, Winter 2020.



Whitechapel Road

get shelter till she earns the few coppers necessary pay her bed, and is forced to seek them after midnight by going on the streets, the question may well be asked, "What sort of a neighbourhood can this Whitechapel be, where such hideous voices can flourish darkly, but apparently unheeded?" And this is the query that am about to answer.

Whitechapel Road, itself, I am perfectly acquainted with, as I have frequently walked down there, and been quietly amused at the "all sorts and condition of men" and women that I have encountered. They have decidedly been a mixed, not to say job-lot, but their behaviour has been generally orderly, although their talk is louder, and the use of expletives freer than what we, poor benighted mortals, are accustomed to. This, of course, is in reference only to Whitechapel Road, which is a wide handsome thoroughfare, brilliantly lit, and exceedingly busy. But like the majority of respectable people, I had no actual knowledge of the slums that branch off from the main artery of this densely populated neighbourhood.

After the dreadful crimes so placidly perpetrated in Mitre Square and Berner Street, I conceived an ardent desire to visit and see for myself the region of a civilized city that seems to be given up to horrors unmentionable.

The thing that puzzled me was how to go. Night was the best time, but it is hardly the place where a stranger would

care to go to alone, and in a great measure unprotected.

I mentioned the difficulty to a friend of mine, Inspector R-----, of the City police.

"It is not a nice neighbourhood," he said thoughtfully, "and it is of no use going there unless you know your way about, or else you stand a tidy chance of getting knocked on your head, or returning minus your watch and chain."

I looked rather glum, and he went on to remark that "he would have been pleased to accompany me only he was leaving town the next day on particular business."

"Where do you want to go?" he asked.

"Well," I replied, "I want to go to Mitre Square, Buck's Row, Berner Street, and Hanbury Street, and just see for myself what class of people really do live there."

"I can manage that for you," he said. "One of our men, Mr. B-----, is a thoroughly efficient and highly respectable and intelligent officer, and he can go round with you."

I thanked the worthy inspector, who introduced me to Mr. B-----, a tall, muscular and rather handsome man, and an arrangement was made there and then that I should meet the officer on the next night by the Law Courts.

"Will you know me again?" I inquired. He glanced at me sharply from a very keen pair of blue eyes. "Yes," he answered, "I shall know you." I felt that mentally he was

taking my photography, and how correct me prescience was I found out afterwards, and also a peculiar but trifling mannerism that I am unconsciously guilty of.

The next evening we met at the appointed place, my escort looking very big and stalwart in his civilian dress, and I, clad in the darkest and least conspicuous of clothes.

It was a lovely night, clear and cold, the blue heavens all aglow with myriads of stars. The Strand was busy as only the Strand can be. Hansoms flitted by us; every now and again carriages drew up at the doors of the brilliantly illuminated theatres, and from them alighted gaily dressed ladies, and their cavaliers in the regulation evening dress. Busses full inside and out drove by, newsboys called out in stentorian accents, "Reported harrest hof the Whitechapel murderer." Laughing, innocent happy-looking girls were hurrying along with their friends. Polite and tired policemen were regulating the traffic, conducting nervous ladies across the road, directing deaf old gentlemen to various places, requesting knots of men to "move on there please," and performing the various other duties incidental to the wearing of the blue coat. The cages were full, and the air was noisy with the traffic, laughter, and conversation. If a lady passed she was carefully escorted by some male friend. The majority were huddled up in furs, for the wind was keen. If vice was here, it was emphatically well-dressed, well-fed vice, for dense as the throng was, it seemed to be almost exclusively formed of warmly-clad people.

I looked with pleasure at the lively, gay, and bright scene; I listened to the ripple of careless laughter, the soft, sweet, modulated voices, and the flow, flow of silken robes. I inhaled the fresh cold air, the perfume that was wafted momentarily to me, from the delicate flowers that nestled on the white bosom of some lady as she passed me to enter a theatre, or the scent that arose from her handkerchief, and as I looked and listened I thought with a cold chill of that other neighbourhood, so near, and yet so distant, where innocent joy or pure amusements are not known.

We hailed a 'bus, and soon we left the glare and bustle of the Strand and Fleet Street far behind. At Leadenhall Street we got down, and just at the end of that street and Whitechapel Road is a narrow street which leads into Mitre Square.

"This is quite a respectable place," says Mr. B-----, as he glances round with a professional eye. Although the night is light, the square seems enveloped in gloom, and in the darkest corner, shaded by a window, is the place where the wretched woman was so foully murdered. Two young men and a woman are surveying the place with a morbid curiosity, and the latter tells me with unctious relish "that the blood all congealed can still be seen down

the area, where it dripped down the from the iron bars."

Slantingly opposite there is a warehouse all lit up, and opposite is the opening from where the assassin escaped after the completion of his ghastly work.

We stand still, the young men and woman go away, the lights are put out opposite, the lamp is extinguished in the window, under which the murder took place, and yet we remain. The square is now deserted, and it is quite dark.

We go up and stand in the shade of that dreadful corner. The quiet is oppressive, we might be miles from any living being, and I catch myself wondering if there is really a busy thoroughfare within a few yards from where we are standing. Presently we hear a measured tread; it comes nearer and nearer, then dies gradually away. It is a policeman in Mitre Street. A few moments after some men cross the square, but we are apparently unseen wrapped up in that murderous shade, for thought they pass within a half-dozen yards of us, they are quite unconscious of our presence. This rather unnerves me, for I realise how comfortably a person could be murdered here.



Just then a severe voice says, "What are you doing here?" A lantern is flashed on us, and there is a bobby. He looks at me, then at my companion, who he recognises immediately, explanations issues, and all is right. Still it does not do away with the fact that we have been allowed to remain there undisturbed for fully seven to ten minutes.

Although Mitre Square is respectable, it affords facilities for crime. At night it is comparatively deserted, and, moreover, is badly lit, the corners being comparatively enveloped in gloom, and another thing is that there are two thoroughfares leading in and out of the square. I honestly believe that the police did their best, and I had very little idea of the difficulties they have to contend with till the night of my expedition to the east, and I could see what an intelligent and efficient body they must by to grapple at all with the vexatious obstacles thrown in their paths.

The next place we visited was Berner Street, and to

get there we had to cross Whitechapel Road and go down Commercial Road. Of these places I shall have a great deal to say, but I will reserve my remarks for another article. The bustle and noise was most grateful after the fearful hush of Mitre Square; there were quantities of men and women, but what men and women were they?

As we got near to Berner Street Mr. B----- asked me "if I felt frightened?" I laughed and replied in the negative, and then he showed me with a certain amount of satisfaction that he was provided with his whistle and a thick, heavy walking stick.

In another few minutes we were in what my companion tersely described as a beastly locality. A long, ill-paved, narrow, badly-lit street. The lamps are few and far between, and show a flickering, sickly, yellow light. This insufficient lighting is simply disgraceful, and is an evil that demands immediate attention.

After the glare of Whitechapel Road the darkness seems trebly bad. The houses are small and squalid, and teeming with life. Late as it is, one must walk carefully for fear of falling over half-naked infants, who crawl about the broken pavements. Wherever you turn you see babies – dirty, unkempt, with hardly sufficient rags on to cover their nakedness. Their helplessness testifies to their

infancy, but their puckered-up faces are indelibly stamped with the legacy of crime. Conceived in vice, brought up on the streets, taught to steal and lie, good God, what can their future be? Children everywhere; but in all the scores not one really childish or innocent face could I see. Little girls nursing gutter brats, and pouring over their charges such torrents of invective, such vile blasphemy, that I fairly shuddered. Girls a little older, but not yet in their teens, mauling boys as ragged, and as filthy as themselves. Girls hurrying up to and from the public houses and smacking their lips over the drink they had surreptitiously taken. Girls carrying infants, and cursing and swearing at them like fish fags. All young, all with matted hair and dirty skins, all with precociously sharp eyes and old wizened faces; few with boots and stockings, few plump or healthy looking, few decently clad, none with their heads covered, but nearly all sporting earrings and brooches. And this, mind you, not in the daytime, but late at night, and within two miles from where I saw strong women swathed in sables and sealskins. I now stood by half-naked infants crawling together as if to seek warmth, on pavements rendered disgusting by the vilest refuse. Women with their hair uncombed, and their hands folded in their aprons or skirts, stood by the doorways and shrieked to their children in harsh, shrill voices. And this was the first



impression I received of Berner Street.

As I have mentioned before, Berner Street is badly lit, and as we go down it, so does the gloom seem to increase.

We meet a couple of policemen, and for a moment they scan us seriously under the flickering gleam of one of the few gas lamps. Evidently decently-clad strangers are somewhat of a novelty in this most unsavoury neighbourhood, but my companion seems to be recognised, for a brief smile momentarily eradicates the professional stolidity which is the characteristic of our blue-coated guardians of the peace when on duty.

Soon we leave the groups of horrible children behind, and the thoroughfare looks deserted, and is so quiet that our footsteps ring out startlingly distinct on the still night air. The atmosphere is impregnated with a cold damp mist, and now and again as doors are opened smells the reverse of agreeable are wafted to our reluctant nostrils.

We cross over, and Mr. B----- points out a door apparently leading into a house, but when he pushes it open I see to my astonishment that it encloses a court or narrow alley.

I peep down it, and as well as I can see in the blackness – for there is no lamp in the entry – I notice that there are houses at each side. Filthy, ramshackle cottages, evidently let out in tenements, for they seem swarming with human beings. Ragged, dirty muslin curtains are hung across the bottom of the windows, bundles of rags are stuffed in the broken panes; the wretched rooms are lit by tallow candles stuck in empty bottles. The smell is vile, the whole atmosphere seems heavy and surcharged with the foul odour of decaying vegetable and animal matters.



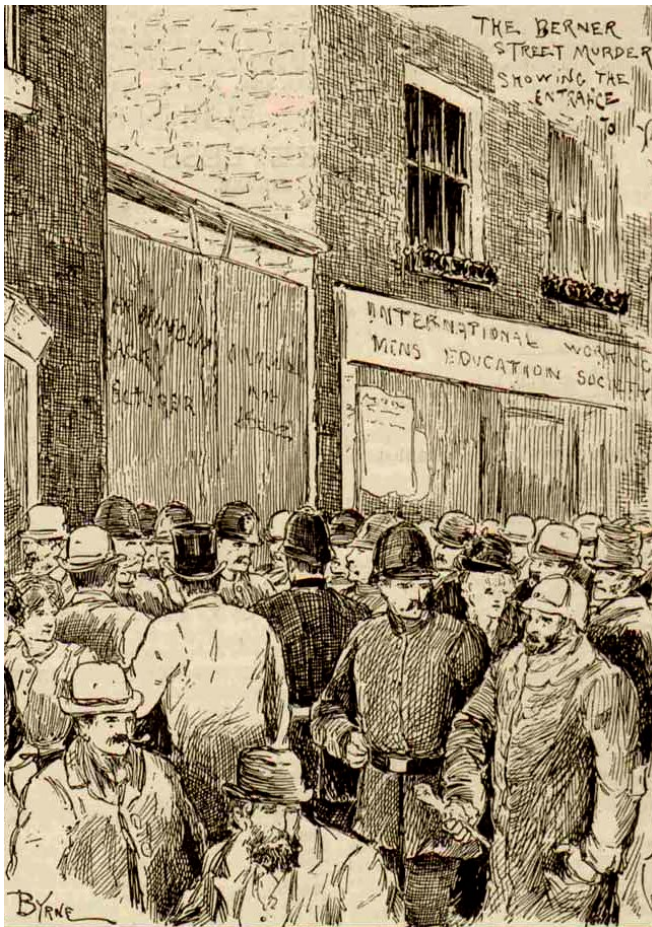
The narrow pathway is paved and broken away here and there, and down it flows a stream of abomination, which settles into little pools before it discharges itself into the gutter.

A man half-dressed, unshaven, and unspeakably brutal looking, emerges from one of the houses. He is short and thick set, one eye is blackened, and a strip of filthy plaster adorns his left cheek. He is clad in fustian trousers and a ragged blue shirt, a wisp of rag is twisted round his neck, with the end of which he wipes his mouth preparatory to speaking. When he does speak it is to gently inquire in a hoarse voice: "What the b----- h----- we ----- are doing?" The expletives roll easily off his tongue, and in the midst of his tirade he catches sight of my companion, who is keeping his blue eyes fixed sternly on his face. The effect is magical, for it instantly stops his eloquence, and he disappears into the interior. He evidently is familiar with the police, and has no wish to voluntarily renew the acquaintanceship. In his absence we make our exit.

"You see," says Mr. B-----, "there are any amount of these alleys about, and while the police are patrolling the street, the Lord only knows what goes on in the courts that branch off from the main thoroughfare. For instance, we passed a couple of constables a few minutes ago; well, they are not able to visit and properly inspect every alley in Berner Street. Why, we should want at least a score of men for that duty alone. Look how dark the entries are. If a murder were committed in the street the murderer could easily escape observation by staying in one of the alleys till the first hue and cry was over, and then he could mix with the crowd and get off. Of course the place is poverty stricken, but the poverty is of the lowest and vilest description. Wait till we get you in Hanbury Street, and then you will notice that poverty and crime are so closely allied that the former is never seen without the latter. And the great friends and helpers of vice are the want of light, the almost entire absence of sanitary conveniences, and the want of proper dwelling accommodation. Old houses are rightly condensed and are pulled down, but none are erected in their stead, the consequence being that the lower and criminal classes are forced to this locality where the sexes herd indiscriminately together like animals. A lot has been written and said about the East End, but as yet there has been no description strong enough to portray the actual state of things that exist here, and the newspaper that will fearlessly open its columns to a statement of unexaggerated facts will be doing a public service."

By this time we have got to a building which Mr. B----- informs me is the club rendered notorious by being so near the scene of the Berner Street tragedy, whilst opposite is

a stone block which is a board school. Next to the club is a pair of high wooden gates which open inwards into the stable yard. We go inside, first taking a hasty glance behind the gates to see if anyone is lurking there, for there is plenty of room for a hiding place.



On the right is the club, the windows of which are all lit up, and further on is the side door. Opposite are three small whitewashed cottages. The place is so narrow that if the hapless victim had made the least noise it must have been heard, despite the singing and merriment that were going on in the club.

A girl of about 14, barefooted and bareheaded, with a white, frightened face and sharp furtive eyes comes out of one of the houses. She starts a little when she sees us standing, and then comes across to me.

"The woman was found there," she says, with infinite gusto, smacking her lips at the chance of repeating the tale of horror to an interested listener. "'er head was on that short stone post, and 'er legs was just over the iron railings, and the blood and gore was all down there," and she pointed out the various spots mentioned with great relish.

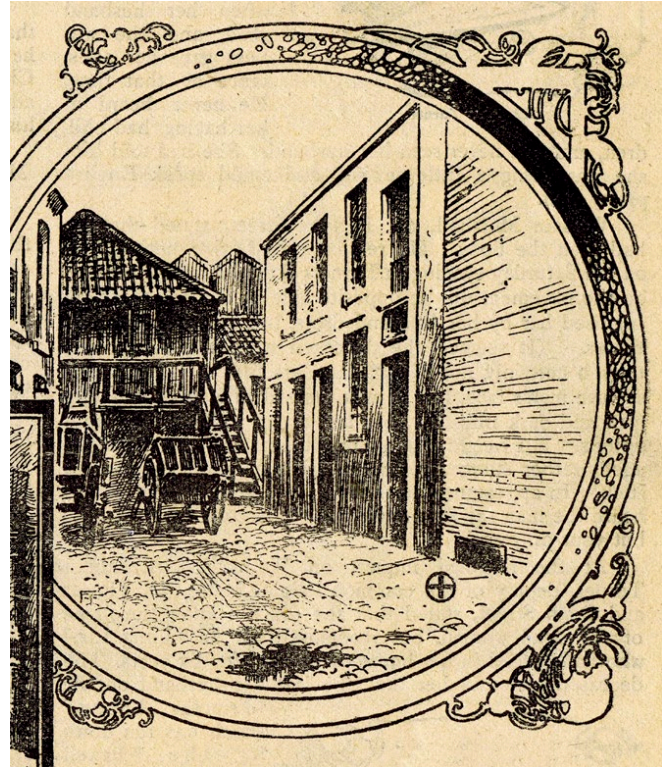
"Do you live here?" we asked.

"Yes, sir, in the second cottage," she answered.

"And did you not hear anything?" queried Mr. B-----.

"Not a sound, sir," says the girl, earnestly, "and nobody else down here heard nothing neither. You know, sir, I think that..."

But we were fated never to hear what the girl thinks, for a voice calls out "Lizer!" and she promptly vanished into the cottage.



We retrace our way back along Berner Street. We pass a public house brilliantly lit up, clean and comfortable, and affording a striking contrast to the wretched habitations we have just seen. The bar is full of men and women, many of the latter having babies suckling at their bosoms. Children are going in and coming out, carrying jugs of beer or bottles containing gin or rum. Two women, standing outside, commenced quarrelling; from words they come to blows; one smacks the other's face, whereupon she rushes forward, catches hold of her assailant by the hair of her head and proceeds to shake her by it. The children stand and laugh; a knot of men smoking clay pipes encourage the combatants by calling out, "Give it her, Bess!" "Never mind, Sukey!" and so on. The shaken woman claws at the other one's face, and just as we are going to interfere someone says "The coppers are coming." So the men leave off smoking, part the two furies, who are making use of choice language, and take them into the public house to 'stand them a drink', the women settling their dresses and fastening up their bodices, which have got disordered in the fray. It is worthy to note that they are both in an interesting condition!

This has created a little diversion, though there seems to be a smouldering feeling of indignation amongst

the onlookers that the police should have been in the neighbourhood, thus to stop an innocent and exciting little spectacle, and they clearly show that they feel injured at the performance being stopped just when it began to get interesting.

The houses that we pass are still small and shabby, and nearly every door is propped up by either a man or woman in various stages of *dishabille*. Some of the windows are adorned with weedy-looking plants; a few have melancholy birds in wicker cages.

A youth passes with his arm around a girl's waist; he is kissing her, and she is laughing. He says something, and her merriment is excessive. Then he makes a coarse jest about being 'Jack the Ripper', and he puts his arm around her neck and draws her head back. Her laughter ceases abruptly; she wrenches herself away, and as we approach them we observe that the colour has faded from her cheeks, and she looked scared and nervous. She is shaking. "No, Jim," we hear her say, "you have upset me tonight." He apologises and evidently makes his peace, for presently they re-pass us again, and he again has his arm around her, but she is not longer laughing.

A batch of girls are coming towards us, the majority carry infants. The eldest is perhaps nineteen, and they all wear wedding rings.

Men are loafing about on all corners, each looking and desperate. At first they seem intending to hustle us, but directly they catch sight of my companion's face they slink away. True that he is in private clothes, but there is something about him, his walk, his calm, stern face, and his intimate knowledge of the slums, that seem to awe those before, who clearly recognise in him a representative of law and order. Be that as it may, we are never ignored. Occasionally we meet a few brawny fellows dressed in corduroys, who peer at us curiously as they slouch along in an aimless sort of manner. Mr. B----- glances at them keenly, and sometimes he smiles a little as we pass on; afterwards he tells me that they are detectives.

At length we reach Buck's Row, and I may at once admit that I was agreeably surprised by it. The street is fairly wide, well paved, and not badly lit. The houses are small, but the majority are clean and respectable looking, and seem to be inhabited by the hard working poor. In fact, it is a very superior locality to Berner Street.

In addition to the regular beat in Buck's Row, policemen are also on duty at the top and bottom of the street, so that it cannot be left for more than a quarter of an hour at a time without the police being either at the top or bottom of the row. The situation is such that it looked the very last one where an undetected murder could be committed.



The actual spot of the tragedy, although rather in the shade, is still open. There is a house with green shutters; by it there is a lamp. Next to it is a pair of high wooden gates, which fall back from the road perhaps a couple of inches, and slantingly opposite is another lamp. Between the lamp by the gate, lying in the road itself, was found the barbarously mutilated body of the second victim of the recent murders. To my mind this is the most mysterious crime of the lot, for it seems improbable that so ghastly an act could be perpetrated in a comparatively well-lit, thickly-populated street like this, without some trace of the assassin being found, or some clew to his whereabouts being discovered.

A door is open of one of the houses, and it gives us an opportunity of seeing an interior so scrupulously clean, so bright and cheerful, that the remembrance of the black deed that took place outside seems to be even yet more horrible. Two young girls, neatly but plainly dressed, and looking like dressmakers, go in, and are met in the oilcloth passage by a cosy-looking old lady, resplendent in a lace cap.

We have seen all there is to see, so passing several warehouses, looking very large and dark, we leave Buck's Row on our way to Hanbury Street.

There is one exceedingly disagreeable feature of all these localities that deserves mention, and yet can necessarily be only lightly touched upon, and that is that the men and women, particularly the former, have not the least knowledge of common decency. Their ignorance or wilful defiance of the most ordinary rules of decorum is apt to prove both embarrassing and uncomfortable to ordinary mortals, who still think that modesty and decency exist even in the far East. The sights that I saw can better be imagined than described; indeed, a description would be peculiarly offensive, and I must admit that the women were nearly as great offenders as the men. Surely some means might be taken to prevent the eye being outraged by spectacles that are a deep disgrace even to the squalid quarter that we are at present in.



Hanbury Street is a very different locality to any we have yet been in. It is long and narrow, and unevenly paved. The houses are rather high, the majority dirty, and the whole lot swarming with inhabitants. The street is light and busy; this, by-the-by, is at the commencement, for I here remarked to Mr. B----- that "the place is not as bad as I thought." He tells me that we are not yet in the thick of it, and he begs me to keep close to him.

I soon find out that I have been too hasty in giving an opinion, for the neighborhood and the people are vile. So

much we see, I with horror-distended eyes, my companion with the placidity born of intimate knowledge of these slums, so much that dare not be written and can only be spoken of in whispers.

There are any number of the noisome alleys like the one in Berner Street, and at first it gives one quite a start to be suddenly confronted by gaunt, grimy men, who stare at me with fierce wolfish eyes, and make towards us as if to clutch at our watch chains, only to find my companion's eyes fixed sternly on them, and they then draw back and noiselessly disappear in the entries. It is very ghostly, the unexpected manner in which these human birds of prey appear, and then abruptly vanish in the mist. The savage way they leer in my face, their low, brutal aspect, the expression of sullen wrath that flits across their ferocious faces a recognise who my companion is, inspires me with a secret anger as well as a half-formed dread, and I keep very close to Mr. B-----. These men are thieves, professional loafers, pickpockets, bullies living on the earnings of the prostitutes who, God knows why, live with them. They are the scum of the criminal class: they are the offspring of the foulest and most unbridled passions; they are the noxious fungi of the worst type of humanity.

Yet, vicious and degraded as they are, they one and all express and have a deep abhorrence of the human devil who through his barbarous crimes is making Whitechapel a region of horrified dread.

If once the assassin was caught in Hanbury Street, his miserable life would not be worth ten minutes' purchase, and he would suffer death from the hands of those who also 'wanted'. Their ideas of morality are peculiar, for we hear one man, say, in reference to the mythical personage known as 'Jack the Ripper', "If a man quarrels with a woman that him knocked her down or give her a ----- kicking, but ----- ----- don't let him rip her up, make such a ----- mess of her."

Thus, blows and kicks seem to be a frequent occurrence in the lives of the Hanbury Street females, for these humane remarks are received with profound satisfaction by the men standing around.

Women pass us; I suppose we must call them women, though, truth to tell, there is nothing womanly about them. No need to be told of their shameful calling; it is branded on them. How can they be described? The ragged, filthy finery; the pinched or bloated faces, daubed hideously over with white and red paint; the red, blurring eyes; the matted hair, with the thick fringe growing right over their eyebrows; the close, sickly smell that clings around them; the eager, wanton glances that they cast around.

Ah, me! It is all too fearful. They appear nervous and dissipated, for they seem to go about their frightful trade

with manifest dread and reluctance. Mr. B----- tells me that it is only the last few nights that these unfortunates have ventured out, and as it is, very many have sought 'fields and pastures new' in the vicinity of the Strand and Drury Lane. Some of them are quite young girls; they are mostly all half-drunk and declined to be noisy. One woman passes us with a face so battered and bruised that there is very little expression left in it.

Indeed this seems the place for the flotsam and jetsam of human wreckage to float in.

The foreign element predominates. Villainous-looking Poles, ruffianly Germans, starved Russians, with the scum of half a dozen other nations all live, or rather exist, about here. They speak some incomprehensible jargon, they manage to find some means of earning a livelihood. I believe that they are quiet and inoffensive if left to themselves, but it is easy to see that they are looked upon with ill-concealed aversion and distrust.

I quite credit Mr. B-----'s statement that "if the murderer was found to be a foreigner, all the police in London would be powerless to stay the persecution that the rest would be subjected to, in fact, they would be hounded out of Whitechapel."

Amongst the many foul smells that assail us, the worst, because it is the strongest, emanates from the fried fish shops. There are a number of these establishments, and they seem to do a brisk trade. I should not care to hazard an opinion as to what compound the fish is soaked in, but judging from the odour, inquiries and research would probably be the reverse of gratifying. This delicacy is retailed out from a halfpenny a-piece, each piece being wrapped up in paper, which is promptly taken off and thrown in the road, which presents, in consequence, an extraordinary spectacle of torn fragments. Several baked potato stalls are in the street, so a halfpenny potato and a halfpenny piece of fish makes a choice supper, which is eaten in the street. For everyone seems to eat and drink and sit and rest in these thoroughfares, as well as performing their various little toilet operations in public.

There are bakers shops, a few vegetable stores, which are perfect markers of dirt and disorder.

Sometimes a wretched, hungry-looking cat slinks past me, but the place is so squalid that animals shun it. A man who has been glancing at us wolfishly darts forward to make a grab at the handkerchief I hold in my hand.

"Ah, would you?" says Mr. B-----, and the would-be thief makes off.

I laugh at the salutary effect that my companion produces.

"They know me," he says; "I have walked into one of

the doss houses (lodging houses) after a man, found him there amongst a score of his pals, and have marched him off quite comfortably. They have got no real pluck; why, the majority of them are miserable cowards. Besides, as they often tell me, "We're not frightened of you, but it's the clothes you wear that we are afraid of." Some times they cut up a bit rough. I remember once getting in a doss house, and not being able to get out again. I blew my whistle, and fought like a demon. Lor', how I laid about me! Just as I was getting the worst of it, three constables came to my assistance, and then the scoundrels let go their hold of me, and I managed to get out whole, but I was in a pretty plight."



"Talking of doss houses," he continued, "they are the worst part of a policeman's duty. I mean when you have got to inspect them, Phew, the smell, it's enough to knock you down. You cannot imagine anything like it. The rooms are generally low, and not too large, and perhaps eighteen unwashed, half-drunk creatures are lying in each apartment, with windows and doors tightly shut. You can fancy how nice and pleasant the atmosphere must be. The most trying, however, are the female doss houses. I'll never forget the first time I went into one. I had not long joined the force, and was a modest lad fresh-faced from the country, and shy of anything belonging to a petticoat. Well, there was a woman 'wanted', and from information received we ascertained that she was hiding in a common lodging house in ----- Street, so I was

told to go and arrest her. It was late at night when I got there, and of course no such person as I wanted was there. However, I had to go in and see for myself. The first room I went into was full of women who had precious little clothing on. The light from my lantern woke them up, and I suppose I must have looked uncomfortable, for they commenced to chaff me. I went from one room to another, and in every one the confounded creatures laughed at my modesty. At last I picked out my woman, but devil a bit of clothes had she on. She decided that she had none, whilst I felt ready to sink into the ground. I wanted some of the females to lend her some, but they were shrieking with laughter and wouldn't. I offered to purchase a couple of the most necessary articles, but no-one would sell them. I dare not leave her here, so I had to force her to wrap my coat around her. I had hard work to make her keep it on, and if I hadn't have handcuffed her she would have had it off in the street. It was a bitter cold night, but the perspiration rolled off me in beads when I got her safe into the police station. By Jove, that walk haunted me for weeks afterwards."

We are now near the scene of the murder; there are few shops, but any number of these common lodging-houses. The place is comparatively deserted, only a few unfortunates flitting by us, very likely seeking the wherewithal to pay for a night's shelter.



On our left is a house with the legend "Comfortable

beds," written on a board outside. Opposite is the lodging-house from which the hapless victim of the Hanbury Street tragedy was turned away to meet her death, because she had not the four pence to pay for her bed.

The night is still young, so the birds of prey have not as yet returned to their noisome nests. While we stand we see several girls disappear down the various entries. One woman asks us for assistance. She say she has no money, and since the last two murders she has been afraid to go out and seek it. We give her a coin, and then enquire if she has any suspicion of anyone. She glances round fearfully as if to see if there are any listeners about, and then she says hurriedly, "No she doesn't know, and wishes she did, he must be a ----- monster to cut up the likes of her."

These woman make no secret of their calling, which they regard with callous indifference, but I cannot help thinking as we watch her go into the house opposite, that she and her class, if they could be persuaded to speak, could throw some light on the mysterious perpetrator of the crimes.

The mist begins to fall in a steady melancholy drizzle, and the wind blows cold and raw. I shiver involuntarily, for the chill breeze seems to penetrate even my thick coat. The damp is surcharged with smuts and wherever they fall they leave a black smear.

A cripple is sitting in a doorway; he looks wolfish and starved; a hunk of dry bread, the rejected evidently of dogs, is lying in the gutter, and this he presently sees. He gives a low cry, and with the aid of his rough crutch he hobbles towards it, his poor maimed leg working with excitement; he clutches at the bread eagerly, drags himself back to the step and commences to gnaw and tear at the crust, more like a wild animal than anything human.

His enjoyment, however, is of short duration, for a long, yellow, thieving hand, belonging to a something that bears a faint resemblance to a woman, grasps him by his frayed shirt, and with the other hand snatches the food from him and then vanishes in the mist.

First the lad curses and blasphemes, and then he gives way to a dreadful misery; he moans and cries and the tears form grotesque little rivulets down his grimy face. He wishes he was dead and prays for the pluck to cut his throat; he shrieks out for the woman's heart, her vitals; he curses her with every curse, and then he falls moaning again.

Mr. B----- stands behind me as I drop a coin into the poor wretch's hand. He doesn't thank me but glares and blinks at me out of his wicked, tear-stained eyes, and in a low, hoarse voice says that he'll "go and get something to eat before she comes out again."

I inquire if she is the person who took the bread from

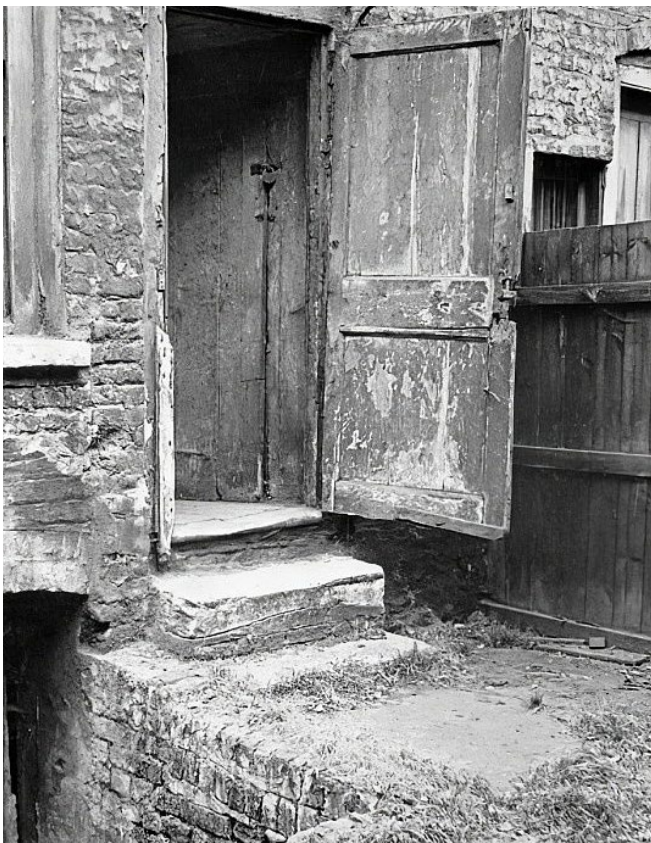
him. He nods his head volubly.

"And who is she?" I ask.

"My mother," he responds, laconically.

I shrink back, the remembrance of the curses ringing in my ears, and I shudder. Surely instead of spending thousands of pounds annually on propagating the Gospel among the Jews, and sending missionaries abroad to reclaim the heathens, a little of that money might be better spent in the efforts to Christianise and humanise the dwellers of the East End slums.

We cross the road, there is the lodging house and there is the inevitable door that shuts in one of the usual dark courts that reek with life, and which form not only a happy hunting-ground for vice, but also a convenient and safe place for murder. It was huddled up behind this door that the victim of the Hanbury Street tragedy was found, close to the house where she was wont to sleep, and within a stone's throw of the street that she had traversed in her blind despair.



"After midnight," says Mr. B-----, "it is something dreadful to see the women congregate round the doss houses, and beg to be let in. They have generally had the price of a night's lodging during the day, but they spend it in drink, and when it gets late and trade is bad with them, they get fair desperate at the idea of sleeping in the streets all night."

As we go along we pass another lodging house, and

there we see a sight so indescribably painful that I find it difficult to realize that I am in a wealthy and humane city.

It is an unfortunate: young, and as well as we can see under the dirt and paint, pretty. She has boots and stockings on and an old silk skirt, with a torn velvet bodice showing the flesh through the rents. She smells strongly of spirits, and we hear her imploring the deputy to trust her a night's shelter. She offers him anything only to let her rest there that night. He refuses; she catches him by the hand, she almost kneels to him, but he is obdurate, shakes her from him and shuts the door on her.

At first the poor creature seems paralyzed, then she shrieks and batters at the door with her hands, then she sobs with impotent misery, and calls on Christ to assist her. She tears at her dress, and falls to beating her bare breasts. She seems to take a fierce delight in torturing herself, for she strikes her head against the wall and drags out her lank hair by handfuls. It is the very personification of abandoned despair. She tears and rives at herself, she drags herself shrieking and cursing to the windows, and then another woman that she seems to know comes along, and to her she explains her plight. Oaths are interchanged, they both squat down on the kerbstone, the second woman counts over her money; the result must be satisfactory, for they both go into the doss house.

My companion tells me that there is an amount of clan-ship amongst these unfortunates; although they will nearly murder each other through jealousy. If one is down on her luck the others will help her if possible; for instance, tonight that woman will pay for the other's lodgings.

I look stealthily at my watch, and I find that it is getting late; so we proceed to direct our footsteps toward Whitechapel Road, which is the first stage of my return journey homewards. As we go along the loafers increase in number.

"These men," says Mr. B-----, "are professional loafers: they sleep and drink all day, and at night they come out of the alleys and courts and lurk about the dark corners to see who they can knock down and rob. Why, if I had not been with you, you would have had every bit of your valuables stolen by this time. These fellows don't work because they won't; thieving pays them much better, and it is exciting. They know me, and they know that I know them; so that is the reason they have left us alone."

I hint a doubt as to the desirability of our detectives being so well known; but this Mr. B----- laughs at.

"I'm in plain clothes," he says, "and the folks about here recognize me; that is, because I want them to. We are not down here on business; we are merely sight-seeing, and I did not want our pleasure to be spoiled by getting into

rows which I knew we could avoid by letting my calling be clearly noticeable. You mentioned a few minutes ago that since we left Berner Street we have met no policemen. More we have met in uniform, but we have kept constantly running against our men, so artfully dressed that you have seen no difference in them and the other individuals who were lounging about. The number of police that have been drafted down here is surprising. If the public only knew of the precautions that are being taken they would cease their grumblings at Sir Charles Warren, I can tell you."

We are now in Commercial Street, and it seems to me a very paradise after the slums we have left. The mist has cleared away, and if it were not for the all-pervading and abominable smell of fried fish, the air would be delightfully fresh in comparison with Hanbury Street.

In addition to the baked potato cans, the proprietors of which are calling out in stentorian tones "Hall 'ot, hall 'ot," a man is going a thriving trade in dispensing new walnuts at "ten a penny". A woman is standing in the road, by a stall on which is laid out some pallid and soft and moist objects. They seem to be in a state of mild perspiration, and do not look unlike unhealthy babyhood. They, however, appear to be a choice delicacy, for when any are sold the purchaser walks off with them in proud triumph. I ask what they are, and I am told that they rejoice in the name of trotters.

A swarthy Italian is grinding away at the piano-organ, and round him are a bevy of children, girls and women. The children and the girls are dancing, some of them a sort of can-can, others kicking up their legs and whirling about

like so many teetotums, whilst several girls are waltzing slowly and gracefully. A little bare-headed ragged child, with a face like a cherub and long golden curls half-way down her back, emerges from a group of juveniles; she glides gently along, makes a deep curtsy, picks up her frock in one hand and dances a measure so gracefully and quaintly that we stop to see the finish of the performance.

Whitechapel Road itself is a great delight to me – it is wide and noisy and presents all the appearance of a fair. Either side of the road is a long row of stalls brilliantly lit up with portable gas, and everything under the sun can be bought there.

There are butcher stalls presided over by loud-voiced men, who assure the bystanders that as it is late they are almost giving the meat away. A lean, pale woman carrying a baby, is haggling over the price of a piece of mutton. It is a fair-sized piece, and he at length agrees to take fourpence; she pays him in half-pennies and a little boy that is clinging to her skirt claps his thin hands rapturously.

There are fruit stalls, ice stalls, book stalls, and stall where unholy-looking shell fish are being consumed with an appetite that speaks volumes for the digestive organs of the Whitechapelites. The immense greeny tinged mussels, and the coy and evading periwinkles are to be had with a sprinkle of pepper and salt and a *souçon* of vinegar, for a halfpenny a saucerful; and it is a beautiful and odifying spectacle to see how clean the saucers are left through the help of the tongue and a grimy forefinger.

There are jewellery stalls at which girls gaze lovingly,





and where a brooch with a diamond rivalling the Kohinoor in size can be bought for threepence, and there are tool stalls, where everything, from a hammer to a jemmy, can be purchased.

And of course there are friend fish stalls. I abhor and detest this delicacy, my heart rails against it. I indulge in wondering as to what the fish was like before it was cooked, and I marvel at the quantity that is sold and without any appreciable detriment of the population in consequence.

A man on a wagon is selling a wondrous ointment, which, if he is to be believed, will not only cure all the ills that mankind are heir to, but will also remedy everything from a smoky chimney to an obnoxious mother-in-law.

The people are better (not to say well) dressed than in the other streets we have been into. Many of the women are resplendent in plush or sealskin; these by the bye are Jewesses. We pass many handsome girls. The majority wear hats, but there are noisy and self-assertive. Men lounge about here, but they give me the idea of idling

after work is done, for they have very little of the raffish look of their Berner and Hanbury Street compeers.

In short, the East End cannot be judged from the flourishing and busy Whitechapel Road. It is the places that branch off from it that are so vile. It is the places where the moral sewage flows till they become hideous cesspools of vice and crime. Fine ladies, and white-handed gentlemen will do no good down here; indeed nothing will remedy the evils while lighting is deficient, sanitary conveniences absent, and these filthy dark alleys exist.

I say my goodbye to Mr. B----- at Aldgate Station, and thank him, as well as I may, for his courtesy and kindness, and for his presence, which has kept me from insult and robbery in what he describes as "one of the (if not *the*) worst localities in London." And as I return to my hotel I think with a thrill of disgust of the many horrible things I have seen and heard during my night's slumming in Whitechapel.

DONALD SWANSON ARCHIVE ON PUBLIC DISPLAY

The unique personal archive of the Scotland Yard detective who led the hunt for Jack the Ripper – including the book in which he named the infamous Whitechapel murderer in the so-called ‘Swanson marginalia’ – has been made public for the first time after being given into the care of an independent museum.

The private collection of Metropolitan Police Chief Inspector Donald Sutherland Swanson has been entrusted to the National Emergency Services Museum (NESM) in Sheffield by the former detective’s family. The treasure trove lay undiscovered for decades until Swanson’s descendants discovered an enormous collection of over 150 individual objects; paperwork, photographs, letters, drawings and personal belongings.

The marginalia, written in Swanson’s copy of Sir Robert Anderson’s memoir *The Lighter Side of My Official Life*, is thought to be a unique artefact revealing unknown details of the case, as well as theories and notes on what evidence the Metropolitan Police had gathered – all from the pen of the inspector charged with solving the case at Scotland Yard.

The marginalia, along with other items from the collection, will form part of a new exhibition, ‘Daring Detectives and Dastardly Deeds’, which opened on 19 May. The exhibition, housed within NESM’s original Victorian cells, explores the intriguing history of 19th crime and punishment from the bobby on the beat to the emerging science of forensics.

The Swanson collection is thought to be one of the most detailed and significant of its kind. It includes official police paperwork and documents from a number of nationally significant criminal cases as well as Swanson’s own personal findings, theories and evaluations, arrest lists and the resources he used to solve some of his cases.

Holly Roberts, curator at NESM, said: ‘We are so proud to have been given the honour of caring for this outstanding

collection, and to help shed light on the achievements of a remarkable man whose story has been largely forgotten.

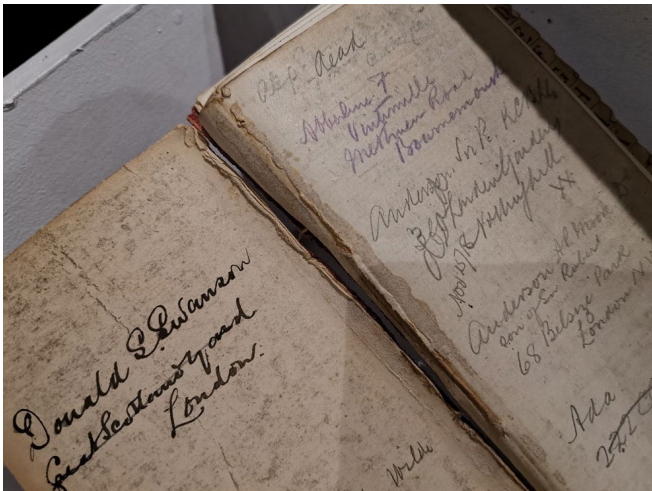
‘This vast collection tells us an enormous amount about what it was like to be a detective in 19th century Britain. Even more unusually, there is so much of his professional career and his family and personal life, offering us a unique picture of what a prominent 19th century detective did in his work time and his down time. It is an amazing addition to our museum and to our new exhibition.’



Curator Holly Roberts and Rip editor Adam Wood at the ‘Daring Detectives and Dastardly Deeds’ exhibition

Adam Wood, executive editor of *Ripperologist* and author of the definitive biography of Swanson, helped to secure the collection for NESM. He said: 'During my seven years of research into Donald Swanson's life I realised that he had enjoyed an amazing career, much more than just his known involvement in the Jack the Ripper investigation. The 35-year period of the late Victorian era in which Swanson served was one of massive development for the Metropolitan Police, culminating in the dawn of fingerprint detection. Perhaps more than anyone, it was he who epitomised the evolving Victorian detective, representing that era in the force's history.'

‘Although a modest man, he was feted in the national press of the day as one of the country’s best detectives – and indeed he rose to become Superintendent of the CID at Scotland Yard, the top detective in the country – so it’s astonishing that he is largely unknown today, whereas contemporaries such as Frederick Abberline are familiar names. From the discovery of the archive in the early 1980s the Swanson family have sought proper recognition of their ancestor’s achievements, so it has been a joy bringing this to fruition by working with the National Emergency Services Museum to make the Donald Swanson collection accessible to all.’



*Donald Swanson's personal address book,
on display at the exhibition*

Bill Swanson, a great-grandson of Donald's, said: 'The Swanson family is delighted that the career of Chief Inspector Donald Sutherland Swanson is being exhibited to the general public and will now be on long-term display for all to see at the National Emergency Services Museum, its best publicly-accessible home.'

‘It is clear from writings by his colleagues that he was held in the highest regard and this is a source of great pride to the family. It is hoped that the public will recognise this. In particular, of course, there is the notorious case of ‘Jack the Ripper’. It needs to be remembered that the

Whitechapel case was, at the time, just another of the many crimes to be investigated by Swanson and the Metropolitan Police.'

As well as forming part of the museum's new exhibition, NESM is also planning to digitise the collection and make it more widely accessible to researchers and historians. It is looking to begin several research projects around the Swanson archive in partnership with researchers and colleagues to understand what can be learnt from the collection and will be hosting a series of workshops, talks and special events to celebrate the Donald Swanson story.

A number of talks have been scheduled over the coming months, and started with Adam Wood speaking on Swanson and the marginalia on 9 July. Future events include Neil Bell speaking on the life of a Victorian Bobby, Angela Buckley with a talk titled 'Murder, Poisoning and Baby-farming', and sessions describing the job of a forensic anthropologist.



For information on 'Daring Detectives and Dastardly Deeds', and how to visit the National Services Museum, see www.visitnesm.org.uk

WHOA NELLIE!

A LOWER EAST SIDE SEX WORKER PROVIDES THE PROSECUTION WITH THE ALLEGED MURDERER'S OPPORTUNITY

By NINA and HOWARD BROWN

In our previous articles concerning the trial of Ameer Ben Ali, we presented the first known and published photograph of Ali (who was convicted under the name of 'George Frank') and his eventual release and exoneration. The entry in this issue of *Ripperologist* takes us to the trial which would decide the fate of Ameer Ben Ali for the next eleven years.

The trial began in late June 1891. The focus of this piece is the person who may have had more of an impact on Ali's imprisonment than the long-winded and, frankly, inconclusive medical testimony by the prosecution. That person was prostitute Nellie English.

What follows is the account of English's stint in the witness stand. One newspaper account mentioned that 'no-one seems to know' much about Nellie English in the Fourth Ward. We continue to investigate.



Brooklyn Times Union
July 1, 1891

'The third day of the trial of Ameer Ben Ali, alias 'Frenchy', promises to be full of interest. Yesterday a lot of evidence was introduced, tending to show that Frenchy carried a knife similar to the one in evidence. But the most damaging testimony was that made by Nellie English, who said that on the night she occupied a room in the East River Hotel with Frenchy the latter left her several times during the night and visited other rooms on the same floor.'



New York Herald
July 5, 1891

'His behavior, when confronted with English, the woman who had been with him in the Fourth Ward Hotel

several months before the crime [Brown's murder] was committed, and who testified as to the manner in which the Arab crept around the corridor peeping into the rooms, showed that he knew well that her evidence was very strong corroboration of his guilt. It showed that he knew the intricacies of the crooked corridor well, that he could find his way about without a candle and that he was in the habit of peeping into the bedrooms, for what purpose we do not know, but surely for no good purpose.'



COURT OF CENTRAL SESSIONS
CITY & COUNTY OF NEW YORK

The People vs George Frank
Indicted for Murder

Indictment filed May 18, 1891

Testimony of Nellie English
*Friday June 30, 1891*¹

NELLIE ENGLISH, a witness called on behalf of the People, being duly sworn, testified as follows.

Direct Examination by Mr. Wellman [Francis Wellman, Assistant District Attorney]

W: Nellie, do you know this man, the defendant here?

NE: Yes, sir.

W: What name do you know him by?

NE: He told me his name was George.

W: When did you first see him, how long ago?

NE: About one month before this trouble.

1 dc.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/3765.



Assistant District Attorney Francis Wellman

W: Please keep your voice up.

NE: About one month before this trouble.

W: About one month before Carrie Brown was reported to have died?

NE: Yes, sir.

W: Where did you see him about a month before [the Brown murder]?

Mr. House [for the defense] Objected to the question.

The Court [Mr Smyth, presiding Judge] sustained the objection.

The Court: You have got two or three objections to this line.

House: Isn't it necessary for us to take it to each witness?

The Court: You may consider it as applying to each witness. I told you before, whether it appeared on the minutes or not, that I would allow an objection and exception to the same line of testimony where you have already taken objections and exceptions.

W: Where did you see him?

NE: I met him on Oliver Street.

W: Did you ever meet him at the East River Hotel?

NE: Yes, sir, I did.

W: Will you please speak up?

NE: I met him at Oliver Street. My heart troubles me. I cannot speak any louder.

W: I saw him when I met him on Oliver Street, near South. Did you ever meet him at the East River Hotel?

NE: The day that I met him he took me there.

W: Who rang the bell [at the entrance to the hotel]?

NE: He did himself.

W: He rang the bell?

NE: Yes, sir.

W: Who went in first?

NE: He did.

W: Did you go upstairs?

NE: Yes, sir.

W: What floor?

NE: On the top floor [Fourth floor], Room 28.

W: Did anyone from the hotel go upstairs with you?

NE: No, sir.

The Court: Who had the key to that room, or was there a key to it?

NE: Yes, sir, there is a key at the desk as you go in.

The Court: Did he get the key?

NE: He got the key, I could not say for sure who it was from.

W: He got the key at the desk, but you could not say for sure who it was from?

NE: No, sir.

W: I didn't ask you anything that was said up there. I simply want you to say what he did up there, while no one was with you – not in relation to you, but in relation to the hotel.

Objected to. Objection overruled. Exception.

W: Did you see him leave Room 28?

NE: Yes sir, he did.

The Court: Did he go into Room 28?

NE: Yes sir.



Judge Smyth

The Court: Did you go in with him?

NE: Yes sir.

The Court: Did you remain there for any length of time?

NE: Yes, sir.

The Court: And about how long?

NE: I did not intend to stay all night.

The Court: You did not intend to stay all night?

NE: Until morning.

The Court: What time was it when you went in?

NE: About eight o'clock, I think.

The Court: Eight o'clock in the evening and you remained there until the next morning?

NE: Yes sir.

The Court: What time in the morning did you leave?

NE: About eight or nine in the morning.

The Court: Did he remain with you during the night?

NE: Yes sir.

Wellman: Now, did he during the night leave Room 28?

NE: Very often and went around the hallway and feeling the door and listening.

Objected to. Objection overruled. Exception

W: You saw him?

NE: I did, yes.

W: You saw him?

NE: I am positive I seen him.

W: You saw him go around and feel the doors?

NE: Yes sir, and stand outside and listen like this... I never had any such night like this in my life.

W: Did you see him go into any room?

NE: Yes sir, I did

W: What room did he go into?

NE On the other side [Note: the door number is illegible in the trial transcript. Possibly Room 31].

W: Was there anybody in there?

NE: Yes sir.

W: Who?

NE: I don't know her name but I know her by sight

W: Was it a woman?

NE: Yes sir.

W: What did you do?

NE: I went outside and called him.

W: Go on....

NE: He came out and he went downstairs for beer and I waited to see who she was, if I would know her, and

when he came out I spoke to her and I said she was a very foolish woman.

W: Never mind what you said. You had one conversation with her?

NE: Yes sir.

W: How many times in all did you say that he left that room during the twelve hours that you were there?

NE: Several times.

W: How many times?

NE: I presume it must have been six or seven times that he got up during the night and went out in the hall.

CROSS EXAMINATION
By Mr. Friend (Defense)



Emanuel Friend

F: Your name?

NE: Mrs. Nellie English.

F: Where do you live, Nellie?

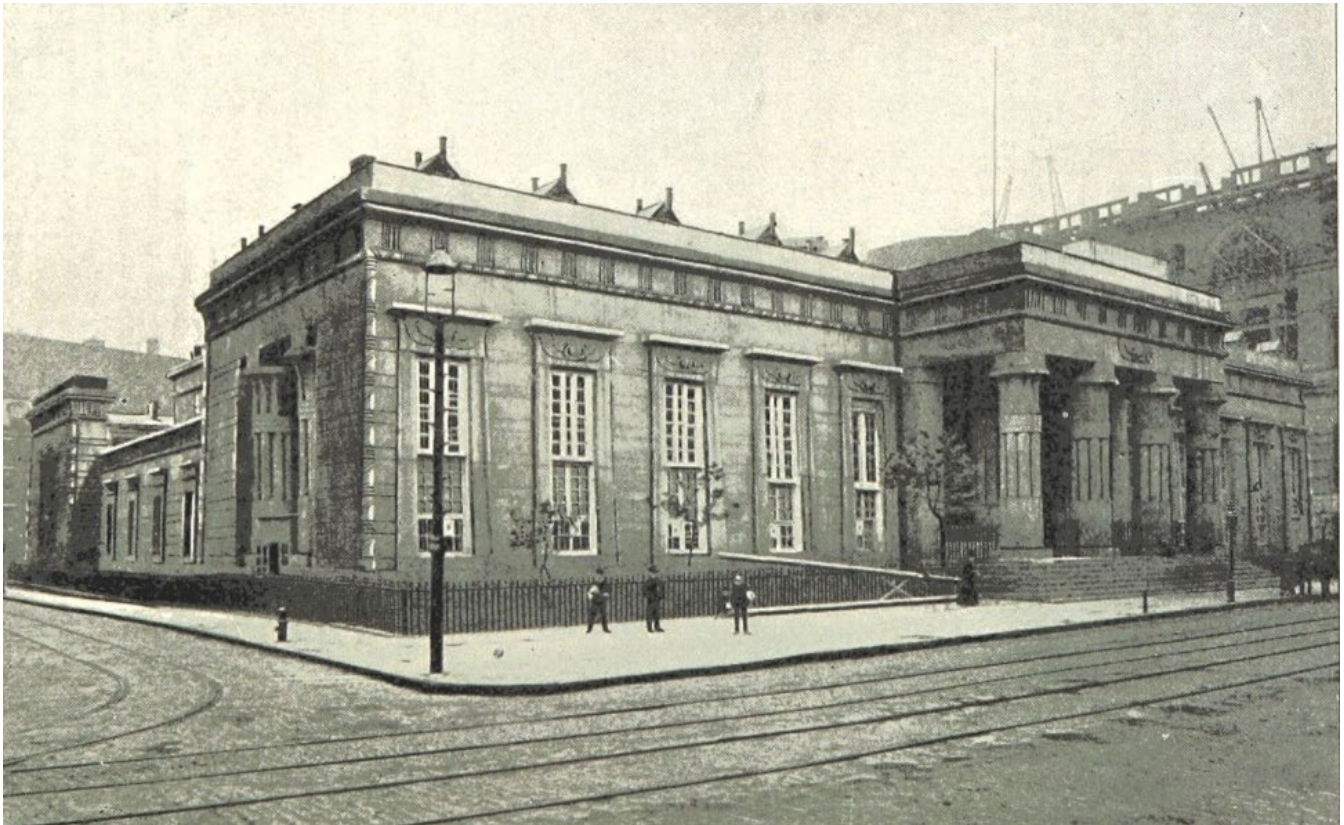
NE: 52 Oliver Street, but I have been living in Brooklyn all my life pretty near.

F: You lived there all your life in 52?

NE: No, sir... in Brooklyn.

F: You live in 52 Oliver Street. How long have living there?

NE: A little while.



The House of Detention: 'The Tombs'

F: How long?

NE: But my last place of residence was in Mulberry Street, #40.

The Court: When did you leave there?

NE: Just before I got arrested, sir, before I came here.

The Court: Before you were put in the House of Detention [also known as The Tombs]?

NE: Yes, sir.

Friend: Before that where did you live?

NE: I used to stop occasionally at Mrs. Crane's, 42 Oliver Street.

F: Now, Nellie you have been in the East River Hotel a number of times in your life, haven't you?

NE: Yes, sir.

F: Sure?

NE: Yes, sir.

F: And with gentlemen friends, I presume?

NE: Yes, sir.

F: Well, during the last year can you tell how many times you have been in that hotel with gentlemen friends?

NE: How many times I was in there?

F: About how many times?

[No answer]

The Court: During the last year?

NE: I really couldn't tell you that.

F: It was so many times that you could not think of them, is that not so?

NE: I can't remember.

F: How many times have you been on the top floor of the hotel during the last year with friends?

NE: Several times.

F: Well... when you say several, do mean a hundred?

NE: No sir, I mean about seven or eight.

F: Seventy or eighty?

NE: Seven or eight.

By Wellman: Six or seven, she says.

Friend: How many times were you on the top floor of the hotel?

NE: About seven or eight times.

F: When was the first time that you were in this hotel, on the top floor, and whom were you there with?

NE: Inside of a year, did you say?

F: Yes.

NE: I couldn't tell you, I can't remember.

F: You can't remember?

NE: No, sir.

F: Can you tell me about the fore part of the present year who you were up there with on the top floor?

NE: No, sir.

F: As a matter of fact you can't tell us anybody you were with in that hotel but the defendant, is not that true? He is about the only one?

NE: I remember that man's face.

F: You remember him now?

NE: Yes sir, I seen his face in the paper. I thought it was a resemblance, the same one I had seen.

F: From the picture?

NE: Yes, sir.

F: What picture?

NE: In the beginning, I thought I had seen that man and his face looked familiar.

F: When you first saw his picture in the newspapers?

NE: When I seen it, sometimes in the papers, I made up my mind that there was a resemblance.

F: You made up your mind that there was a resemblance?

NE: I said, "I have seen him somewhere before."

F: It didn't occur to you at that time that he was one to whom you had extended favors?

NE: Only the face looked familiar and just about when I seen him. I thought his face looked familiar to me, it was someone I had seen before.

F: Now you remember going to that hotel with somebody, whose name you can't at present describe, besides this man?

NE: Sometimes, I might think of someone.

F: Some time you might think of it?

NE: Some time if I might think of it.

F: You remember that those whom you took to that hotel always went ahead of you, don't you?

NE: Sometimes I might, but that I can't say about.

F: Can't you refer to some instance where a party that you took to that hotel went up ahead of you?

(No answer)

By the Court: Can't you recollect any time when the man went upstairs first and you followed them?

NE: No sir.

By Friend: You don't know whether the other men that went up that hotel with you went up before you or after you?

NE: Some went up before.

F: You always paid particular attention to that, to see who

goes up first?

NE: No sir. I did not pay no particular attention. You asked me a question and I am answering you.

F: That is not directly impressed upon your mind whether the gentleman goes up ahead of you or behind you?

NE: Some had gone up ahead of me and some after me.

F: And those who went up ahead of you and those who went up behind you, you also remember?

NE: Some gentleman that is not familiar with the place, I show. I know where some rooms are and I show them.

F: How long have you known that hotel?

NE: I have been going there for the last four years, off and on. I know most every room in the hotel.

F: You know most every room in the hotel. Now, when you know a hotel that you are acquainted with, you go ahead and lead the way?

NE: Providing the gentleman doesn't know where the room is, I show myself.

F: And this hotel you know?

NE: Yes, sir.

F: Are you very certain that you didn't go upstairs first?

NE: The man rang the bell and went upstairs first.

F: Do you remember there is a step there, is there not?

NE: Yes, sir.

F: Do you remember his putting his left foot first or his right foot?

NE: I can't say about that. I didn't notice that.

F: Won't you try and think and see whether you did not notice that?

NE: I did not look at the gentleman's foot to see if he put it up. I know that he rang the bell and went in first.

F: Did he wait up at the head of the stairs for you to come up?

NE: He waited downstairs.

F: You followed him right upstairs?

NE: Yes sir, I followed him right up.

F: And he escorted you into this room, room 28?

NE: Room 28.

F: About what hour of the night was this?

NE: Eight o'clock.

F: Eight o'clock?

NE: In the evening.



L-R: District Attorney De Lancey Nicoll; Frederick House and Abe Levy, defense lawyers

F: He doesn't speak English?

NE: He could understand me very soon. I could understand most everything he said. He told me he was a Spaniard.

F: As though he was a Spaniard?

NE: He told me that he was a Spaniard.

F: He told you that he was a Spaniard.

NE: Yes sir, I believed him.

F: As the result of your portion of the night's entertainment, will you kindly tell me how much money this defendant gave you?

NE: He told me he would ----- on me during the day, all he gave me was one dollar. I didn't intend on staying with him all night. He locked the door and kept the key – any time he was in the room.

F: He had spent a good deal of money on you?

NE: In drinking, he had spent a good deal of money. How it was I managed to stay steady... [cut off by Friend]

F: Where do you live now?

NE: I have been staying – My place of residence – is 40 Mulberry Street.

F: Oliver Street?

NE: I went down with a young lady friend of mine.

F: You are down there in the neighborhood of the Fourth Hotel every day, aren't you?

NE: Not every day.

F: Nearly every day?

NE: Occasionally.

F: You are down there three or four times a week?

NE: Yes sir, two or three times a week.

F: Are you locked up in the House of Detention?

NE: Yes sir.

F: How long have you been there?

NE: Two months last Sunday.

F: Two months last Sunday?

NE: Yes sir.

F: Nellie, you have been arrested, I presume?

NE: Yes sir, I have.

F: How many times have you done service?

NE: Well, I have about seven or eight times, intoxication, always short times.

F: Always for intoxication or disorderly conduct?

NE: Since I was arrested for the officer said that was soliciting and the other times for intoxication.

F: You were convicted of that?

NE: Yes, sir.

F: The officer was mistaken, you were not soliciting?

NE: That was what I was convicted of, but I was talking to a friend at the time, and once a gentleman took me and charged – once I was arrested, charged with having taken eleven dollars from a man, but the man withdrew the charge.

By The Court: Were you discharged?

NE: Yes sir, he found out he had made a mistake.

End of Nellie English's testimony.



NELLIE ENGLISH IN THE RECORDS

Census

1900 Census – Manhattan – New York – New York –
344 Water Street

Age - 42

Birth Date & Place - September 1858, New York

Female, White, Single, Boarder

Father's Birth Place – Ireland

Mother's Birth Place – Ireland

Occupation – Day Working, Unemployed 6 Months

Can Read, Write & Speak English

Year: 1900; Census Place: Manhattan, New York, New York; Page:9;
Enumeration District:0017; FHL microfilm:1241080.

Inmates Almshouses (Blackwell's Island)

Last Residence – 343 Water Street

Physical Condition - Sick

Age – 48

Born – abt.1854, U.S.

Female, White, Single, Can Read & Write, Catholic,
Domestic

Admission Date - 4 March 1902, New York City

Father's Birth Place – Ireland - Butcher

Mother's Birth Place – Ireland

Relation or Friend – Mrs. Scott, 343 Water Street, New
York City

New York State Archives; Albany, New York; Census of Inmates
in Almshouses and Poorhouses, 1875-1921; Series:A1978;
ReelA1978:112; Record Number:19/655.

Death Index

Age – 48

Birth Year – abt 1854

Death Date – 8 May 1902

Death Place – Manhattan, New York, USA

Certificate Number - 14573

Ancestry.com: New York, New York, Extracted Death Index, 1862-1948.



Frenchy was released on 22nd April 1902: sixteen days
later, Nellie English died..



Carrie Brown



Ameer Ben Ali

Visit How Brown's new website devoted entirely to the Carrie Brown murder,
Ali trial, and the infamous East River Hotel at www.carriebrown.net

ROBERT CHARLES LINFORD

21th May 1955 – 8th December 2020

The much respected and beloved researcher Robert Linford passed away due to complications brought on by Covid-19 in Nottinghamshire, England on 8th December 2020. His death has greatly affected his colleagues in the Ripperological community from both JTR Forums and Casebook. Bob's wit, genealogical skills, amiability, and enthusiasm were among his many attributes. Along with a few details from Robert's background, which his sister Jane provided, we are pleased to publish tributes from the Forums and Casebook, kindly shared by Howard Brown. Although some time after the event, as this is our first edition of *Ripperologist* since we wish to preserve the thoughts of Robert's many friends and colleagues within the community.

Born in Ilford, Essex, Robert once wrote for the BBC and ITV in the 1980s. He submitted work for programmes such as *Spitting Image*, *Weekending* and *The News Huddlines*, writing satirical one-liners around current affairs. He was a keen reader, mainly 'highbrow' literature, and in his younger days was an avid chess and bridge player.



"With John [Savage], I worked with Robert for a long time, more sporadically in recent times. I never met him or knew what his voice sounded like. But the three of us enjoyed a massive and wonderful correspondence. These last couple of days, I've been looking through some of it. Visiting with him, I suppose. Like his posts here [JTRForums.com], his emails are full of helpfulness, insight, warmth, and his terrific humor, which was sometimes too intelligent and English for me to grasp. He elevated our research and conversation, always finding many of the pieces of our jigsaw puzzle that we were working on. He was a friend. More than that though, I know that he was devoted to his family. It's a profound loss, a hard loss." *David O'Flaherty*



*

"I exchanged a few PMs with Robert and he was friendly, helpful and generous as he always was on the boards (not forgetting his great sense of humour.) He was also very knowledgeable and obviously an excellent researcher." *Michael Banks*

*

"Robert was witty and intelligent, and I always looked forward to reading his insightful and often funny posts. I never met him, but I'm sure he'd have been great company in the flesh, as he was in cyberspace." *Gareth Willians*

*

"The reason Robert and I communicated via the message system was because of his post here [JTRForums.com] asking us to check out a GoFundMe page for a baby in the UK with a rare tumor in his heart. The child needed surgery at Boston Children's Hospital. Robert had no personal connection to the family with the sick baby but apparently he had seen the appeal and became involved." *Anna Morris*

*

"A huge loss to Ripperology and to this site in particular. I never met Robert in person, but it feels like a personal loss too." *Gary Barnett*

*

"Robert always reached out a hand when I got stuck in my research efforts. He will certainly be missed by me! I always enjoyed his sense of humor." *Jerry Dunlop*

*

"One of the nicest people on the forums. Like many people here I have never met him. He kept himself to himself and never seemed to have a cross word with anyone (maybe once) and that is quite a rare feat in this field, which tells you a lot about him." *Robert Clack*

*

"I'm finding it hard to think back to a time when Robert Linford wasn't around. A calm, steady oak in the midst of all

of us blustering weeds. I don't care who you were or who you think you were, if Robert's views on a matter differed from yours, you stopped in your tracks to have a rethink because anything Robert offered was always measured, considered, and well-informed. The man was never combative, always friendly, and still generous with handing out his reality checks. I'm not sure I can express how rare and valuable that is. Ripperologists are well known for our propensity to debate anything, but I'm certain no one would disagree with me when I say Robert Charles Linford was the best of us." *Tom Wescott*

*

"I never met Robert but I felt like he was a friend. He and A.P. encouraged me to join JTRForums right at the beginning, when How set it up in its present form. I never saw Robert have a cross word with anyone or speak ill of anybody. He was just a lovely, helpful and patient person with a brilliant sense of humour. He was here purely for his enjoyment of the subject. Things won't be the same without him." *Debra Arif*

*

"Although we never met in person, Bob was very helpful to me in digging up critical nuggets of information that greatly added to articles that I have written. He will be missed for his research capabilities and great good humor. *Christopher T. George*

*

"Like most of us I never had the chance to meet Robert or even speak to him on the phone. Despite this I feel as though I have lost a great friend; as others have mentioned he was a brilliant researcher always helpful to me as well as others. Some years ago, along with David O'Flaherty and myself, we were all in touch almost daily researching and writing a series of articles on the JTR coroners over a period of nearly two years. Robert's hard work and good humour made the task easier and better, so thanks my friend and may you rest in peace." *John Savage*

*

"Generosity. Friendship. Helpfulness. These qualities came so wonderfully natural to Robert. I was so proud to talk with him over the phone. So very proud to share in his company. So honored to have worked with him so closely all these years. The last time we communicated, Robert told me how appreciative he was of his sister and all of her help and love. Robert brought out the best in everyone he came in contact with. He was so dependable in making a situation better. I can barely go on, so I will end by saying that I am deeply saddened by the loss of my good friend" *Joe Chetcuti*

*

"What can one say, except that he'll be terribly missed from these boards." *Paul Begg*

*

"Robert helped me out more than once. He was a gifted researcher and a very clever genealogist, but, more importantly, he was a nice person with a great sense of humor." *R.J. Palmer*

*

"I have a tremendous amount of respect for Robert. He was an incredibly astute man, who had a real gift for research. He also had an uncanny knack of getting to the root of the many mysteries that surround this case. All his responses were peppered with his usual and unmistakable wit. He always got me thinking!" *Sean Crundall*

*

"One of nicest men that I ever had the honor to know. Rest in peace my friend, I will miss you." *Nina Brown*

*

"Like most others here, I only knew him through his posts, but they showed someone who was funny, sensible, kind, and knowledgeable - endearing traits that will make him greatly missed, not just on this site, but to everyone who knew him in the real world. Thanks for the memories, Bob." *Bill Perring*

*

"Robert and I had communicated from time to time away from the forums over the years as well as on it, and he was always wonderful to chat to and very encouraging of a younger researcher like myself at the time. The Ripperology world is much the poorer for his passing." *Adam Went*

*

"Quite simply, there's never been anyone quite like Robert, and his contribution to this field over the years has been unique and will keep his memory alive. I was already missing his clever way with words, not least his brilliantly funny caption contest entries, which never failed to brighten a dull day. He used to win so often that he stopped entering to give others a chance. Rest in peace, Robert. Let me know if they don't make the tea up there just how you like it and I'll have words." *Caroline Brown*

*

"The final communication between Bob and myself was an email requesting that I write a post on his behalf on the message boards commemorating the anniversary of the passing of another member of the community. Fortunately, his research and thousands of posts will be preserved on both websites for us and those who may wish to know Robert a little better." *Howard Brown*

*

"If most people were like Bob it would truly be a wonderful world. What a legacy on many levels he leaves." *Cris Malone*

*

"We are all very appreciative of the beautiful expressions from everyone on the boards, and that it has been a big comfort to us. Robert was very devoted to his family, and doted on his great-niece and nephew. He will always be our hero. *Jane Linford*

◆

Rest In Peace, Dear Brother, Uncle, and Friend.

VICTORIAN FICTION

OIL OF DOG

By AMBROSE BIERCE

Edited with an introduction by Eduardo Zinna

On 2 October 1913, the 71-year old American writer, journalist, editor, critic, lexicographer and satirist Ambrose Bierce left Washington DC for Mexico, which was at the time torn apart by the conflict between the régime of General Victoriano Huerta and the rebel forces of Venustiano Carranza, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata. Before leaving, Bierce wrote a letter to his niece Lora which concluded: 'Good-by - if you hear of my being stood up against a Mexican stone wall and shot to rags please know that I think that a pretty good way to depart this life. It beats old age, disease, or falling down the cellar stairs. To be a Gringo in Mexico - ah, that is euthanasia!' His words would prove prophetic.

Ambrose Gwinnett Bierce was born on 24 June 1842 in a small farm in Ohio. His parents, Marcus Aurelius Bierce and Laura Sherwood, were dour, austere members of the fire-and-brimstone First Congregational Church of Christ. For reasons of their own, they gave every one of their 13 children names beginning with the letter 'A': Abigail, Amelia, Ann, Addison, Aurelius, Augustus, Almeda, Andrew, Albert, Arthur, Adelia and Aurelia. It is perhaps not surprising that the tenth child, Ambrose, did not grow up to be particularly fond of his parents. He was susceptible, however, to the influence of his colourful and combative uncle, 'General' Lucius Bierce, a staunch abolitionist who had once led an abortive invasion of Canada designed to liberate it from the British yoke. At fifteen years of age,

Ambrose joined an abolitionist newspaper, the *Northern Indianan*, as a 'printer's devil', that is to say, an apprentice who performed such tasks as mixing tubs of ink and fetching type. It was the lowest possible position, but it was Bierce's first venture into journalism.



In 1861, at the outset of the American Civil War, Bierce enlisted in the Ninth Indiana Volunteers Regiment. He quickly rose through the ranks and saw action at Shiloh, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga and Chattanooga. On 23 June 1864, a musket ball glanced off his head at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain. 'For many years afterward,' he later wrote, 'I was subject to fits of fainting, sometimes without assignable immediate cause, but mostly when suffering from exposure, excitement or excessive fatigue.' Bierce returned to

active duty in September, participated in the capture of Atlanta and Sherman's March through Georgia, and left the army after Lee's surrender in April of the following year. At the recommendation of General William Hazen, President Lincoln made him a brevet major.

One year later, General Hazen invited Bierce to join his expedition to explore and map what was still the Wild, Wild West. The expedition left Omaha, Nebraska, in July 1866 and arrived in San Francisco, California, in December. Hazen had recommended Bierce, still a volunteer officer, for a captaincy in the regular army. But Bierce was offered only a second-lieutenancy, the lowest commissioned

rank. He flipped a coin to decide whether he would accept the commission or try his luck in journalism. The coin said 'journalism'. 'The coin was right,' Bierce later said. While working as a guardian at the San Francisco Mint, Bierce studied, read the classics, wrote and submitted his material to the local journals. In 1868 he placed a few magazine articles and was hired to write the 'Town Crier', a humour column, for the *San Francisco News Letter* and *Commercial Advertiser*.

On 25 December 1871, Bierce married Molly Day, the daughter of a mining magnate. Theirs would not be a happy union. They had three children: two sons, Day and Leigh, and a daughter, Helen. Both of Bierce's sons died before him: Day was killed in a gunfight over a woman and Leigh died of pneumonia. Bierce and his wife separated in 1888 and divorced in 1904. In 1872, however, those gloomy events were far in the future and the couple went together to Britain, where Bierce contributed to humorous magazines such as *Figaro* and *Fun* and published three novels signed with pseudonyms. 'Generally speaking,' he wrote about his experience in a letter, 'the English are good fellows, the Scotch are better, and the Irish are a bad lot'.

Back in San Francisco in 1875, Bierce resumed his career in journalism. He was assistant editor of *The Argonaut* from 1877 to 1879 and in 1881 became editor-in-chief of *The Wasp*, a well established satirical magazine. He would make his name lampooning public figures and writing editorials, satirical sketches, poems, short stories and the acerbic aphorisms and barbed epigrams disguised as dictionary entries later collected in *The Devil's Dictionary*. In time, he became one of the most independent and influential writers, journalists and critics on the West Coast. He was more feared, alas, than loved. 'My independence is my wealth,' he wrote, 'it is my literature. I have written to please myself, no matter who should be hurt.'

When Bierce's turn as editor of *The Wasp* came to an end in 1886, a happy coincidence came to his rescue. On 5 March 1887, William Randolph Hearst took over the *San Francisco Examiner*. One of his first acts was to invite Bierce to join his staff. Within the same month Bierce published his first column, which under the title 'Prattle' would continue to appear for the next 20 years. In January 1896, Hearst sent Bierce to Washington, DC to launch a newspaper campaign against Collis P Huntington, the owner of the Southern Pacific Railroad. The US Government had granted loans for 130 million dollars to the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railway companies to build the First Transcontinental Railroad. The terms of the loans were very favourable, but Huntington wanted to go a step further and persuaded a member of Congress to introduce

the Railroad Funding Bill excusing the companies from repaying the money. When Huntington confronted Bierce on the steps of the Capitol, angrily asking him to name his price, Bierce replied: 'My price is 130 million dollars. If, when you are ready to pay, I happen to be out of town, you may hand it over to my friend, the Treasurer of the United States'. The Bill was defeated. Bierce relocated to Washington DC, where he became a national columnist for Hearst's newspapers, showing his independence by first supporting, then mildly criticising America's war with Spain. At the end of 1908, Bierce resigned from Hearst's employ. From 1909 to 1912, he spent most of his time compiling and editing his 12-volume, million-word *Collected Works*, the seventh volume of which was devoted entirely to *The Devil's Dictionary*.

By 1913 Bierce was a lonely, ageing man, plagued by general ill health, asthma, and the lingering consequences of his war wound. Yet, despite his age and physical condition – or perhaps because of them – he decided to become active in journalism again and chose the Mexican Revolution as his subject. On his way to Mexico, he visited the battlefields of the Civil War and travelled through New Orleans and Texas. When Pancho Villa seized Ciudad Juárez on 16 November 1913, Bierce took a train to El Paso, crossed the border and joined Villa's army as an observer. In that role was present at the Battle of Tierra Blanca and followed Villa to Chihuahua, from where he addressed his last letter, dated 26 December 1913, to Blanche Partington. He wrote: 'I leave here tomorrow for an unknown destination.' He was never heard from again. Some believe he was killed during the siege of Ojinaga in January 1914. Some claim that he did not go to Mexico at all but committed suicide at the Great Canyon. Some maintain that he was executed by a firing squad at the cemetery of Sierra Mojada – which would have been the fulfilment of his own prophecy.

Apart from *The Devil's Dictionary*, Bierce is remembered today for his ninety-odd short stories, of which roughly half were ghost and horror stories and the rest were war stories based on his own experience and satirical old-Western 'tall tales'. The present offering, 'Oil of Dog', is neither one of Bierce's best known stories nor one of the horror or war stories that made his reputation. It can best be described as a humorous tale – though its humour is of the blackest variety. It was first published on 11 October 1890 in the *Oakland Tribune* as 'The Oil of a Dog: A Tragic Episode in the Life of an Eminent Educator' and later collected in *The Parenticide Club* together with three more stories whose subject was also gentle murder within the family: 'My Favorite Murder', 'An Imperfect Conflagration' and 'The Hypnotist'.

OIL OF DOG

By AMBROSE BIERCE

My name is Boffer Bings. I was born of honest parents in one of the humbler walks of life, my father being a manufacturer of dog-oil and my mother having a small studio in the shadow of the village church, where she disposed of unwelcome babes. In my boyhood I was trained to habits of industry; I not only assisted my father in procuring dogs for his vats, but was frequently employed by my mother to carry away the debris of her work in the studio. In performance of this duty I sometimes had need of all my natural intelligence for all the law officers of the vicinity were opposed to my mother's business. They were not elected on an opposition ticket, and the matter had never been made a political issue; it just happened so. My father's business of making dog-oil was, naturally, less unpopular, though the owners of missing dogs sometimes regarded him with suspicion, which was reflected, to some extent, upon me. My father had, as silent partners, all the physicians of the town, who seldom wrote a prescription which did not contain what they were pleased to designate as Ol. can. It is really the most valuable medicine ever discovered.



But most persons are unwilling to make personal sacrifices for the afflicted, and it was evident that many of the fattest dogs in town had been forbidden to play with me—a fact which pained my young sensibilities, and at one time came near driving me to become a pirate.

Looking back upon those days, I cannot but regret, at times, that by indirectly bringing my beloved parents to their death I was the author of misfortunes profoundly affecting my future.

One evening while passing my father's oil factory with the body of a foundling from my mother's studio I saw a constable who seemed to be closely watching my movements. Young as I was, I had learned that a constable's acts, of whatever apparent character, are prompted by the most reprehensible motives, and I avoided him by dodging into the oilery by a side door which happened to stand ajar. I locked it at once and was alone with my dead. My father had retired for the night. The only light in the place came from the furnace, which glowed a deep, rich crimson under one of the vats, casting ruddy reflections on the walls. Within the cauldron the oil still rolled in indolent ebullition, occasionally pushing to the surface a piece of dog. Seating myself to wait for the constable to go away, I held the naked body of the foundling in my lap and tenderly stroked its short, silken hair. Ah, how beautiful it was! Even at that early age I was passionately fond of children, and as I looked upon this cherub I could almost find it in my heart to wish that the small, red wound upon its breast—the work of my dear mother—had not been mortal.



It had been my custom to throw the babes into the river which nature had thoughtfully provided for the purpose, but that night I did not dare to leave the oilery for fear of the constable. "After all," I said to myself, "it cannot greatly matter if I put it into this cauldron. My father will never know the bones from those of a puppy, and the few deaths which may result from administering another kind of oil for the incomparable ol. can. are not important in a population which increases so rapidly." In short, I took the first step in crime and brought myself untold sorrow by casting the babe into the cauldron.

The next day, somewhat to my surprise, my father, rubbing his hands with satisfaction, informed me and my mother that he had obtained the finest quality of oil that was ever seen; that the physicians to whom he had shown samples had so pronounced it. He added that he had no knowledge as to how the result was obtained; the

dogs had been treated in all respects as usual, and were of an ordinary breed. I deemed it my duty to explain—which I did, though palsied would have been my tongue if I could have foreseen the consequences. Bemoaning their previous ignorance of the advantages of combining their industries, my parents at once took measures to repair the error. My mother removed her studio to a wing of the factory building and my duties in connection with the business ceased; I was no longer required to dispose of the bodies of the small superfluous, and there was no need of alluring dogs to their doom, for my father discarded them altogether, though they still had an honorable place in the name of the oil. So suddenly thrown into idleness, I might naturally have been expected to become vicious and dissolute, but I did not. The holy influence of my dear mother was ever about me to protect me from the temptations which beset youth, and my father was a deacon in a church. Alas, that through my fault these estimable persons should have come to so bad an end!

Finding a double profit in her business, my mother now devoted herself to it with a new assiduity. She removed not only superfluous and unwelcome babes to order, but went out into the highways and byways, gathering in children of a larger growth, and even such adults as she could entice to the oilery. My father, too, enamored of the superior quality of oil produced, purveyed for his vats with diligence and zeal. The conversion of their neighbors into dog-oil became, in short, the one passion of their lives—an absorbing and overwhelming greed took possession of their souls and served them in place of a hope in Heaven—by which, also, they were inspired.

So enterprising had they now become that a public meeting was held and resolutions passed severely censuring them. It was intimated by the chairman that any further raids upon the population would be met in a spirit of hostility. My poor parents left the meeting broken-hearted, desperate and, I believe, not altogether sane. Anyhow, I deemed it prudent not to enter the oilery with them that night, but slept outside in a stable.

At about midnight some mysterious impulse caused me to rise and peer through a window into the furnace-room, where I knew my father now slept. The fires were burning

as brightly as if the following day's harvest had been expected to be abundant. One of the large cauldrons was slowly "walloping" with a mysterious appearance of self-restraint, as if it bided its time to put forth its full energy. My father was not in bed; he had risen in his night clothes and was preparing a noose in a strong cord. From the looks which he cast at the door of my mother's bedroom I knew too well the purpose that he had in mind. Speechless and motionless with terror, I could do nothing in prevention or warning. Suddenly the door of my mother's apartment was opened, noiselessly, and the two confronted each other, both apparently surprised. The lady, also, was in her night clothes, and she held in her right hand the tool of her trade, a long, narrow-bladed dagger.



She, too, had been unable to deny herself the last profit which the unfriendly action of the citizens and my absence had left her. For one instant they looked into each other's blazing eyes and then sprang together with indescribable fury. Round and round, the room they struggled, the man cursing, the woman shrieking, both fighting like demons—she to strike him with the dagger, he to strangle her with his great bare hands. I know not how long I had the unhappiness to observe this disagreeable instance of domestic infelicity, but at last, after a more than usually vigorous struggle, the combatants suddenly moved apart.

My father's breast and my mother's weapon showed evidences of contact. For another instant they glared at each other in the most unamiable way; then my poor, wounded father, feeling the hand of death upon him, leaped forward, unmindful of resistance, grasped my dear mother in his arms, dragged her to the side of the boiling cauldron, collected all his failing energies, and sprang in with her! In a moment, both had disappeared and were adding their oil to that of the committee of citizens who had called the day before with an invitation to the public meeting.

Convinced that these unhappy events closed to me every avenue to an honorable career in that town, I removed to the famous city of Otumwee, where these memoirs are written with a heart full of remorse for a heedless act entailing so dismal a commercial disaster.

NON-FICTION REVIEWS

Included in this issue:

Cutting Point, Jack the Ripper Suspects and more!

CUTTING POINT: SOLVING THE JACK THE RIPPER AND THE THAMES TORSO MURDERS

Christer Holmgren

Sweden: Timaios Press, 2021

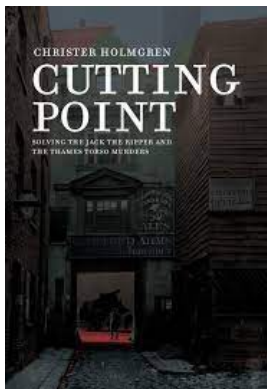
www.timaiospress.com

203pp; illus.

ISBN: 978 91 87611377 hardcover, 978-918611360 softcover.

£20.61 hardcover, £16.10 softcover.

Reviewed by Steven Blomer, author of *Inside Bucks Row: Mary Ann Nichols: An Anatomy of Murder*



In case you don't know about the 'Lechmere theory', on 31st August 1888 Charles Allen Lechmere was heading down Bucks Row on his way to work when he found the body of Mary Ann Nichols. After a minute or two Robert Paul joined him, and following a brief examination of the body, the two men continued their walk to work. They soon came

across PC Mizen and told him about their discovery. When the police later questioned Lechmere, he told them his name was Charles Cross. The 'Lechmere theory' is that Charles Lechmere was the murderer.

Christer Holmgren first presented the theory in part three of a six-part television documentary called *Missing Evidence*, broadcast on 17th November 2014.

A few years ago, Mike Dant wrote a less-than-satisfactory book favouring Lechmere, *Caught In The Act*, but the theory has otherwise been endlessly expounded and debated on Ripper message boards, often heatedly. Researchers and enthusiasts have been waiting for Holmgren to present his argument clearly and concisely in a book, where it can be adequately evaluated. *Cutting Edge* is that book, and the questions are: does it present any evidence not already revealed by Holmgren, and does

the theory hold together any better when presented in a cohesive whole than in Holmgren's extensive internet posts?

The book begins with an introduction in which the author tells us not to expect a standard Ripper book. He tells us that much will be omitted – unfortunately, that includes footnotes – and the book doesn't follow the overworked 'tradition' of giving each murder an individual chapter. I suspect that many readers will be happy with this approach. Christer also indicated that distances would be measured and blood flow timed, which I thought would be interesting, but the book only touched on these. On the other hand, there were interesting sections on subjects such as anatomical displays, profiling and psychology, but I couldn't see how these linked to the Lechmere.

The book discusses the murder of Mary Ann Nichols in Bucks Row at length, of course, but one has to navigate carefully between fact and speculation. Holmgren begins by saying that Robert Paul is very important, but he pretty much cherry-picks the details as given in a report in *Lloyds' Weekly News*. Some of it is pure imagination, such as his claim that Robert Paul was a hundred yards or more from Lechmere when he first became aware of him. He may have been, but I don't know any source in which Lechmere says how far Paul was away from him when he first became aware of his presence.

Christer is also a bit dodgy when it comes to the weight attached to some information. For example, he gives prominence to a comment that Robert Paul thought he felt Nichols breathing, but underplays Paul's statement to PC Mizen that he thought the woman was dead.

I could go into several other examples of Christer's somewhat questionable interpretation of the available facts, but unfortunately they require more detailed explanation than a review allows. But his biases seem to be on display rather too often to conclude that one is

reading an altogether balanced view.

I also thought Christer inadequately explained some arguments. A case in point is the blood evidence. He refers to blood flow timings but presents the opinions of two doctors about how long a wound will bleed, and it wasn't clearly stated whether he was talking about bleeding under pressure or by gravity. Blood is also given prominence when Christer argues that Robert Paul made no mention of the stuff because the cuts were very recent (i.e., inflicted by Lechmere), which sounds very reasonable, but it was too dark to see any blood. Not only did Paul say so, but PC Neil saw no blood until he turned on his lamp. Furthermore, two policemen – Helson and Spratling – stated that most of the blood had soaked into Nichols' clothing, so even if it had been light enough to see any blood, there wasn't much to see anyway.

The problem with the Lechmere theory is that it is based almost entirely on interpretation. Lechmere was found close to Nichols' body, but instead of having just stumbled across it, it's interpreted as evidence that he was the murderer. Even allowing that he possibly *was* the murderer, we have to suppose that instead of fleeing into the darkness, Lechmere coolly extemporised an explanation and calmly accompanied Robert Paul in a hunt for a policeman. And then he gave the police a false name – or rather, a legitimate name, but one which he never otherwise used – yet did not attempt to hide his home address or his place of employment.

But *was* 'Cross' a name he never used?

Some recent research has turned up a traffic accident in 1876 involving a Pickfords' driver named Cross. Christer accepts that this man is probably Lechmere, but instead of reaching the fairly obvious conclusion that Lechmere was known by the name Cross at Pickfords, Christer tortuously argues that the accident wasn't an accident, but a crime and that Cross was the name Lechmere used when committing a crime!

Of particular interest was the attempt to connect the Torso Murders to Charles Lechmere but, once again, it is difficult not to stumble over the inappropriate weight Christer attaches to those things that he feels support his argument. He makes rather more than perhaps he should of a bloodied cloth found between Lechmere's home at 22 Doveton Street and Pinchin Street, where a torso was found, but did not mention that the cloth was found only yards from the London Hospital. To find a bloodied cloth near a hospital is less likely to be significant than if it had been found anywhere else.

Particularly glaring was how Christer accepted Dr Hebbert's conclusion that the torso crimes of 1887-9 were linked, but discounted Dr Hebbert's conclusion

that the torso and Ripper murders were unconnected. Of course, we don't have to agree with Dr Hebbert about everything, but his reasons for believing these crimes were by different people – that the remains showed the murderers possessed other skills – cannot be so easily discounted on the theory that Hebbert didn't understand the killers' drives.

Cutting Edge is a necessary book. We have needed a clear and ordered presentation of the Lechmere theory, and Christer Holmgren is the very best person to have given it to us. There is no question in my mind that it's a book every serious student of the case should have on their bookshelf.

More than that, *Cutting Edge* is a good read. It's well constructed, engaging and very well written, especially as English is not Christer Holmgren's native language. As for the theory, the book falls far short of making its case, and I think Christer made a big mistake omitting a bibliography, footnotes with source details, and an index. He addresses these issues in his Introduction, but there's no excuse for the omission. We've waited seven years for Christer to present his argument in book form, and for many readers who don't follow the endless debates on the message boards *Cutting Edge* will be their introduction to Lechmere. For the serious reader and researchers, the absence of sources makes it tedious and time-consuming to check statements and claims.

Personally, it was disappointing to find little in the book that hadn't been discussed at length elsewhere. It will all be new to some readers, but I'd been hoping to find evidence and arguments that would mean I'd have to add to or amend my own book. My disappointment is assuaged only because I won't have to do the work that would have caused.

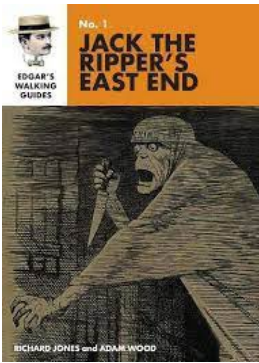
In many ways, *Cutting Edge* is little more than what was said in the television documentary *Missing Evidence* with a discussion of the Torso crimes added on. I know how many years of hard work Christer Holmgren has put into the theory and this book, and I would dearly love to recommend it wholeheartedly, but it's hard to do that.

JACK THE RIPPER'S EAST END

Edgar's Walking Guides, No. 1
Richard Jones and Adam Wood
London: Edgar's Walking Guides Ltd, 2020
www.EdgarsGuides.com
198pp, illus; maps.
ISBN 978-1838234201
£10.00

Reviewed by Amanda Lloyd, Ripperology Books and More

As you will probably have guessed, this is the first book in a series of walking guides, and measuring just under 6x4 inches it conveniently fit into all but the smallest



pockets. At just 198 pages long I thought it would be a bit light on content, but it was packed with every bit of information one could want for a Jack the Ripper walking tour.

Edgar's tour begins at Aldgate East tube station and ends at the famous Ten Bells public house on Commercial Street, and in between you visit

forty-four Ripper-connected locations, all shown on a map provided inside the book. The walk is roughly four hours long if done in one go, longer if you allow yourself some diversions. The advantage of an Edgar-guided walk is that you can stop for refreshment, a loo break, or to take in somewhere not on the organised itinerary. You can even break your walk into stages.

Edgar's written instructions are clear and concise, and detailed down to advice about the best place to cross the road. Co-author Richard Jones has been pounding these streets for longer than he cares to remember, but I can reveal it is more than three decades, and the guide takes you on a journey of discovery. It takes you to the locations of ten of the eleven murder sites, but en-route you visit several buildings of historical significance to the case or in the history of the area, such as Wilton's Music Hall, the Brick Lane Mosque, and Toynbee Hall, and with each location explained, you know what you are looking at and why. This applies to all the places visited, of course.

Sadly, a lot has disappeared under redevelopment, but Edgar guides you to where they once were, and photos show what the place looked like back then.

The geography is interesting in itself, but is made more interesting because of the stories attached to it and the mystery surrounding the identity of Jack the Ripper. But the foundation of it all is the horrible murder and sickening mutilation of several helpless women. This book remembers them with a short biography of each and instructions on finding the cemeteries where many are buried. I thought this was particularly valuable, because I believe it is important to pay one's respects.

It's said that all good things must come to an end – although I have never really understood why – so it's time to head back to Central London, weary but hopefully not too footsore. Edgar's guide very considerably tells you how to do that.

What surprises me the most is the vast amount of detail in a pocket book. It really is a little gem, and I highly recommend it.

JACK THE RIPPER SUSPECTS (Vol 1 & Vol 2)

C.J. Morley

Independently Published, 2020

477, 448pp; softcover

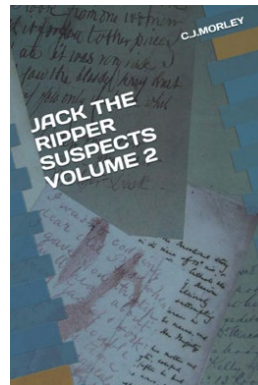
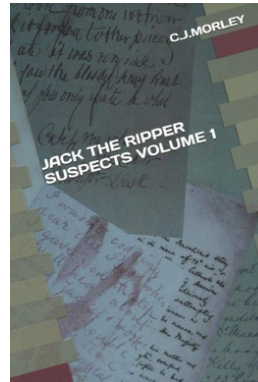
index of suspects

softcover

Vol 1 ISBN:979-8568480303, Vol 2 ISBN: 979-8568500964

£13.99 vol 1, £13.99 vol 2

Reviewed by Paul Begg



These books should be on every serious Ripperologist's bookshelf.

Back in goodness knows when, Christopher Morley published a slender volume, *Jack the Ripper: 150 Suspects*. As you will have guessed, the book described 150 people suspected at the time and since of being Jack the Ripper, with most receiving just a page or less.

In 2018, Morley published a much-expanded suspect guide, *Jack the Ripper Suspects*, running to nearly 500 pages. That book has now doubled in size to almost 1,000 pages, describing over 450 suspects!

Not all these people are 'genuine' suspects, by which I mean that not all the people included in these volumes were seriously thought to have been the murderer. Morley has included men who confessed when drunk, or who looked or behaved suspiciously, but whilst these people weren't the killer, it's valuable to have their names recorded in case they crop up in other contexts, such as coming under more serious suspicion.

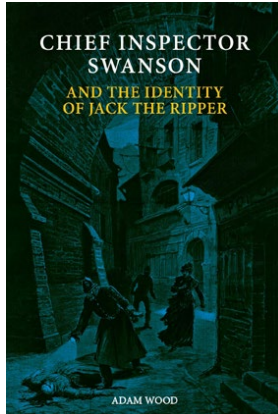
One downside is that Morley hasn't included sources. He sometimes cites and quotes from relevant newspapers, but the reader is often left high and dry when it comes to getting more information about a suspect. For example, Morley tells us that a man named Jack Irwin was mentioned as a suspect by A.H. Skirving of the Canadian Police, but when and where Skirving suggested him isn't revealed. We're also told that investigations showed that Irwin wasn't in Britain at the time of the murders, but Morley doesn't tell us who investigated or where Irwin was in 1888, or where these findings were published.

I don't want to sound to be carping. The sheer scale of this project and its completion overwhelm any minor

criticisms. Morley deserves congratulations, and he gets them in full. This book is a terrific and valuable work.

CHIEF INSPECTOR SWANSON AND THE IDENTITY OF JACK THE RIPPER

Adam Wood
London: Mango Books, 2020
www.MangoBoooks.co.uk
162pp; softcover
illus; timeline.
ISBN: 978-1914277092
£10.00 softcover
Reviewed by Paul Begg



This book is extracted from Adam Wood's longer biography of Chief Inspector Donald Swanson that deals with the Whitechapel murders, which has garnered almost every accolade going, and it should be on your reading list. But if it's just Swanson's connection with the Ripper that interests you, or you want the full story of the marginalia,

this book is right up your street.

And in case you don't know who Swanson was, he was the Metropolitan Police Chief Inspector at Scotland Yard who was at one point put in charge of the Ripper investigation, Commissioner Charles Warren ordering that Swanson was to be his eyes and ears and that everything was to pass through his hands. Swanson was probably very close to the Ripper investigation throughout, and it is perhaps fair to say that he would have has his finger more firmly on its pulse than anyone else.

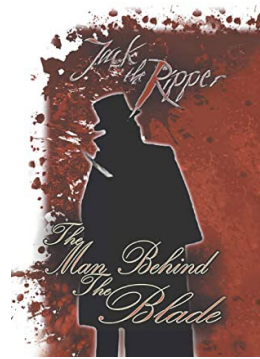
He remained close to Assistant Commissioner Robert Anderson, who in 1910 wrote in his autobiography that Jack the Ripper's identity was known to the police. In his copy of Anderson's book, Swanson made some brief pencilled notes in the margins and endpapers. He named Anderson's suspect as 'Kosminski'.

Was the note reliable? Adam Wood provides what is probably the most in-depth and balanced look at the marginalia in any book.

JACK THE RIPPER: THE MAN BEHIND THE BLADE

S.M. Cornthwaite
Foreword by Professor Kristi Palmer
Bloomington, Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2021.
www.authorhouse.com.
ISBN: hardcover 976-1-6655-1836-9
softcover 976-1-6655-1838-3
ebook 976-1-6655-1856-6
illus; biblio.

£22.95 hardcover, £12.99 softcover, £8.99 ebook
Reviewed by Paul Begg



Sometimes the bibliography is the place to find an indication of what to expect from a book. It can be very revealing, indicating what sources the author has read, how extensive their reading has been, and sometimes their interests and what has influenced them most. For example, Shannon Cornthwaite's bibliography lists

books about serial killers and many psychology books and papers, but on Jack the Ripper, he mentions Stewart Evans and Paul Gainey's *The First American Serial Killer*, Trevor Marriott's *Jack the Ripper: 21st Century Investigation*, and the website Casebook.org. This didn't suggest a great depth of knowledge about the crimes and times, and I was concerned that it would lead Mr Cornthwaite astray. But Mr Cornthwaite writes that he's been interested in the case since he chose Jack the Ripper as a project in the 9th Grade, which was in 1998, so one can only suppose he feels he has a solid grasp of the subject.

Shannon Cornthwaite is very interested in what makes serial killers the way they are, which occupies the first half or maybe even the first three-quarters of his book. I suspect that Mr Cornthwaite was more interested in exploring the serial killer's psyche and constructing what he thought was a good profile of Jack the Ripper than he was in applying that profile to a specific individual.

I must defer to others better qualified to judge whether Mr Cornthwaite's understanding of serial killers is good, bad or indifferent, but no matter how well-grounded in serial killer psychology a Ripper author may be, a good knowledge of time and place is equally important. Get that wrong, and your theory can let you down with a serious bump. And it certainly seems to have let Mr Cornthwaite down.

Mr Cornthwaite's theory is that Jack the Ripper was Joseph Merrick, the Elephant Man.

On the surface, Merrick seems an excellent candidate. He suffered cruelty and suffering that could easily have turned his mind, but all accounts suggest that he possessed a kind and generous spirit. Any assessment of Merrick must be based on those reports, and whilst we can never know what secrets another person keeps locked away in their head, we can't judge a person on what we suppose he may have been like. Baseless speculation is not enough.

Mr Cornthwaite suggests that the victims represented Merrick's cruel and unpleasant stepmother, and that he

intended the mutilations to make the women as hideous as himself. Mary Kelly represented his biological mother, on whom he took out his rage at being born the monster he was. This argument sounds plausible, but there is no evidence to support it.

But no matter how good Merrick might fit a psychological profile, place and time are equally important: Joseph Merrick was primarily confined to the London Hospital and its grounds, so could he have slipped away unnoticed? And even if he could, would he have been able to move unseen through the streets, bundled up in his habitual muffler and a large hat, shuffling because of his limp? Even if Merrick could have achieved that, would he have been able to contact the victims and take them or have been taken by them to the lonely place where they were murdered? Would those poor women, in a time of panic because of the murders, willingly have gone to a lonely place with a man who was bundled up in clothing, his features hidden? And even if he was able to do all that, it's doubtful that he would have been physically able to strangle them and kneel over their bodies to mutilate them.

Mr Cornthwaite has put a lot of work into this book. Some of it makes interesting, albeit chilling, reading, but the sheer improbability of Joseph Merrick being able to pass through the streets unnoticed and have been physically able to commit the murders defeats his arguments. No matter how good the psychological profile may be, the idea that Joseph Merrick was the murderer collapses at every turn.

JACK THE RIPPER: THE INTERVIEWS. VOL. 1

Alan R. Warren and Michael L. Hawley

privately published, 2020

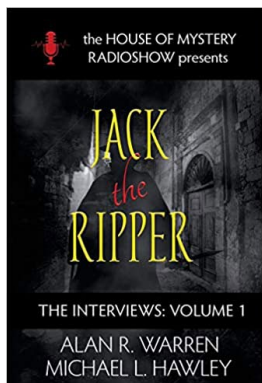
www.alanwarren.com

ISBN: 9781989980170 softcover, 9781989980187 ebook

185pp, references.

£7.55 softcover, £3.77 ebook

Reviewed by Paul Begg



The House of Mystery is a radio show syndicated across America and has been running for ten years, but I have to admit to being unfamiliar with it until recently. I'm deeply ashamed at having to make that admission, which isn't a reflection on the show but instead the appalling level of my ignorance. My only excuse is that I've got my nose

stuck in a book when I'm not writing. I don't get a chance to do much else these days.

Anyway, it's been running for ten years and is right up

my street, being interviews with experts on all manner of mysteries. This book is the first in a planned series of summaries of those interviews, themed under subject material. This one is about Jack the Ripper, as you no doubt guessed, and those that follow will be about the assassination of John F Kennedy and, after that, the mysterious 'Zodiac' murders.

They are not all recent interviews. One with Russell Edwards, the author of *Naming Jack the Ripper*, was conducted back in 2014, just when his book was published. Ripperologists greeted his book with utter disdain. Edwards didn't deserve the pillorying that came his way. He'd bought a length of material, claimed to be a 'shawl', but some people described as a table runner, which for decades had been owned by the family of a Met policeman and family lore was that he'd found it at the scene of Catherine Eddowes' murder. Edwards had the material examined for DNA by Jari Louhelainen, who found traces of DNA that matched the descendants of Eddowes and suspect Aaron Kosminski!

Unfortunately, there were severe problems with the provenance of the 'shawl' that made it inconceivable that the DNA could be there. However, Louhelainen was (and as far as I know, still is) sure, and Russell, who was not a DNA expert, wasn't in a position to argue with the results. The hot coals rained upon his head. The interview with him is therefore an interesting and valuable historical piece.

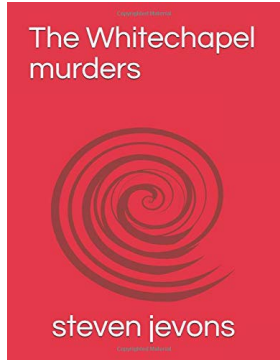
Also interviewed here is Jeff Mudgett. He was also interviewed on the show twice, once before and once halfway through the broadcast of an eight-part docuseries investigating his belief that his great-great-grandfather, the infamous serial killer H.H. Holmes, was Jack the Ripper. One has to give Mr Mudgett ten-out-of-ten for 'marketing' his theory; nobody has had a docuseries based on their Ripper theory before, but H.H. Holmes as the Ripper hasn't convinced too many people.

Other good folks whose interviews appear here are Tom Wescott (twice), Neil Storey, Michael Hawley, Paul Williams, Adam Wood, and Steve Blomer. And me – although for some reason, they cut all my brilliant insights, highly quotable observations, and hilarious shafts of wit.

As a Ripper author, I always find it interesting to hear other Ripper authors talk about their work. Ten years of House of Mystery, as well as our own Rippercast, suggest that readers do too. Whether these edited summaries contain enough meat is something only you can decide. Still, I thought the book might have benefited from some illustrations of the authors. However, on second thoughts, it probably wouldn't do much for Ripperology to reveal what a motley bunch we are Ripperologists are.

THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS

Steven Jevons
Amazon KDP
Softcover A4
67pp, illus.
ISBN: 9798652349264
£10.99
Reviewed by Paul Begg



One of the great things about Ripper studies is that people read and learn and then want to do something with their knowledge, such as write a book. Self-publishing means that they can. Unfortunately, it also means that they do. That sounds rude, but a book, especially a book on such a well-trodden subject as Jack

the Ripper, should offer something new – new information, fresh interpretations, or different perspectives. As good as a Ripper book may be, if it just regurgitates the same old facts, it's like eating the same thing for dinner twenty times on the trot.

This is the problem with Steven Jevons' book. It begins with a brief description of late 19th century London, then discusses the victims from Emma Smith to Mary Jane Kelly, has a quick flick through a handful of suspects, looks at the post-Kelly murders, and finally considers Mr Jevons' favoured suspect: George Hutchinson for the murder of Mary Kelly, and someone else for all the others.

Mr Jevons doesn't explain why he thinks George Hutchinson was the murderer of Mary Kelly. It's little more than that Hutchinson was there, and there is nothing inherently wrong with that. Indeed, it's more than can be said for many suspects, some of whom can't even be shown with certainty to have been in the United Kingdom during 1888.

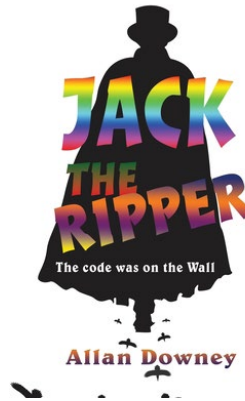
Mr Jevons could have done with an editor to break up some of his paragraphs, which can be a page or more long and present a block of black text which is difficult and unpleasant to read. There are also missing commas and periods and slightly garbled sentences, especially towards the end of the book, which seems rushed. And the cardinal sins – no sources, no bibliography, and no index.

Despite the five-star reviews on Amazon, each of which was noticeably by a first-time 'reviewer', there's not a lot to recommend about this large-size (A4) book. I fully appreciate the desire to write about Jack the Ripper, and I admire anyone who does so. Still, I don't expect to pay over £10 for an unprofessionally produced, not particularly well-written 67 A4-pages, especially when it

offers nothing new or different.

JACK THE RIPPER: THE CODE WAS ON THE WALL

Allan Downey
New York: Goldtouch Press, 2021
www.goldtouchpress.com
80pp; biblio
Hardcover: ISBN: 978-1-954673-23-6
Softcover: ISBN: 978-1-954673-22-9
Ebook: ISBN: 978-1-954673-24-3
Hardcover £14.99, softcover £5.99, ebook £2.99
Reviewed by Paul Begg

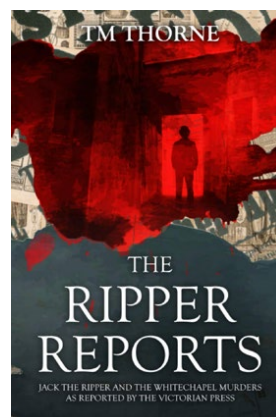


The title says it all: clues to the identity of Jack the Ripper hidden codes in the JUWES message, the Ripper correspondence, and in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, all point to – Walter Sickert! This short book, just 80 pages (many of them giving the appearance of someone gone potty with type sizes – all caps, no caps, dark font,

standard font, big letters, small letters... We'd probably be looking at 40 pages if the text had been normal), presents an argument that stands or falls on your personal opinion whether you think it is remotely possible that Jack the Ripper would have left clues in letters or a message chalked on a wall. Even if you do buy into such a possibility, you must accept that those writings were the work of the murderer.

THE RIPPER REPORTS: JACK THE RIPPER AND THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS AS REPORTED IN THE VICTORIAN PRESS

T.M. Thorne
Privately Published, 2021
www.tmthorne.com
146pp, index of people & index of streets
ISBN: 9798705905379
£9.99 softcover, £3.99 ebook
Reviewed by Paul Begg



The reaction of the press and public to the Whitechapel murders was unprecedented. Somebody was committing horrible murders without any discernible reason, something that most people had never known before, and it terrified them. The impact of the murders doesn't always come across in the books, but you can catch sight of it in the

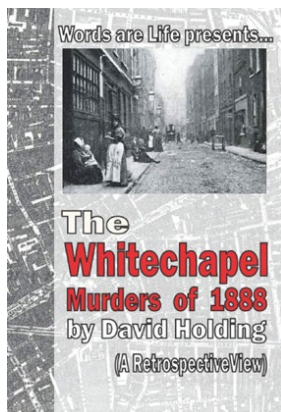
newspaper reports. Nothing – absolutely nothing – gives you a better ‘feel’ of being in 1888 than contemporary newspaper reports, especially if you can see the murder reports on the page, in the context of other events happening on the day.

Your very best option is an annual subscription to the British Newspaper Archive (BritishNewspaperArchive.co.uk). The same digitised newspapers are available on the website FindMyPast.co.uk, along with a ton of useful genealogical material. These are expensive options, though, especially if you only make occasional use of them. A free alternative is Casebook.org, where transcripts of what must amount to hundreds of newspaper reports of the murders are available. These are hugely valuable, although they can’t be searched by word or phrase, and you don’t see the other stories in the paper. A collection of transcripts such as T.M.Thorne’s *The Ripper Reports* is an economical alternative. The softcover edition is nice to have on your shelf, but the ebook has the advantage of being easily searchable. Thorne also provides two indexes of his own, one of people and the other of streets.

Thorne’s book has a good selection of articles from a range of newspapers, all ordered chronologically so that you can follow the story as it unfolds and, for once, it doesn’t look like the reports have been lifted from Casebook. They do appear to be from the British Newspaper Archive, however. As much as I respect the labour that’s gone into transcribing these newspaper reports, I’d be far more impressed if Thorne had reproduced stories from non-digitised newspapers. Still, it’s not a bad collection. We’re promised for next year *The Thames Torso Reports*, due February.

THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS OF 1888: A RETROSPECTIVE

David Holding
Independently Published, 2021
99pp; select biblio.
softcover & ebook
ISBN: 979-8731620628
£4.99 softcover, £1.99 ebook
Reviewed by Paul Begg



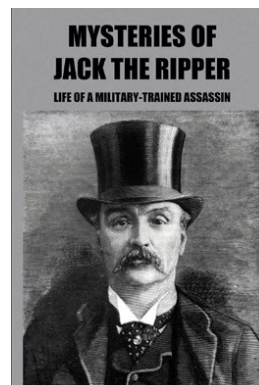
At the start of his Introduction David Holding states that his book was structured to compare the police investigation in 1888 with how a similar investigation would be conducted today. This isn’t a new idea, and it invariably doesn’t amount to much more than a catalogue of the deficiencies of the police in the

late 19th and early 20th centuries. Holding does pretty much the same thing, but points out that whilst they lacked the forensic aids we take for granted today, the police of 1888 did as much as they could. He does make one error, at least what I think is an error, namely that the police followed the theories of criminologists of the day and looked for a “dribbling lunatic” as the perpetrator of these killings.” It seems clear that the police, at a senior level at least, were aware of what we call serial killers today and may not have been focused on motive-led killers like religious fanatics. Mad, avenging doctors and so forth were more the domain of the less well-informed press and public.

Anyway, at first this slender volume seemed to promise little, but it turned out to be an engaging, well-written, and informative little book, well worth a fiver.

MYSTERIES OF JACK THE RIPPER: LIFE OF A MILITARY-TRAINED ASSASSIN

Saran Robel
Independently Published, 2021
softcover
ISBN: 9798748707091
£8.62
Reviewed by Paul Begg



For some reason, you can find this book on Amazon under this title and *Jack the Ripper Murder: Exploring Shocking Stories & Secret Service: Jack The Ripper Book* by Lawanna Aggarwai (ISBN: 979-8748775953) and *Jack the Ripper Revealed: Understanding His Facts, Victims, & Suspects: Jack The Ripper Documentary*

by Kassie Arcuo (ISBN: 979-8748721608). They are all similarly described, so hopefully nobody will buy them before reading the blurb, but what the writer hopes to achieve by shoving out the same book under different titles and invented author names, but similarly described, is anyone’s guess.

The description rang bells, and a quick check shows that it is *Jack the Ripper: British Intelligence Agent* by Tom Slemen and Keith Andrews, published back in 2010 by The Bluecoat Press of Liverpool. The Bluecoat edition had a bizarrely glowing introduction by Richard Whittington-Egan, who also wrote the introduction for Stephen Knight’s *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution*: proof, if any were needed, of what an astonishingly kind and generous man he was. *Mysteries of Jack the Ripper* lacks Richard’s introduction, which is a kindness and lacks the illustrations and index that graced the original. It also lacks page numbers, a title page, the author’s name, and

the title on the spine.

The suspect offered up is Claude Regnier Conder, a soldier, explorer in Palestine, and sometime colleague of Sir Charles Warren. As Ripper books go, *Mysteries of Jack the Ripper* doesn't quite hit rock bottom, but that's only because there are some very, very bad Ripper books.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LYDIA HARVEY

Julia Laite

London: Profile Books, 2021

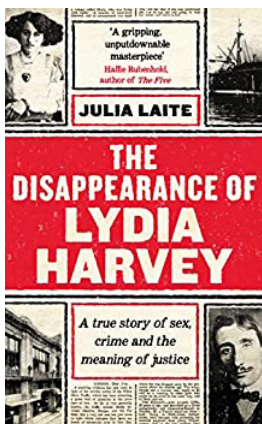
www.profilebooks.com

410pppp; illus; notes; index.

hardcover 9781788164429. ebook 9781782836544.

£16.99 hardcover, £4.74 ebook.

Reviewed by Dr Drew Gray, author of *London's Shadows* (2010), *Jack and the Thames Torso Murders* with Andy Wise (2019), and *Murder Maps* (2020).



In 1910 Lydia Harvey, an ordinary working-class girl from a small town in New Zealand, 'disappeared'. She'd already left home, where she lived with her mother and sisters, to find a more exciting life. When Lydia looked at the future that society offered her – decades of drudgery as a domestic servant or housewife – she turned her nose up and

struck out for independence. In doing so, she made herself vulnerable to people like Antonio Carvelli (aka Aldo Cellis and several other pseudonyms) and Veronique White, who trafficked young women like Lydia for the sex trade. Lydia was taken to Argentina, where she was 'broken in' to prostitution, before being sent to London to work the streets around Soho and Piccadilly. Her London experience was short and unpleasant, involving streetwalking, time spent in hospital recovering from an STD and a women's refuge, whilst also appearing in court to give evidence against those that had procured her. In the end, Lydia Harvey was repatriated to New Zealand, where, nine years later, she died.

Lydia Harvey was one of thousands of young women who were the victims (or survivors) of 'White Slavery' in the late Victorian and Edwardian period. The trade in young girls had been exposed most famously by William Stead in 1885, but it was changes to the laws around prostitution, greater connectivity between police forces, and growing concerns around undesirable migration that helped bring the stories of girls like Lydia to the fore in the 1900s. That and the public's seemingly insatiable desire for sensational news stories peddled by the burgeoning 'tabloid' press.

And Lydia Harvey was just one of hundreds of young women that the historian Julia Laite encountered as she researched her first book *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens: Commercial Sex in London, 1885-1960* (Palgrave, 2011) over ten years ago.

Something about Lydia's story made Laite want to know more, and she has been investigating all the leads she could find to piece together what happened to this quiet independent girl from Oamaru, and to unpick the tales of everyone involved. In *The Disappearance*, she does precisely that: across seven chapters and an 'afterword', Laite skilfully reconstructs Lydia's short life and those of the people she encountered as she left New Zealand to become one of London's 'unfortunates'; the sinister figure of Aldo Celli (Carvelli) and his partner in crime Marie Vernon (aka Veronique White), and Cellis' long-time associate Alessandro di Nicotera and a portfolio of other minor villains. There are coppers like Detective Inspector Ernest Anderson of the CID and DS George Nicholls (who would go on to have an illustrious career in the Met), as well as PC William Mead, who, unfortunately, ended up treading a quite different beat. We also meet the well-meaning Eilidh MacDougall, an early social worker who tried to help women like Lydia that found themselves caught up in the male-dominated world of the criminal justice system, and Guy Schofield, the journalist that tried to break the story of Lydia's abduction, albeit somewhat reluctantly. Each chapter tells the story of Lydia Harvey from a different perspective, and each one is informed by careful use of surviving documented history placed alongside considered speculation by a historian very much in command of her craft.

"The lives in this book were found in fragments," Laite admits. "I have stitched these details together with threads of imagination." She is open about her methods and sources throughout, and the book is well referenced and indexed. I might have liked a bibliography or 'further reading', but the interested reader can make their own from the endnotes.

We cannot know precisely what happened to Lydia Harvey or why, and Laite is transparent about this also. Where accounts differ or conflict, she gives both and leaves it open for the reader to come to their own conclusions.

This is a history that reveals much more than just the story of one young girl from the Dominions. Like all great case studies in history, it tells us such a lot about the context in which these events occurred. Laite's expert knowledge informs *The Disappearance* of historical prostitution and trafficking, it offers us a view of international criminality, of travel and communications in the first quarter of the twentieth century, of policing in London, Australia and

New Zealand, and of the hypocrisy of the press, politicians and 'respectable' society. It is a reminder of why young girls like Lydia Harvey were seduced into leaving home in search of a 'better' life when domestic drudgery was all that was offered by way of an alternative.

Laite is surely accurate in suggesting that for many women in the period sex was considered something that men wanted from them, not something they might want for themselves. Wives provided sex for their husbands for free; the very concept of 'rape' within marriage was not recognised until the 1990s. So, as one of the protagonists of *The Disappearance* says: "It is silly to do it for free, when you can make good money." (p251).

But the exploitation of young girls like Lydia for sex is not the only thing that emerges from this story. The exploitation of women (and men) was rife in the 1900s and arguably remains so. Lydia found work in a theatre in Australia once she had 'escaped' London. There, she, like others, worked "long hours and unpaid overtime, and [were] at the mercy of their directors and producers as to when and where they worked." Laite goes on: "Young women like Lydia Harvey were seen as expendable, easily recruited workers: for every dancing girl onstage, there were another two waiting in the wings." (p314).

Julia Laite is a recognised expert in the history of prostitution, and that is clear in the authority she brings to this history of one young woman's personal tragedy. It is carefully constructed, painstakingly referenced, and beautifully written. I am bound to say that it has elements of *The Five* about it and Profile Books have certainly considered Rubenhold's publishing success in their presentation of Laite's work. But in many ways *The Disappearance* is the book that *The Five* could and should have been. It is powerful, gripping, and purposeful, but it leaves the reader to draw their conclusions based on the 'facts' presented. This book has a powerful message about exploitation and sexuality and the vulnerability of young lives when society looks the other way. Above all, however, this is a fascinating story told well; what more would you want in a history book?

THE DARK SIDE OF ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Angela Youngman

Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword History, 2021

www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

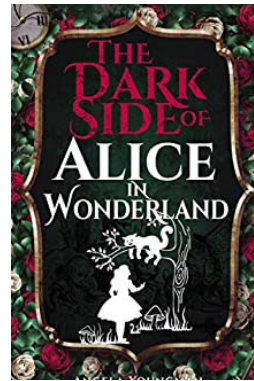
186pp; illus; biblio; index.

ISBN: 9781526785817

£19.99 hardcover, £6.49 ebook

Reviewed by Paul Begg

This idea of this book intrigued me. We're all familiar with *Alice in Wonderland*, but there is a dark and even threatening side to the story. Ripperologists are familiar with the theory that the story's author, Lewis Carroll, was Jack the Ripper. Still, less well-known is that Carroll



recorded in his diary for 26th August 1891 that he had discussed Jack the Ripper with Dr George Dabbs and seemed to have been impressed with the latter's "very ingenious theory". Sadly, we don't know what that theory was. But the Ripper connection, no matter how tenuous that might be, is how *Alice* has a dark side, ranging

from horror through pornography to '60s psychedelia. In *The Dark Side of Alice in Wonderland*, travel and lifestyle journalist Angela Youngman for the first time takes a look at the dark and even threatening ways in which Alice has been adapted over the years and at the mysteries and rumours that have surrounded both the story and its author, Lewis Carroll.

The idea won't appeal to everyone, but I found it an unusual and highly readable book. Of immediate interest, of course, is the chapter 'Ripper Alice'. The idea that Lewis Carroll was Jack the Ripper was advanced by Richard Wallace in his book *Jack the Ripper: Light-Hearted Friend* (1996), and has since been relegated to the outlandish theories bin, although journalists almost always trot it out to show how daft Ripperologists' ideas are!

Angela Youngman gives a short account of the Ripper's crimes and briefly touches on other theories before dismantling the Lewis Carroll theory. There's nothing here that even the newbie Ripperologist wouldn't have known. But overall, Youngman has written an unusual and entertaining look at how Carroll's children's story has been twisted over the years into shapes that the author could never have imagined.

TRACING YOUR PRISONER ANCESTORS

Stephen Wade

Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Family History, 2020

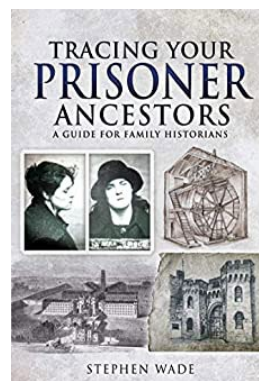
www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

176pp, illus; biblio and sources; index.

ISBN: 1526778521

£10.99 softcover, £6.99 ebook

Reviewed by Paul Begg



It's not something that everyone wants to admit, but if you have a villain as an ancestor, it could be good news because even minor ones received press coverage that could tell you about them and their families. Prison records can be pretty revealing too. But the fact is that ancestors who landed in chokey are not significantly

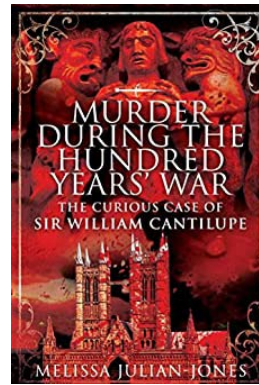
different from anyone else when it comes to tracing your family tree. You'll still look up the name in the same way as you usually do, be it online or elsewhere, and follow the trail thus provided. Stephen Wade doesn't give you any significant avenues for further research. Of course, the less experienced family historian will plunder the book and find it an absolute feast of information.

Keeping strict records of prisoners wasn't practised until the middle of the 19th century and, as with everything, the further back you manage to go, the fewer the records and the harder they are to understand. Before the mid-19th century records are extremely patchy, and the court procedures and the descriptions of crimes are incomprehensible in some cases. Stephen Wade's excellent book isn't so much a guide to tracing your prisoner ancestors – there's already a volume in the series devoted to criminal ancestors – but to understanding the documents and other material at which you're looking. It's a great introduction to legal terms, offences, procedures, sentences, and much more besides.

MURDER DURING THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR: THE CURIOUS CASE OF SIR WILLIAM CANTILOUPE

Melissa Julian-Jones
Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword History, 2020
www.pen-and-sword.co.uk
hardcover and ebook
218pp; illus; notes.
ISBN: 1526750791
£25 hardcover, £5.59 ebook
Reviewed by Paul Begg

Most murders we read about were committed in the 19th or 20th century, probably because we are heavily dependent on newspaper reports for the details. It wasn't before the mid-1900s that newspapers gave much coverage to such distasteful topics. Any book about murders before 1800, therefore, immediately attracts my attention, not because the murders are any different from



those that take place today – the motives are usually pretty much the same at any time – but because the crime gives you an insight into the day-to-day lives of the people living in a world very different from our own.

It was in 1936 that Rosamund Sillem brought to light a murder committed in

1375! She was working with the Lincolnshire Peace Rolls, documents recording the proceedings of the justices of the peace in 14th century Lincolnshire, when she came across an account of the investigation of the murder of Sir William Cantiloupe.

It should be said at the outset that we don't know very much about the murder. We understand how Sir William was killed, we know who was accused – which included family, servants, and even his wife – and we know who was convicted, but we don't know very much more than that, and even that's open to question and doubt! But what has gripped historians about the murder of Sir William Cantiloupe is the complex relationships within households that the case reveals, especially between lords and servants and lords and their wives. As the jacket blurb sums it up, 'This is a story full of political intrigue and scandal, bribery, sexual transgression, personal grudges and family disloyalty', all set against the background of the Hundred Years War.

Curiously, the story has not previously been the subject of a book, a deficiency that I am pleased to say has been corrected by Dr Melissa Julian-Jones with this volume – warmly recommended.

Loretta Lay
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FICTION REVIEWS

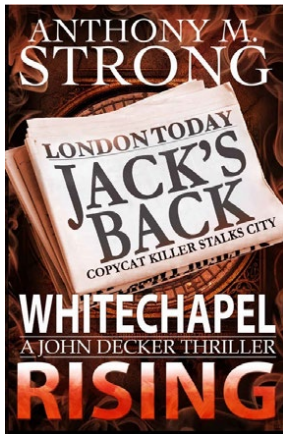
By DAVID GREEN

Reviewed in this issue:

Whitechapel Rising, Heartless, West of Whitechapel and more!

WHITECHAPEL RISING

Anthony M. Strong
West Street Publishing, 2020
ISBN-13: 978-1942207122
Paperback, 256pp
£8.87



Anthony M. Strong is the author of a series of best-selling supernatural horror mysteries featuring homicide detective John Decker. I say homicide detective, but really Decker is more of a creature-hunting county sheriff, battling werewolves in the lush Louisiana bayous and grappling with Inuit sea monsters at an abandoned Navy base in Alaska. Now, in

this fifth instalment, he crosses the Atlantic to confront his most dangerous opponent yet – a resurrected Jack the Ripper.

We're in London in 2018. Building work at a Mayfair townhouse has revealed a mysterious bricked-up basement room: inside there are newspaper clippings about the Whitechapel murders, a bloodstained knife, and a well-preserved corpse restrained in gold handcuffs. Police and forensic teams arrive quickly at the scene, and there is jubilation that Jack the Ripper's dungeon lair has at last been discovered. However, by the time the ambulance crew descends into the cellar to transport the body to the Westminster medical school, the cadaver has vanished. Jack has somehow come back to life and escaped, and within the hour he is dossing down in an abandoned workhouse in Bethnal Green and back to his old murderous ways.

John Decker is called in. He teams up with Nina

Parkinson, an American exchange student studying sociology at the University of Central London, and a creepy sicko research student called Martin Slade, who acts as the novel's resident Ripperologist. And off they go on a rather silly adventure involving vampires, a fob watch with supernatural powers, a serial killer returned from the dead, and a secretive Victorian organisation called The Order of St George, which boasts Inspector Abberline as one of its members...

The book has plenty of fast-paced action crammed into its 58 short chapters, and there is an enjoyable episode where Jack the Ripper wanders around the battlefields of Marston Moor in 1644 supping on the wounds of the fallen Roundheads. But in truth this is a third-rate chase thriller with a contrived storyline, one-dimensional characters, and lots of juvenile gumph about magic and blood lust. John Decker fails utterly to convince as a sort of cross between Van Helsing and Simon Templar. At the end of the book he returns to Mississippi, and we're glad to see the back of him.

HEARTLESS

Ron Nicholson
Independently published, 2020
ISBN 9798565256147
Paperback, 150pp
£5.00

Ron Nicholson's *Heartless* is a short novel set in the fictional Norfolk town of Bradstone. Inspector Paul Cross and his newly-promoted partner Detective Sergeant Burkitt find themselves caught up in a gruesome series of murders with Jack the Ripper associations.

Nicholson's style is desolate and low key. His two police officers spend hours drinking vending machine coffee while staring out the office windows into the car park below. Icy winds blow inland from the North Sea. There are chains on all the doors. A bag of Mint Imperials



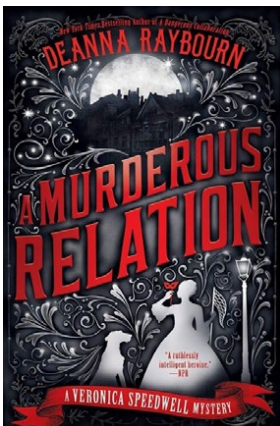
is passed round at a crime scene to take the edge off the taste of blood. One of the book's characters is a janitor with a metal leg – could this be the Tin Man serial killer who disembowels his victims and removes their hearts in the fashion of Mary Jane Kelly? Over a microwave meal for one, Inspector Cross searches the internet for information

on Saucy Jack.

Ron Nicholson continues to self-publish his crime stories despite what I imagine are only modest sales and almost no reviews. For me, though, this was a powerful tale, evoking beautifully a sense of place: it is a dark, brooding case study about madness and death, and an entertaining addition to his small body of work.

A MURDEROUS RELATION

Deanna Raybourn
Berkley, 2021
ISBN 9780451490759
Paperback 336pp
£6.30



This is the fifth book in Deanna Raybourn's series of late-Victorian mystery novels featuring the butterfly-hunting New Woman lady detective Veronica Speedwell and her partner, Revelstoke Templeton-Vane, known as Stoker, a brooding former naval surgeon.

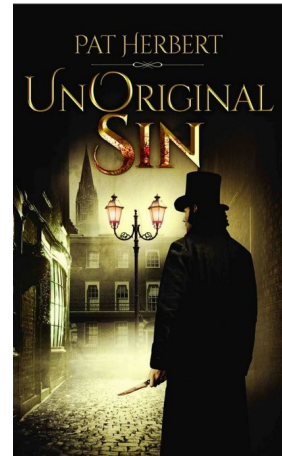
It is 1888. Jack the Ripper is terrorising the streets of the capital. While the country teeters on the brink of hysteria, Inspector Archibond of Scotland Yard can only dither. What is to be done? Veronica and Stoker are invited to go undercover at Madame Aurore's high-class brothel, the Club de l'Etoile, where Prince Albert Victor is a regular client. Eddy, it seems, is suspected of being Jack the Ripper. Can our eccentric pair of amateur sleuths solve the Ripper murders and at the same time save the Royal Family from a potential scandal of monarchy-destroying proportions?

Inevitably, the royal conspiracy theory is played mostly for laughs. The author is far more interested in low-cut ball gowns and the depraved antics of noblemen and women at the sex club. The novel has lots of witty banter and there is a smouldering slow-burn romance between the two leads,

but I wanted to know more about the crime scenes and the lodging houses of Spitalfields, all of them lying dimly-seen and almost completely unexplored beyond this lavish world of privilege and masquerade.

UNORIGINAL SIN

Pat Herbert
New Publications, 2020
ISBN 9781944156824
Paperback 300pp
£6.99



Back in 2018 I reviewed Pat Herbert's novel *The Long Shadow*, a Gothic fantasy in which the evil spirit of Walter Sickert/Jack the Ripper haunted a house in Camden Town (see *Rip* #163). Now, in *Unoriginal Sin*, the author returns once again to the East End murders of 1888 for a standalone historical drama.

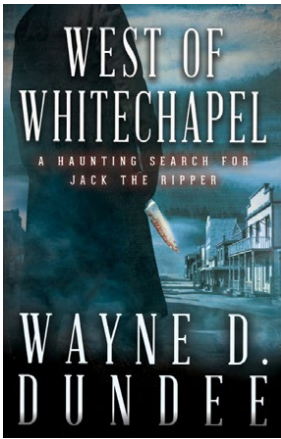
Helen Sadler is an ambitious young nurse at the London Hospital. She hopes one day to practise medicine and become a surgeon. On the ward she is admired by two rival doctors, Arthur Satmore and the roguish Richard Penforth. But Helen is captivated by Jacek Kaminski, a good-looking Polish Jew employed as a hairdresser at Carlucci's Whitechapel barbershop, while for his part Kaminski seems drawn to the prostitutes of Whitechapel.

Inevitably, when the body of Martha Tabram turns up horribly murdered, Kaminski becomes a person of interest to the police. Chief Inspector Swanson, depicted here as a bluff, overweight, vainglorious racist buffoon, wades in wanting to know about Kaminski's scissors and cutthroat razors. But the Pole is just one of several characters whose tangled motives make them credible Ripper suspects. Even Helen has a dark side, developing into a tormented, mysterious figure with an 'unladylike love of gore' and a disturbing bedside manner at the autopsy table.

Unoriginal Sin begins fairly predictably, but gradually twists and deforms into a menacing whodunit of superior quality.

WEST OF WHITECHAPEL

Wayne D Dundee
Wolfpack Publishing, 2021
ISBN-13: 978-1647347289
Paperback 282pp
£7.99



Russ Wheeler and Lew Torrent are old buddies from the Union Army. Twenty years later they meet up again by chance in a Cheyenne saloon: Russ is now a reporter working for one of the New York papers, while Lew is a private investigator. When Russ is killed in an ambush, Lew travels to Denver to break the news to Wheeler's daughter, Victoria. It turns out

that Victoria is also a journalist, who has been working with her father on *The Story of the Century*, an exposé of Jack the Ripper. For Lew it's the least he can do to help her track down the Ripper.

It's not spoiling anything to reveal that Jack the Ripper is named here as Ambrose Tuttle, a former snake oil salesman, abortionist, and self-publicist from the Colorado Rockies. Tuttle went on a killing spree in Whitechapel when his bisexual partner caught a disease from a prostitute; now, back in America, he has resumed his murderous ways and is preying on the 'soiled doves' of Colorado's mining camps...

Wayne Dundee's take on the Tumblety story is a step up from the usual Jack the Ripper western. There's plenty of fast-moving action and almost as many twists and turns as an old wagon trail across the prairie. It mixes the mythology of the Wild West with the mythology of Jack the Ripper, and the result is powerful piece of fiction, gripping, and dark in tone.

THE HYPNO-RIPPER

Donald K. Hartman (ed)

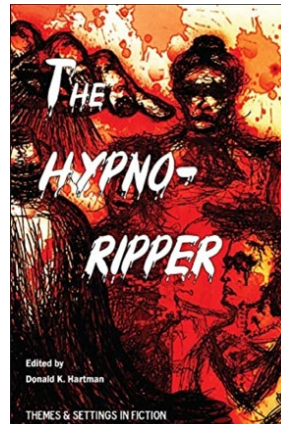
Themes & Settings in Fiction Press, 2021

ISBN 9780960082308

Paperback, 198pp

£8.62

Stories about the criminal use of hypnosis were very popular in the closing years of the nineteenth century. George du Maurier's novel *Trilby* (1894), featuring the sinister Hungarian mesmerist Svengali, is perhaps the best-known example of these early portrayals of hypnotists as sexual predators and evil manipulators. In my Proper Red Stuff column (*Ripperologist* #159) I described an even earlier treatment of this theme in J.W. Nicholas's Jack the Ripper-inspired novel *The House of Mystery* (1891). Now,



in *The Hypno-Ripper*, editor Donald K. Hartman presents two further fictional accounts from the late 1880s in which Jack the Ripper commits murder while under the influence of hypnosis.

Both the stories presented here will be familiar to readers of this journal. N.T. Oliver's *The Whitechapel Mystery: A Psychological*

Problem was first published in 1889 by the Rand McNally Publishing Company as part of their Globe Detective Series of dime novels. A facsimile edition was released by Dave Froggatt in 2000. Better known and far more accomplished as a piece of suspense writing is the second offering – a short tale entitled 'The Whitechapel Horrors' published anonymously in several American newspapers in the same month that Mary Jane Kelly was murdered: it purports to be a confession, written in the style of a diary, by an American assassin called Charles Kowlder.

As two of the earliest fictional accounts of the Whitechapel killings, both yarns have considerable curiosity value, even if they are rather scrappy affairs written quickly to capitalise on the Ripper hysteria. The many similarities in their storylines and in the tabloid frenzy of their narrative voice leads the editor to speculate that both these fictions may, perhaps, be the work of the same writer. Certainly, in their different ways, both tales highlight the tensions that existed around hypnosis in the late nineteenth century as practitioners struggled to wrest their discipline from the hands of showmen and vaudeville entertainers. These stories are not great literature, but they are entertaining enough as pulp fiction.

Hartman contributes a useful biographical essay about Edward Oliver Tilburn ('N.T. Oliver'), which is probably worth the price of the book alone.



I am taking a short break from reading Ripper fiction.



DAVID GREEN lives in Hampshire, England, where he works as a freelance book indexer. He has written *The Havant Boy Ripper* (Mango Books, 2018), an account of the Percy Searle murder case of 1888, and edited *Trial of Frederick Baker* for the revived *Notable British Trials* series.

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