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James Maybrick's inquest

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RIPPEROLOGIST MAGAZINE

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QUOTE FOR MARCH:

And their cover of Screaming Lord Sutch's spook-rock masterpiece Jack the Ripper shows ghost-train pop and instrument flagellation can be a thrilling combination.

Leonie Cooper, *The Horrors, Strange House*, *The Guardian*, London, UK, 2 March 2007.

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COVER IMAGE: Shawl allegedly owned by Catherine Eddowes.
Courtesy Evans/Skinner Crime Library

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PO Box 735, Maidstone, Kent, UK ME17 1JF. contact@ripperologist.info

Editorial Team

Editor in Chief

Paul Begg

Editors

Christopher T George; Don Souden; Adam Wood

Contributing Editors

Christopher-Michael DiGrazia
Monty (Neil Bell); Wilf Gregg; Chris Scott

Consultants

Stewart P Evans; Loretta Lay
Donald Rumbelow; Stephen P Ryder

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The Trials of James Maybrick

Entertainment and 'Ripper Events'

EDITORIAL by CHRISTOPHER T GEORGE

Most Ripperologists will agree that it is highly unlikely that James Maybrick was Jack the Ripper, despite the controversial 'Diary' and vest watch that came to light on Merseyside in the early 1990s that appear to point the fickle finger of Ripperhood at the Liverpool cotton merchant who died in mysterious circumstances in May 1889.

As we have been reporting in these pages, an event that is scheduled to occur in Liverpool on the weekend of 19-20 May is 'The Trial of James Maybrick' to be held in a large marquee on the grounds of the Liverpool Cricket Club adjacent to the former Maybrick mansion, Battlecrease House, on Riversdale Road. News of this event has been given a hostile reception by some posters on the *Casebook: Jack the Ripper* discussion forum. One poster, University of South Florida Professor John V Omlor, has gone so far as to label the event 'the Liverpool Fraud and Death Show.'

Taking part in the Liverpool 'Trial' are expected to be respected writers and experts such as Shirley Harrison, author of *The Diary of Jack the Ripper*, Professor David Canter, Head of the Department of Investigative Psychology at Liverpool University; historian Professor William Rubinstein; and Ripperologists Paul Begg, Donald Rumbelow, and Keith Skinner. This is not the first 'Trial' of James Maybrick of course. In *Ripperologist* 39, February 2002, we reported on a *Trial of Jack the Ripper* television broadcast on 20 February of that year on the Discovery Europe channel and hosted by Angela Rippon. On that occasion, Maybrick was not alone in the dock. The 90-minute programme featured various experts and on-air personalities presenting the cases against Sir William Gull, Aaron Kosminski, Maybrick, and Dr Francis Tumblety. Shirley Harrison and Jeremy Beadle prosecuted the case against the Liverpool cotton merchant, and viewers had the chance to call four dedicated hot lines to stick the boot in or give a reprieve to the respective suspect.

Television programmes about the Ripper, both documentaries and fictionalized treatments, are meant to provide entertainment as well as, to an extent, inform. Indeed, we should recognize that most Ripper conventions have an entertainment element as well, and I say this speaking as an organizer of the first two US Jack the Ripper conventions in 2000 and 2002 and as a speaker at a number of the British and US events. We organize such meetings partly for an educational and scholarly purpose but *de facto* entertainment is part of the weekends as they are planned by the organisers and experienced by the convention goers.



'The Trial of Jack the Ripper' featured on the cover of *Ripperologist* 39, February 2002.

It is easy to become sanctimonious. I remember when Patricia Cornwell's *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper Case Closed* appeared in 2001, I attended a talk by Ms Cornwell at Lisner Auditorium at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. In her talk, Ms Cornwell was quite scathing in voicing the opinion that Ripperologists themselves and the 'Ripper walks' in the East End exploit the Ripper murders. She remarked that residents of Washington would not tolerate tours to visit the site of the DC area sniper killings that had recently occurred and caused terror among residents of the region. I thought at the time how hypocritical it was for her to criticise Ripperologists when she likely would make a great deal of money from the sales of her book. Probably more money than most Ripper authors would see in their lifetime from their writings. Indeed there were actually people lined up with armfuls of copies of *Case Closed* for her to sign! And of course previous to her book naming Walter Sickert as the Whitechapel murderer, Ms Cornwell had made a mint from her crime novels featuring her fictional Richmond medical examiner, Kay Scarpetta. For some authors, crime sells.

I don't think that Ms Cornwell's chosen suspect, Walter Sickert, was the Ripper and neither do I think that James Maybrick was. Nonetheless, I was sorry to hear recently that the Maybrick family headstone in Anfield Cemetery, Liverpool, had been vandalised once again. Previously vandals had smashed the ornamentation on top of the grave marker. This time the stone was split entirely in two. I contacted Martin Doherty, Compliance Officer for Liverpool cemeteries, based at the city's Allerton Cemetery, to ask about repair of the gravestone. Mr Doherty has promised to look into the feasibility of repairing the headstone and said he would authorise the repair if it could be effected at reasonable cost.



The vandalised Maybrick family headstone in in Anfield Cemetery, Liverpool, as photographed in February of this year. (Photograph courtesy of Dave Wood.)

I also came to the realisation recently that I have a tangent connection to the Maybricks because it turns out that Sir Samuel Brighouse, the coroner who conducted the inquest on James Maybrick in 1889, is the same coroner who conducted the inquest on an uncle of mine, my father's elder brother, who was killed in a motorcycle accident in January 1933. You can read about this long-serving coroner and his colourful career in my article, 'A Coroner for All Seasons: Sir Samuel Brighouse' in this issue of the *Rip*. As noted in *The Times* obituary on Sir Samuel, published 16 January 1940, he was an unconventional coroner. I hope learning more about Brighouse, his inquests,

and his opinions will add more to our knowledge of the English coronial system that has been such a lively topic in these pages over the past couple of years. History can be entertaining as well as educational, my friends.



A Parade Before the Lord Mayor's?

By DON SOUDEN

With our close focus on Mary Jane Kelly and her “gentleman callers” on the night of her murder—“Blotchy Face” and possibly “Astrakhan Man”—we tend to lose sight of the dynamics of Miller’s Court and end up thinking of it as almost some sort of early gated-community. This is especially so in terms of the men, residents and non-residents, who may have been in and around the court during the early hours of November 9, 1888. Indeed, there may have been so many men traipsing down the narrow passageway into Millers Court as to have constituted a veritable parade before the Lord Mayor’s Day parade.



To begin with those men for whom we have some solid evidence of their presence in the court that night, Joseph Barnett is first and foremost. In fact, he readily admitted he had visited Mary in the early evening of November 8, leaving her some time between 7:30 and 8pm. Whether he returned with malice aforethought in the wee hours of that next morning is best left to those who see him as the Ripper (or at least as Kelly’s murderer), but there is little doubt he had been there.

A less well attested presence, but still one accepted by most students of the crime, is a man seen by Mary Ann Cox in Kelly’s company at about 11:45pm. Cox described him as being “about 36 years old, about 5ft 5in high, complexion fresh and I believe he had blotches on his face, small side whiskers, and a thick carrotty moustache....”¹ He was also said to be shabbily dressed and carrying a quart beer pail. He went into Kelly’s room and with that act he went out of our ken for the rest of time. Kelly was heard to be singing for a time afterward, but what happened to the man with the carrotty moustache and who he was remains a mystery. He certainly never came forward to say he had been there. Perhaps he didn’t like his description as given by Cox—or didn’t recognize himself from the invidious portrait she provided.

¹ Evans, Stewart P. and Keith Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Companion*, p. 371. There continues to be some debate over what Cox meant by “carrotty.” Today, the adjective means “carrot colored hair” and yet some argue that rather than the color of the root, Cox meant a moustache whose growth was wild and unruly like the vegetable’s leaves. While that seems a stretch, I must admit I have heard moustaches referred to as “lip spinach” and I doubt the speaker meant the hair was green.

The entrance to Millers Court.
Photograph from Leonard Matters’s *The Mystery of Jack the Ripper*

A third man reported to have been in the court that morning is the subject of George Hutchinson's very controversial witness statement. After being accosted by Kelly (with whom he claimed a three-year friendship) and then shunted aside when he confessed he was himself broke, Hutchinson said he saw her approach another man, speak to that man and then walk with him to her apartment in the court. What makes the witness statement controversial was the highly detailed description provided after a brief and probably ill-lit sighting.

The veracity of Hutchinson's statement is not germane to this study, but among the wealth of sartorial details supplied was a "long dark coat, collar and cuffs trimmed astrakan"² that has earned the shadowy gentleman the nickname "Astrakhan Man." Again, according to Hutchinson, this visitor to Millers Court entered Kelly's room around 2am and was still there at 2:45 when Hutchinson decided to end his voyeuristic vigil and shuffle off in search of shelter.

While considerable attention has been devoted to the wealth of detail in Hutchinson's description of Astrakhan Man, less has been paid to his mention of someone else who entered the court at the time—himself. He says that "I then went to the Court myself to see if I could see them. I couldn't."³ After indulging his voyeur's impulse at least once, if not more often, he claimed he then waited across the street until he left. So, depending upon how much credence one wishes to place in George Hutchinson, there were possibly two more men who strode down the passageway into Miller's Court that night.

To move from those men attested to have been to have been in Miller's Court that morning (however weak the testimony) to those who might well have been there we must start with landlord John McCarthy. According to Liz Prater, one of his tenants, she and McCarthy stood in the arched entrance to the court and chatted for about 20 minutes. As I have argued elsewhere,⁴ there is good reason to believe McCarthy kept a close check on several of his tenants who were prostitutes (despite his protestations to the press and police that he was shocked, absolutely shocked to learn some of his renters paid for their rooms from immoral earnings) and this was especially true of Kelly.

As an aid to McCarthy and company's surveillance, the back room of his shop at 27 Dorset Street provided an excellent view of anyone coming in or out of the court. Still, there is no reason to believe he would not often take a nocturnal stroll of his property, much like the landed gentry enjoyed an evening's walk through their estate—both to revel in their property and keep an eye out for anything untoward. Thus, it was quite likely John McCarthy went down and around Miller's Court at least once that night before bed.

Then, too, there is McCarthy's hired man and general dogsbody Thomas "Indian Harry" Bowyer. As McCarthy's rent collector, among other things, Bowyer doubtless had many an excuse to be up and down the court in the daylight, though his presence there in the nighttime seems less obvious and more problematic. Still, anyone who will blithely peer into a woman's room—as "Peeping Tom" did when Kelly did not answer his knocks—can't be ruled out automatically. Who knows, he may have offered eagerly to McCarthy that he would check windows in the court at any time of the day or night.



George Hutchinson sees Mary Kelly with "Astrakhan Man"



John McCarthy



Thomas Bowyer

² Ibid. p 377. Astrakhan is the curly fur derived from the skins of young lambs from the Astrakhan region of Russia. A fabric with a curly, looped pile that resembles the fur is also referred to by that name.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Time Is On My Side", Casebook.org

Beyond that pair, there were also at least two men reported to be living in the court: Mr. Keylor and his wife were at Number 2 Miller's Court and Julia Venturney's live-in male companion, Harry Owen, at Number 1. That either, or both, were in the court to use the privy, the pump or just to stretch their legs is a very strong possibility. Moreover, there may well have been more men among the tenants than we know. According to research done on the 1891 census by "Sam Flynn", the tenants of Miller's Court at that time seem to have been mostly couples and that included 20 males⁵. McCarthy's renting policy may have changed because of all the bad publicity in the wake of Kelly's murder, but it may also have been that in 1888 there were more couples of whom we know nothing, thus providing even more men for the passing parade.

There also are two interesting men who might have visited the court that particular morning. One is Liz Prater's former boyfriend, about whom she testified:

*About 1 on Friday morning I stood at the corner by Mr. McCarthy's shop till about 20 minutes past 1 I spoke to no one I was waiting for a man I lived with, he did not come. I went up to my room... I went in about 1.30 I put 2 tables against the door.*⁶

There are several interesting aspects to that brief bit of testimony. For one, while Prater's "a man I lived with" is a bit ambiguous, I think it is clear she meant "a man I *had* lived with." She made no bones about the fact she was now alone and by waiting for him out on the street it suggests strongly he was not welcome in her room. Interesting as well was her mentioning that she moved two tables against the door. It may have been that, unlike the apartment below that had a lock but no key, Prater had a key but no lock. More likely, she had some sort of lock and put the tables in place simply as added protection and to provide a warning in case someone tried to enter.

And what may have had her so frightened as to move the tables? Was it the man she was supposed to meet, who may have had a key to the room? Someone else in the court or nearby about whom she had reason to be wary? Or was it perhaps a generalized fear engendered by Jack the Ripper? In any case, she certainly was worried about someone entering her room and as good a possibility as any is that it was the former boyfriend. Certainly from all we know, domestic relations in Dorset Street and the vicinity was much less "Happy Families" and much more like soccer hooligans at home.

At about the same time that Liz Prater barricaded her door, Sarah Lewis, of 34 Great Pearl Street, Spitalfields, was having "a few words with my husband"⁷ as she stated to the police the afternoon of the murder. By the time she testified at the inquest the difficulties with her husband may have been settled amicably because she does not mention the argument. Her interest for Ripperologists and, presumably the police, was that she saw a man standing across the street from the court entrance at 2:30am (whom many believe was George Hutchinson—even paradoxically some who don't believe Hutchinson's story) and that later that morning she heard a cry of "Murder."

Often overlooked, though is just why she was in the court at all. As noted, she'd "had words" with her husband, but however she glossed over the event (and even "forgot" it) at the coroner's inquest, it must have been sufficiently violent to make her flee home in the early hours of a wet, cold morning for the safety of the room of her friends, the Keylers, at Number 2 Miller's Court. We have no way of knowing, but there is certainly every suggestion that Mr. Lewis had a nasty temper and his wife running off to find a safe haven with the Keylers was not a one-time thing.

Liz Prater gave up waiting for her former companion and went to bed after stacking several tables against her door and Sarah Lewis came to the court in the middle of the night after a fight with her husband. Certainly, Prater's man knew where she lived (even if not welcome there) and it would seem quite probable that Sarah's husband at least had an inkling where she might have gone. Thus, we have the strong possibility there were two more men on the prowl in Miller's Court—and what's more a pair with a mad on: Prater's man angry because she hadn't waited for him and Lewis's husband seeking his wife who'd left him after an angry spat.

5 Gareth Williams, Casebook.org. There were 17 households enumerated with the following result: Solomon Shremsky and boarder Emily Weiss; Lilian Reardon (Widow), age 37, and son Charles; Patrick Conlan, wife Alice, sons Bernard, Alfred and Michael. Joseph Wadham, wife Mary Ann, son John; John Payne, wife Jane, son John; George Southey, wife Elizabeth, sons George and Frederick; Henry Hooker, wife Clara, son William and visitor Eliza Wilson; Thomas North, wife Sarah, boarder Katherine Durand; Elizabeth Norman (Widow), age 34, Occupation needlewoman. Matilda Merriton (Married), age 46, Occupation N/K; Mary Jeffrey (Widow) and son Edward; Mary Griffin (Single), aged 19, Occupation rope-maker; William Harrison, wife Mary; Edward Childs, wife Jane; Thomas Kelly, wife Ann; Elizabeth Harper (Widow), age 39, and her brother James; Mary Clark (Widow), age 49, Laundress, and her son Charles.

6 Evans and Skinner, op. cit. p. 371. It is worth noting that like several other people, Prater changed her testimony regarding John McCarthy. In her police statement she said she spent the time waiting for her former lover talking to McCarthy, yet by the time she appeared at the inquest she says "I spoke to no one." John McCarthy still has much to answer for even if he were most certainly not the Ripper.



Joseph Barnett

As far as former companions are concerned, there are two in that category that must be considered. First and foremost is Joseph Barnett, who as recently as two weeks before her murder had been living with Mary Jane Kelly. Indeed as mentioned above, he had been to see her in the early in the evening by his own admission as well as the testimony of witnesses. If anyone knew the Court and Number 13 it would have been Barnett and he could easily have slipped out of his lodging house and come back to the court and Number 13 for any number of reasons.

There is also the other Joe in Mary's life to consider, Joseph Fleming, with whom she had lived before taking up with Barnett. It is probably to him that Julia Venturney referred when, in her police statement, she said that Kelly: "told me she was very fond of another man named Joe, and he had often ill-used her because she cohabited with Joe [Barnett]."⁸ It is interesting that when she gave her inquest testimony Venturney had mellowed considerably about the other Joe, simply saying "Deceased said she was fond of another man named Joe who used to come and see her and give her money"⁹ with no mention of Fleming's shabby treatment of Mary Jane Kelly.

In either case, Fleming (who coincidentally lived in the same lodging house as the mysterious Hutchinson and Joe Barnett's brother Dan) is surely a person of interest who could have been in the court that morning. He had been there many times before, and surely knew his way around. Moreover, Venturney's original statement that he had ill-used Mary Jane Kelly (such a quaint term for likely beating the bejabbers out of her) would make him a person of *great* interest if he had in fact decided to go out and get some air that morning, especially if that quest included the rather fetid air of Miller's Court.

Finally, we need to turn our attention to the large number of men for whom we have no information at all, but who nonetheless might well have been in and out of Miller's Court that particular morning—just as they might have for many another morning. Despite the fact that a pedestrian in a hurry might well glide past the narrow entrance to Miller's Court without even noticing it, there can be no doubt the little *cul de sac*, by the very nature of its inhabitants, was well known throughout the area.

An interesting article written a day after the murder carried the answer of what was termed "an intelligent laboring man, a denizen of the neighborhood"¹⁰ who was asked if it were not amazing that men were in and of the court at all hours. His reply to the query was "Not a bit and you would understand if you know the place and the kind of people. Men go in and out of there and nobody thinks anything about them or takes notice of 'em."¹¹ Naturally, any item about the murders appearing in a contemporary newspaper must be considered carefully, but this particular story has the right ring to it as the reporter seems to have done some independent digging and did not merely repeat the trite rumors and misreports of so many of his journalistic brethren.

Moreover, another reporter interviewed Liz Prater and concluded "It was a common thing for the women living in these tenements to bring men home with them."¹² We must once again weigh the veracity of this remark, based on the comments of a Miller's Court resident no less, and once more the reporter gets a passing grade. The reason for this is that the rest of Prater's remarks seem to tally with what she had said earlier in the day to the police. The only exception was that Prater is quoted as saying she heard nothing during the night, which was at variance with her statement, but it may be the police had asked her to keep that information quiet. On the whole the interview seems genuine.



The entrance to Millers Court - easily missed.
Photograph from Leonard Matters's
The Mystery of Jack the Ripper

7 Ibid., p, 366. In some instances Lewis's story is credited to a "Mrs. Kennedy," with some slight variations in the tale. It does, however, strain credulity that two different women had fights with the their husbands and fled to Number 2 Miller's Court. Moreover, for our purposes in this article it makes no difference.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., p. 375.

10 *Daily News*, November 10, 1888.

11 Ibid.

12 *Daily Telegraph*, November 10, 1888.



Dorset Street

And if that were not enough, we also have the inquest testimony of Mary Ann Cox who said "I heard men going in and out, several go in and out, I heard some one go out at a quarter to six."¹³ Not that there should be any doubt that the court was frequented by men and most often by men whose reasons for being there were probably not a curiosity about the architecture of the tenements. If anything, Miller's Court was likely a magnet for men, especially at night.

Just how many men that might include lies squarely in the realm of conjecture, but it would be a not inconsiderable number. One lodging house on Dorset Street normally had 260 occupants of a night and two others could house 200 or more each. Nor were these the only lodging houses on the street. It has been estimated that upwards of 1,500 men slept nightly in Dorset Street alone¹⁴ and this does not include the doss houses on other, nearby streets. Further, these numbers exclude the many like George Hutchinson who were too late to gain entry to a lodging house or lacked the money and would thus spend the night wandering the streets and otherwise roughing it.

Indeed, this last class of men is the more likely to have had reason to march in and out of Miller's Court. Of course, those with a secure place for the night could have left their lodgings to venture into the court, but that would have called for a certain purposefulness of action. Still, if it can be suggested that Joseph Barnett or Joseph Fleming did so, then with an admitted lesser degree of certainty that desire for a nocturnal stroll can be imputed to almost any lodging house occupant. And it must be borne in mind that the court and many of occupants did have an attraction for men like that of the nectar for a hummingbird.

Still, there could be many more mundane reasons for those men without a night's doss to take the short walk into the alley. Surely, a call to nature could be a compelling reason to slip into the court in the wee hours of the morning. The more fastidious might avail themselves of the privy, but quickly gaining relief *al fresco* seems a better possibility. For that matter, the really fastidious of the area's homeless might want to use the pump with which to wash themselves. Moreover, the court would doubtless draw the curious, confused and crooked among the area's roaming males for whatever purposes. That it also drew canoodlers in the way 29 Hanbury Street did seems less likely, but can't be ruled out as there simply was no accounting for taste in East End trysting places.

The only possibility that should be ruled out as far as stray and straying men in the area is the old tale, first retailed in the *Daily Telegraph*, that Number 26 Dorset Street was an open shed that served as a free dossing spot for those unfortunate folk without a farthing to their name. Not only would such a place be as buzzing with humanity at night as an apiary is with bees in summer, but one must remember that this supposed shed belonged to John McCarthy. He leased or owned a fair amount of the lodging houses and tenements in Dorset Street and while he may have cut Mary Jane Kelly some slack (for reasons explored elsewhere) he was not known for his benevolence and the idea of him providing free shelter in competition with his own businesses is rather less likely than Kelly's future canonization. As it is, if there is any truth to the story it probably involves a stable elsewhere on Dorset Street, but that is for another time and another article.

¹³ Evans and Skinner, *op. cit.*, p.371.

¹⁴ *Daily News*, November 12, 1888.

Even discounting those who weren't in any case sleeping in the front of Number 26, there are more than enough men who could have been in and out of Miller's Court on November 9, 1888, to have made for quite a parade. And most likely a goodly number of those possible men did make their way there. Just what this parade means in terms of speculation about Mary Jane Kelly's murder is quite fruitful, indeed. More than that, the ramifications of there possibly having been so many men in Miller's Court that morning are likely to provide aid and comfort to almost any Ripper theorist extant—and that is something both rare and remarkable for any article.

The most basic dichotomy among Ripperologists concerning the murder of Mary Jane Kelly is whether or not she actually was a victim of the Ripper of all. It almost goes without saying that there were certain differences when compared with the other murders in the series (which, simply for ease of reference, will be called the Canonic Five). The other murders among the Canonic Five all took place outdoors whereas Kelly was done in indoors. Further, the mutilations wrought upon Kelly were of an order beyond the febrile imagination of most slasher-film directors. Even as experienced a physician as Dr. J.R. Gabe said he "had seen a great deal in dissecting rooms, but...had never witnessed such a horrible sight as the murdered woman presented."¹⁵

Of course, it could be argued that one of those differing elements was simply the product of the other. That is, because the murder was indoors and the killer accorded much more opportunity play at "guts for garters" he literally turned Number 13 into a shambles. Still, those who argue that it was the Ripper who played "doctor" in that room have to account for the shift in venue from the great outdoors to the intimacy of the parlor.

That change could have as simple an explanation as opportunity; after all, the others among the Canonic Five all lived in lodging houses and plied their trade on streets and back alleys, whereas Kelly and her sisters of the court had rooms of their own. This doubtless presented them with the ability to charge a premium price but also put them at somewhat greater risk of meandering men, something that Liz Prater at least recognized. Then again, with winter coming on, perhaps the Ripper just decided continuing to work outdoors was deleterious to his health. Or so the pro-Ripper side might argue.

In turn, the anti-Ripper faction makes much more of the differences between Kelly and the rest of the Canonic Five. For them, moving indoors for whatever reason is incompatible with the Ripper's previous pattern. Moreover, the wretched excess of the eviscerations upon Kelly speak of a copycat murderer at work, someone who having read about the Ripper's mutilations, especially those of Kate Eddowes, simply free-lanced to his heart's content and in the process made a hash of his imitative efforts.

The problem with either view, however, is that since Kelly was the last in the series, that she was killed indoors and her murderer seemingly practiced overkill, the question of whether she was a Ripper victim must remain open. Simply put, being the last murder associated with the Ripper, the excessive mutilations could be only the natural culmination of ever-escalating butchery, or they could be by another hand altogether. Happily, this article won't pretend to answer that conundrum, but instead will only provide fodder for either faction.

Clearly, there is nothing in the notion of an excess of men having been in the court that morning to damage the argument that among them was the one and only Jack the Ripper. After all, he could have been the blotchy-faced man with a carrotty moustache whom Mary And Cox averred she saw and George Hutchinson's tale of the toff with a fur-trimmed overcoat was so much malarkey. Then again, gregarious George could have had a photographic eye for detail, told the truth and the man he saw with Kelly was the Ripper in person. Or, and here is where allowing for more than just those two to have been in Miller's Court proves interesting, Jack could have been any of a number of other males who could have been in the court.

Conversely, the field truly opens up for those who argue that Kelly's murder has no place among the Canonic Five. This is particularly true when we remember that although the door to Number 13 was almost assuredly locked when the police arrived, we have no way of knowing if the door had been off the latch until the last person to leave locked it. It could have been locked from the inside while the murderer was at work, the better to preserve his privacy, and then pulled shut when he exited. For that matter, I have elsewhere suggested it may have been locked inadvertently by McCarthy when he briefly entered the room after he sent Bowyer for the police.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, November 10, 1888.

¹⁶ Souden, *op. cit.* The argument made was that McCarthy desperately wanted to retrieve something incriminating from the room. Nothing to do with Kelly's murder—I feel McCarthy was innocent in that regard—but something that might link him to profiting from immoral activity or something else.

In any case, not only is it an open question as to whether the door was unlocked, there were those like Barnett (and probably Fleming) who knew the secret of reaching through the broken window pane to trip the latch. Nor is it beyond conjecture that your usual East End miscreant was much smarter than the police when it came to gaining entry to locked rooms. After all, it would call for no great genius to notice a broken pane and wonder if that might not allow access. And finally, even if the door was locked when her killer arrived there is nothing to say that Kelly didn't let him in, no matter who he was. Kelly was desperate for money, the rent man would cometh upon the morrow and almost anyone with cash in hand who wasn't waving a large knife with the other hand would have been welcomed.

Still, if it were a one-off copycat murder, the prime suspect must be the recent resident and rejected lover Joe Barnett. There are those who argue that the seemingly ineffectual former fish porter was Jack the Ripper in the flesh and they *may* be right, but Joe really fits the frame much better as the murderer only of Kelly. After all, most murder investigations start and stop with family and friends—which is one reason serial killers are difficult to run to ground—and Joe certainly falls into the latter category. Moreover, he willingly told the coroner's jury that he kept Kelly *au courant* on the Ripper and his depredations, so he could perfectly well have killed in a jealous frenzy and then covered his tracks by making the murder seem like just more of Jack's labors of lust.

The same situation would hold true for Joe Fleming. He, too, had been another notch on Kelly's non-chastity belt, he still visited her, he lived in the neighborhood and he was accused of having "ill used" Mary Jane because she had taken up with Barnett. Given his probable penchant for corporal punishment as well as corporal pleasure, he would be another good candidate as a copycat killer. Indeed, because he had a history of abuse and ended up in the mad house, someone like Fleming might well have enjoyed imitating the Ripper's twisted urge to slice and slash.

Then, there are our possible wild cards of the evening—Liz Prater's ex-lover and Mary Ann Cox's husband—prowling the court with an anger directed at a particular woman that could have easily turned into an anger against all women. It doesn't take too much imagination to picture either of them blundering into the wrong apartment and wreaking blind vengeance on the woman within, only to discover the error and then butcher the poor victim's body in an effort to make it look like yet another Ripper crime. It would certainly fit the facts as we know them. But then that would hold true for almost any seriously suggested candidate for the title of Jack the Ripper once we accept Miller's Court was more a parade ground than deserted country lane that night.

We need only run down a list of the more prominent suspects to realize how the openness of the court enhances rather than inhibits their possibility of having committed the Kelly murder. With thanks to the Phoenicians (or whoever it was that first plotted what became the Western alphabet) William Bury heads the list as Joseph Barnett has already been discussed at length. That is actually rather convenient since Bury has become something of a "hot" suspect of late. Anyway, Bury becomes no less hot by our expanding the number of men who may have walked on by the door to Number 13 that fateful night.

Same holds for Thomas Cutbush, who I suppose might have chanced an entry into the court in search of bottoms to poke. And, having chosen the wrong person's bum to bother with, was forced to slay her rather than face the consequences. But, aside from his rather odd name there seems little about Mr. Cutbush and his strange fetish to sustain him as a suspect in any case. Still, for those who favor him (and there were and *are* a few such) their case is not harmed by the arguments in this article.

Montague John Druitt, however, is a barrister of a different hue altogether. On the one hand, he would seem a good suspect on a number of counts, yet on the other it is only his death rather than his life that provides any reason to consider him the Ripper. More's the pity really, since his lifestyle could have provided a paper trail of the sort needed today to reasonably name the Ripper. Regardless, while imaging this barrister, schoolmaster and cricket player from across the river making an early morning incursion into Miller's Court is as unlikely as the idea, working in reverse, that Mary Jane Kelly consorted with Prince Albert Victor, nothing says it didn't happen. After all, the more men in Miller's court the merrier for most theorists.

Severin Klosowski (George Chapman) likewise could have been one of those in Miller's Court and would certainly have fit in better than many others. He at least was in London at the time, though if you consider his later dabbling with death, spending his evenings reading a pharmacopeia would seem more in character. Nonetheless, can't rule him out either.



Contemporary sketch of Millers Court showing broken windows boarded up



L-R: Druitt, Klosowski and Maybrick

Continuing our abecedarian endeavors, we come upon Aaron Kosminski and/or David Cohen. They are not the same person, but for our purposes are interchangeable since they both present the same sort of wretched existence. Actually, either of this pair would represent the mind-numbing notion of being too *declassé* to be wandering in what would have been for them a "country club" setting. That is, neither seems likely to have made a favorable appearance even for the Miller's Court flesh peddlers. Still, in the dark hours all sorts of ghoulies and ghosties and things that go rip in the night were on the streets of Whitechapel... even Cohens and Kosminskis.

Moving right along, those who believe dear, dull James Maybrick was butchering women—when not writing in his diary (which despite his wealth was an old scrapbook from which he had removed a number of pages)—can only be heartened by the possibility of a virtual parade of men in the court. Of course, they have to get him from Liverpool to London first (teleportation seems more reliable than rail service, then or now), but with that out of the way nothing hinders his presence on Dorset Street in the pre-dawn.

For that matter, turning Miller's Court into a busy thoroughfare rather than a private pathway only improves the odds for most any of the candidates bandied about in books and message boards. Find a way to get Walter Sickert out of France and into London on the evening of November 8, 1888, and he is no less likely to have peregrinated in the court than any number of others. Same with R.D. Stephenson. Smuggle him out of the hospital and he could have headed straight to Miller's Court for a late night liaison at Number 13. And, if Francis Tumblety wouldn't have banged his head on the low archway entrance, he could have stooped so low as to be there as well.

Even a few of the lesser known suspects must be considered. Recently Michael Connor advanced the name of Charles Cross, discoverer of Polly Nichols body and a carman for Pickford's removalists, as the Ripper.¹⁷ Interestingly enough, in her statement to the police Liz Prater stated that "I was up again and down the stairs in the court at 5:30am but saw no one except two or three carmen harnessing their horses in Dorset street."¹⁸ Similarly, James Hardiman, a cat's meat dealer and the chosen miscreant of Rob Hills,¹⁹ might just have been there intending to solicit the custom of the aforementioned Prater whose cat wakened her to a cry of "Murder!"

Indeed, among the many suspects on the Casebook.org list, the only ones that can be eliminated from consideration, besides those proved demonstrably dead, imprisoned or otherwise incapable of the crime, would be Lewis Carroll and William E. Gladstone. Even the youngish Kelly would be far too old a woman to evoke any interest in Carroll (who if perhaps not quite a paedophile was surely no paedophobe). Gladstone, however, was known to chat up prostitutes on the street, but only from an evangelizing perspective. That said, one would have to truly imagine a parade of epic proportions up and down Miller's Court before you could even consider the possibility of finding Carroll or Gladstone among the marchers.

We may have had a little bit of fun latterly examining the possible culpability of some of the suspects, but that should not obscure the very important fact that there may have been a lot more men in and out of Miller's Court the morning of November 9, 1888, than normally appreciated. The descriptions of Blotchy Face and Astrakhan Man tend to capture our attention to the exclusion of other men who could have been in the court and that allows for a very short-sighted approach to the murder of Mary Jane Kelly. It is only by considering the many other men who paraded through the court the morning of the Lord Mayor's Parade that we can more fully understand the wanton butchery that occurred in Number 13 Miller's Court.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Jane Coram, Jennifer Pegg and Gareth Williams.

¹⁷ Michael Conner, "Did the Ripper Work For Pickford's," *Ripperologist* 72, October 2006.

¹⁸ Evans and Skinner, op. cit., p. 365.

¹⁹ Rob Hills, "Cat's Cradle," *Ripperologist* 75, January 2007.



A LOST WOMAN
MARY KELLY
IN MILLER'S COURT

A Coroner for All Seasons: Sir Samuel Brighouse

By CHRISTOPHER T GEORGE

Into the awe-struck silence of the courtroom spoke Coroner Sir Samuel Brighouse...

From 'Misadventure at Winwick,' *Time magazine*, 22 October 1934

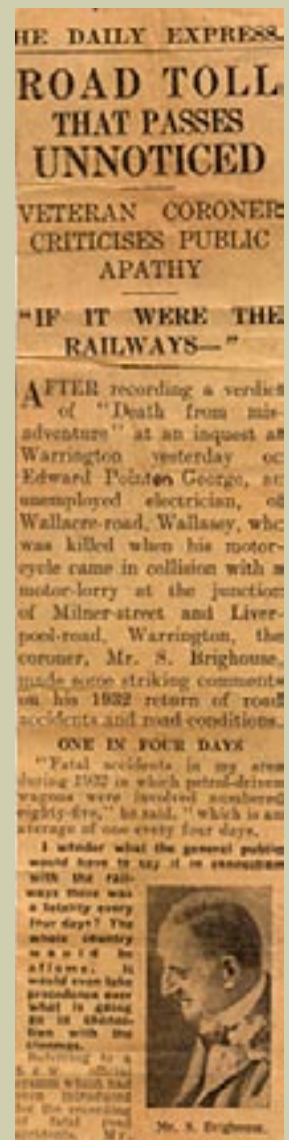
In the spring of 2006, my cousin Haydn George sent me a copy of a yellowed newspaper cutting from the *Daily Express* of 7 January 1933 which chronicled developments at the inquest on the accidental death of Edward George, our fathers' elder brother.¹ I had long known that Uncle Edward had been killed in a motorcycle accident. However, because my paternal grandparents had a strong connection to the Isle of Man as well as to Wallasey in Cheshire, I had been under the impression that he had been killed on the island's famous TT race course. This idea that I had turned out to be incorrect, as I will explain in a moment.

When I was a little boy growing up in the 1950s my paternal grandmother seemed very old to me. She was a little thin old lady who lived in a converted Isle of Man school house overlooking Laxey Bay with a lot of cats and chickens and a blind old skinny black dog named Smutty. I know now she was in fact quite a bit older than my mother's parents, having been born in Douglas, Isle of Man on 12 August 1876 and christened with the unusual name of [Birtles Pointon](#), the fifth child of William Hodson Pointon and Eliza Jane Birtles Pointon. This compares to my maternal grandfather, who was born in 1892 in Liverpool, and my grandmother, born in 1897 in Gateshead, County Durham. When my uncle, Edward Pointon George, was killed at around age eighteen, he died almost exactly fifteen years before I was born in 1948. Contrary to the way I had thought Uncle Edward had met his death, I learned from the *Daily Express* article that he was killed when his motorcycle was struck by a lorry in Warrington, Lancashire, some twenty miles east of Liverpool. At the time, he lived in Wallasey across the River Mersey from Liverpool, where he was an 'unemployed electrician' as the news article characterized him.

A Reform-minded Coroner

The *Daily Express* article on my kinsman's inquest in truth had little to do with his tragic demise, which was ruled to be 'Death from misadventure.' The occasion of the inquest held in Warrington was used by coroner 'Mr S Brighouse' as a bully pulpit by him to highlight the grievous death toll caused by motor vehicles and particularly of 'petrol-driven wagons' such as the one that had killed my uncle.

¹ 'Road Toll that Passes Unnoticed. Veteran Coroner Criticises Public Apathy. If It Were the Railways—.' *Daily Express*, 7 January 1933.



Newspaper cutting on the inquest held on Edward Pointon George, *Daily Express*, 7 January 1933. (Courtesy of Haydn George.)

As the *Express* put it, 'the coroner... made some striking comments on his 1932 return of road accidents and road conditions.' Brighouse in fact was quite outspoken, using the occasion to castigate public apathy and government inertia alike in allowing such a toll of deaths to occur:

'Fatal accidents in my area during 1932 in which petrol-driven wagons were involved numbered eighty-five,' he said, 'which is an average of one every four days. I wonder what the general public would have to say if in connection with the railways there was a fatality every four days. The whole country would be aflame... until they [the government] amend the roads which were never intended for this traffic... I cannot see how things can be any different.'²

Here was evidently a coroner of reformist-minded bent, in the tradition of radical coroner Dr Thomas Wakley of a hundred years earlier: a man who used his coroner's enquiries to urge social change.³ David O'Flaherty, who with co-authors John Savage and Robert Linford, has written about the English coronial system in *Ripperologist*, has remarked that the news article 'is a really good example of what coroners were all about - public safety and the prevention of deaths - a point I think that is often lost.'⁴

Samuel Brighouse, the 'Veteran'

From the clue in the 1933 newscutting that coroner Brighouse was a 'veteran' in his position, it did not take me long to ascertain that he in fact held the position of Coroner for South-west Lancashire for an incredible span of 56 years! David O'Flaherty commented, 'He just edges out [City of London Coroner] Samuel Langham whose career lasted about 52 years, 1849-1901.'⁵

Brighouse, who died on 15 January 1940 at the age of ninety, was the same coroner who oversaw both the inquests on Ripper suspect James Maybrick and the inquest on the bodies of the wife and four children of another suspect, Frederick Deeming, discovered at Dinham Villa, Rainhill, in 1892.

The *Times* obituary on Brighouse, published on 16 January 1940, tells us that

*Sir Samuel, who was appointed coroner in 1884, had conducted about 25,000 inquests. He had been a solicitor for over 68 years... Born at Lathom [on 1 August 1849] and educated at Ormskirk Grammar School, he was admitted a solicitor in 1871 and founded the firm of Brighouse, Brighouse, and Jones, of which he remained the head for the remainder of his life. In the conduct of inquests he would never allow 'red tape' to hamper his determination to get at the truth, and sometimes his methods were a little unconventional.'*⁶

The *Times* stated number of 'about 25,000 inquests' hardly sounds credible though. In 56 years, there are a total of 20,454 days (56 years times 365 days adding 14 days extra for leap years) so that Brighouse would have had to have done more than one inquest a day every year, Sundays included! The Maybrick and Rainhill inquests alone took a number of days each, as did his enquiries into some industrial accidents. And we add to this the fact that as a county coroner, elected by freeholders, Samuel Brighouse was a part-time coroner! Yes, you heard correctly. Presumably the bulk of Brighouse's income came from his law firm and was the reason why he remained head of the Brighouse law firm all those years. In contesting the 1884 coroner's election which led to his initial appointment, Brighouse spent £1,400, three times the coroner's annual salary. In fact, author Gordon H H Glasgow, himself a retired coroner for the Lancashire metropolitan districts of Sefton, Knowsley, and St Helens, tells us that the part-time nature of the county coronerships, in contrast to borough or city coronerships in Liverpool or Manchester, failed to attract medical candidates because 'the possibility of an expensive contested election that would not be justified by the emoluments of the office.' Thus solicitors such as Samuel Brighouse and not doctors were the ones who contested and won the elections for the six part-time Lancashire county coronerships.⁷



Sir Samuel Brighouse. (From W Burnett Tracy, compiler, Lancashire at the Opening of the Twentieth Century: Contemporary Biographies. Brighton: W T Pike, 1903, L-6.)

2 Ibid.

3 See Robert Linford, David O'Flaherty, and John Savage, 'The Green of the Peak: The Coronial System.' *Ripperologist* 63, January 2006.

4 David O'Flaherty, private email to author, 22 April 2006.

5 Ibid.

6 'Sir Samuel Brighouse. A Coroner for Over 55 Years.' *The Times*, 16 January 1940.

7 Gordon H H Glasgow, 'The campaign for medical coroners in nineteenth-century England and its aftermath: a Lancashire focus on failure (Part I),' *Mortality*, Vol. 9, No. 2, May 2004:150-67.

While the full figure of 'about 25,000 inquests' might be doubted on a practical basis of simple time available to carry out that many inquests and to head up a law practice as well, it is nonetheless true that coroner Brighthouse in his long career handled many thousands of inquests large and small. Indeed, as county coroner for South-west Lancashire, he not only had involvement in famous murder cases and innumerable deaths by misadventure but a large number of industrial and railway accidents. Lancashire was one of the cradles of British industry, with the collieries of Wigan, for example, being part of Brighthouse's jurisdiction. His area comprised the subdivision of the county known as the hundred of West Derby, dating back to the Domesday Book of 1086, with the exception that Brighthouse was not responsible for the City of Liverpool which had its own coroner. Included thus in Brighthouse's care were such parishes as Walton, Sefton, Childwall, Huyton, Halsall, Altcar, North Meols, Ormskirk, Aughton, Warrington, Prescott, Leigh, Wigan, and Winwick, and also then outside the Liverpool city boundary, Aigburth and Garston - scene of the sensational Maybrick Case that burst on the world in May 11, 1889 with the untimely death of Liverpool cotton merchant James Maybrick. The same man who has been, in our time, named as a Jack the Ripper suspect on the basis of the controversial 'Maybrick Diary' and watch. A gentleman who, for all the world at large knew in 1889, was a perfectly 'innocent' man possibly poisoned to death by his pretty Alabama-born wife Florence Chandler Maybrick, 26 years his junior.

Brighthouse's Role in the Maybrick Case

Authors Anne E Graham and Carol Emmas, in *The Last Victim: The Extraordinary Life of Florence Maybrick the Wife of Jack the Ripper*, are critical of Brighthouse's handling of the inquest on Maybrick, when circumstantial evidence was introduced that appeared to point to the American-born Florie as being guilty of planning and executing the demise of her spouse in order to be with her lover, Alfred Brierley.⁸

Is it possible that as with Justice James Fitzjames Stephen's controversial instructions to the jury at the Lancashire Assizes at St George's Hall, Liverpool, three months later, coroner Brighthouse allowed his distaste of Florence's infidelity to influence his conduct of the inquest and his directions to his coroner's jury? Did James Maybrick's brothers, Michael and Edwin, who seemed to help to railroad proceedings against the young Alabama-born widow, bring pressure to bear on the Coroner for South-west Lancashire? Is it credible, as Graham and Emmas speculate, that successful musician Michael Maybrick (professional name Stephen Adams) used his masonic connections to 'influence the authorities, who, after having discovered adultery and opportunity, were now determined to find arsenic?'⁹

It may be noted that although Brighthouse had a long and notable career as a coroner, he was only four years in the job at that time of the Maybrick inquest and thus fairly fresh to his responsibilities as county coroner when he was presented with this very high profile and sensational case. The Maybrick case came upon the heels of another celebrated local case involving arsenic. In 1884, in Liverpool, two married sisters, Catherine Flanagan and Margaret Higgins, had been hanged for using arsenic from flypapers to murder to obtain life insurance money. And now here was another case in which a woman may have poisoned for gain or advantage. Brighthouse was a partner in a respected law firm and was also a steward for Lord Derby. Even if masonic connections meant little to the coroner, maintenance of the status quo and public order might have been important to him.



The young Florence Maybrick

8 Anne E Graham and Carol Emmas, *The Last Victim: The Extraordinary Life of Florence Maybrick the Wife of Jack the Ripper*. London: Headline Book Publishing, 1999, 87-88, 94-105.

9 Ibid., 96.

The first post mortem on Maybrick was conducted in the bedroom at the family home, Battlecrease House, 7 Riversdale Road, Aigburth, on Monday, 13 May, two days after the cotton merchant's death. The inquest was opened by Brighthouse on Tuesday at the Aigburth Hotel, about half a mile southeast along Aigburth Road from Battlecrease House. Michael Maybrick formally identified his brother's body. He also passed to Inspector Baxendale a number of Florence's letters. Brighthouse announced, 'The result of the post-mortem examination was that poison was found in the stomach of the deceased in such quantities as to justify further examination.' He then adjourned the inquest for a fortnight. Graham and Emmas note in protest, 'However, his [the coroner's] statement was completely untrue. No poison whatsoever had been found in James Maybrick's stomach during the post-mortem examination the previous day.'¹⁰ While the medical men agreed that the cotton merchant had died of an irritant poison they were unable to say if a poisonous substance or impure food had been involved.

The inquest resumed on Monday, 27 May at the Garston Reading Room, Wellington Road, Garston, although Florence herself, according to a doctor's note, was too ill to appear and remained in Walton jail. The room was packed with thirty to forty reporters along with a crowd of locals come to hear the Maybricks airing their dirty laundry. Brighthouse ordered that Maybrick's body in Anfield Cemetery be exhumed. The upshot was that although considerable arsenic was discovered in various bottles and containers in the house, the amount of arsenic actually found in Maybrick's body on the second post mortem was again negligible for a man who had allegedly received a fatal dose of arsenic. The subject of James Maybrick being an arsenic addict never came up at the coroner's inquest, incidentally, although Florence's defense barrister, Sir Charles Russell would raise the issue at the Assizes at St. George's Hall.

On the resumption of the enquiry on 5 June at the Garston Reading Room, as reported in *The Times* of 6 June, details of Florie's infidelity were revealed to a crowd of some 500 spectators packed into the room. For this session, Florie herself was in the library of the building and not visible to the public. Testimony was given to show that Florie and Brierley posed as 'Mr and Mrs T Maybrick' at Flatman's Hotel in London in March:



James Maybrick; colourisation by Jane Coram



*The Garston Reading Room, Wellington Road, Garston, Liverpool.
(Photograph courtesy of Kev Keegan.)*

Arthur B. Flatman, who had various addresses in London, including 82 Chapel street, Cavendish square, identified some letters and a telegram as having been received by him on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of March last.

After a discussion with Mr. Pickford [appearing for Mrs. Maybrick] and Mr. Mulholland [representing Mr. Brierley], the Coroner said - First of all the name of Mr. Mulholland's client [that is, Mr. Brierley], is not mentioned in the letters in any shape or form. They go to this, that the wife of the deceased communicates with the witness now before you by telegram and letters, and asserts that her sister in law and her husband - that is to say, Mr. and Mrs. T. Maybrick - are about to come to town, and as their agent she makes the necessary arrangements for their arrival. Bear in mind that the Grand National is on March 29, and Mrs. Maybrick returned on the 28th, Thursday. On the 16th, the Saturday before the Grand National, a

¹⁰ Ibid., 88.

telegram was sent; then a letter on the 18th, one on the 19th, and then a letter of no date; but the text of the letter shows it must have followed the one of the 19th, so I think you may take it that it was sent on the 20th. The telegram and letters came to this, that Mrs. Maybrick, the wife of the deceased, said - 'My brother in law and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. T. Maybrick, are coming to town. Can they stay in your house?' There is a reply, I presume, because arrangements are made for Mr. and Mrs. T. Maybrick to stay with the witness at the hotel.



60 Huskisson Street, Liverpool, the home of Florence Maybrick's lover, Alfred Brierley. (Photograph courtesy of Steve Horton.)

Mr. Mulholland - The jury understand that this gentleman keeps an hotel, and she occupied rooms. Having read these letters, did, on March 21, a lady present herself at your hotel? - I presume she did from my books. I have no other knowledge; I produce my books. I only know that someone, purporting to be Mrs. Maybrick, came to my house, and stayed there from the 21st to the 24th. Alfred Schweasal [Schweisso], head waiter at the hotel, stated that he remembered a lady, whom he understood to be Mrs. Maybrick, coming to the hotel on the afternoon of the 21st of March. She had with her a portmanteau and dressing bag. Witness [Schweisso] was sent into the library where Mrs. Maybrick was sitting and on returning into court stated that she was the person who came to the hotel. The day she arrived a young gentleman came to the house about half past six o'clock and took her out to dinner and to the theatre. Witness did not see her return to the hotel, and she said her husband was staying out late.

Superintendent Bryning - The next morning the 22nd had Mrs. Maybrick been joined by another person? - Yes, Mr. Maybrick.

What name did he give? - It was her husband, as far as I know.

They stayed at the hotel as man and wife, I understand? - Yes.

How long did they stay on those conditions? - From the Thursday to the Sunday morning, from the 21st to the 24th.

Do you mean they slept in the same bedroom? - Yes.

By the Coroner - The gentleman who called on the day of her arrival called the next morning to see Mrs. Maybrick, but she was not in, and he did not call any more.

Superintendent Bryning - And on the Friday morning you found a gentleman at the breakfast table who you believed to be the husband of the lady? - I saw him at the breakfast table. From that time up to the Sunday they lived together as man and wife.

Who is the gentleman? Have you seen him in this room?

Witness (standing) - To the best of my belief he is that gentleman there (pointing at Mr. A. Brierley).

This statement elicited some hissing, whereupon the Coroner said that if there was the slightest manifestation of feeling he would have the Court cleared.¹¹

In a letter dated 18 January 1890 to Scottish solicitor Alexander MacDougall, who wrote a book in defense of Mrs. Maybrick, the head waiter Alfred Schweisso repudiated his identification of Brierley at the coroner's inquest:

With regard to Mr. Brierley. Of course I should not have recognised him at all if it had not been for the police; but as I was for the prosecution I went by their orders, which I am sorry for now for they acted in a very shameful manner... I could not recognise him when he came; but a policeman came up and showed me where Mr. Brierley was... it was a regular got up job.¹²

The inquest was resumed on 6 June. Letters between Florie and Brierley were read out to the jury - including a key letter that Florie wrote to Brierley, intercepted by servant Alice Yapp, in which Florence told her lover that her husband was 'sick unto death' - and the medical and toxicological evidence was concluded. As reported in *The Times* of 7 June, Brighthouse said in part to the jury:

11 'The Aigburth Poisoning Case.' *The Times*, 6 June 1889. Available at www.casebook.org/press_reports/times/18890606.html

12 Quoted in Alexander William MacDougall, *The Maybrick Case: A Treatise*. London: Balliere Tyndall and Cox, 1891.

Now, although the object of your inquiry is to find out how and by what means Mr. Maybrick came by his death, the practical part of the inquiry is as to the connexion of Mrs. Maybrick with the death of the deceased, and as to whether on the evidence you can say she is criminally responsible for the death of her husband. The law presumes that every person is innocent until the contrary is proved; and we must take it that before the commencement of these proceedings, so far as you are concerned, Mrs. Maybrick was an innocent woman. In conclusion, he asked them three questions:- Did they believe that death resulted from the administration of an irritant poison; if so, by whom was the irritant poison administered; and if it was administered by Mrs. Maybrick, was it administered by her with an intent to take away life.

The jury retired to consider their verdict, and in 35 minutes returned into court.

The foreman, in reply to the Coroner, said that they were unanimously of opinion that death had resulted from an irritant poison, and 12 of the 13 were of opinion that the irritant poison had been administered to Mr. Maybrick with intent to take his life.

The Coroner - That means a verdict of 'wilful murder' against Mrs. Maybrick. (To the police.) Bring in Mrs. Maybrick.

Mrs. Maybrick, who during the afternoon had been detained at the Garston Police station, was then brought into court, and addressed by the Coroner as follows:- Florence Elizabeth Maybrick, the jury have inquired into the circumstances attending the death of your husband, and they have come to the conclusion that he has been wilfully murdered by you. I therefore commit you to the next Assizes to be held at Liverpool, there to take your trial upon that charge.¹³

Nasty Discoveries at Dinham Villa

The Rainhill murders committed by globe-trotting conman and bigamist Frederick Bailey Deeming proved to be another sensational case for the coroner from South-west Lancashire. Deeming had married Miss Emily Mather in Rainhill on 22 September 1891 two months after he had murdered his wife Marie and his four children, aged eight and under - one of them an infant. It is thought that he killed them with a native battle ax while they were in bed then slit their throats. He then buried their bodies and cemented them under the hearthstone of Dinham Villa. He even had the ghoulish temerity to hold a wedding banquet in the murder house. On 17 October, he and his new wife sailed for Australia. Two months later, on Christmas Eve, he murdered Emily and cemented her remains under the hearthstone of their Windsor, Melbourne, home. Unfortunately, the rocky ground of Melbourne proved not so conducive to concealing his crimes as the damp, rich earth of Rainhill would prove. After murdering Emily, Deeming traveled to Perth, Western Australia, under the alias of Baron Swanston. In this guise, one of his many pseudonyms, he proposed to another woman. Emily's remains were found in Melbourne on 3 March after a smell had been noticed in the house. The killer was arrested on 11 March 1892 and extradited to Victoria to stand trial. News of the finding of the remains in Windsor, Melbourne, buried in cement was telegraphed to England where inquiries into his movements were begun. Following a tip from a newsman, on 13 March, Superintendent Keighley of Widnes obtained permission to dig up the cement in Dinham Villa. Three days later, on 16 March, the five bodies were unearthed. With the still unsolved Whitechapel murders in the minds of reporters, and given Deeming's British connections, the press naturally theorised that he could have been Jack the Ripper:

The arrest of the man Deeming in Australia, and the disclosures of the various murders which are attributed to him have created the most profound sensation throughout the world. Greater interest is attached to the case as it is uncertain yet whether Deeming is not the veritable Jack the Ripper whose atrocities roused the public excitement to the highest pitch in 1888 -91.¹⁴

It seemed possible that Deeming might be brought back to Britain to be tried for the Rainhill murders, if not for the Ripper crimes - though in the end this never occurred and he was executed on 23 May 1892 in Melbourne gaol. It was against the background of his possible extradition to England that coroner Brighthouse viewed the remains of Mrs Deeming and her four young children on 17 March. The inquest was opened the following day. Extra telegraph lines had to be connected and twenty-two clerks especially hired to serve the needs of the journalists covering the inquest. Additional trains were added to serve the curious who came to Rainhill to attend the inquest and to peek at Dinham Villa. Seventeen witnesses were called, including Albert Deeming and his wife Martha with Albert emotionally identifying the bodies. Over ten thousand people that day lined the streets and crowded the cemetery to watch the funeral. The inquest found that Marie Deeming and her children had been willfully murdered by Frederick Bailey Deeming.

¹³ 'The Aigburth Poisoning Case.' *The Times*, 7 June 1889. Available at www.casebook.org/press_reports/times/18890607.html

¹⁴ 'The Liverpool and Australia Murders. Is Deeming "Jack the Ripper"?' *The Daily Gleaner*, 19 April 1892. Available at www.casebook.org/press_reports/daily_gleaner/920419.html

Was Frederick Bailey Deeming Jack the Ripper? John Godl has written:

Like so many Ripper suspects there is no irrefutable evidence to prove Frederick Deeming was Jack the Ripper, beyond an unwritten confession and many scurrilous claims by journalists. Who also accused him of vampirism, due to a conspicuous absence of blood in his victims and at the crime scenes.

Although the conduct of the press was frequently unethical it should be noted their sleuthing evidently played a part in the discovery of the Rainhill murders, a London journalist acting on details from Australia having followed the clues to Dinham Villa before the police arrived. Informing Mrs Mather of her daughter's tragic death, before prompting local authorities to excavate the cement floor of Deeming's former home.

Besides problems posed by his speculative movements at the time of the Whitechapel murders, there is also a significant disparity in the modus operandi of the killings.

Jack the Ripper was an opportunist, a predator he stalked the dark streets of Whitechapel and killed at random, where and when a victim presented herself. Grotesquely mutilating his victims he made no attempt to conceal the crimes, leaving the bodies where they fell. Whereas Deeming's murders were the antithesis, and he had a motive for his crimes. He murdered his first wife Marie because she was blackmailing him, childhood sweethearts, she used her knowledge of his past to extort financial support from him.¹⁵



Frederick Bailey Deeming.

'Killed by Electricity'

A tall granite marker in the graveyard of St James Roman Catholic Church in Orrell, near Wigan, memorializes one family's pain and, by implication, another inquest by coroner Brighthouse marked by controversy:

Sacred Heart of Jesus have Mercy on the Soul of John T. Alker of Winstanley. Killed by electricity June 24th 1898, Aged 21 years.¹⁶

At the time of his death, John Thomas Alker was a mining student with J and R Stone's Park Collieries, Garswood, Ashton-in-Makerfield, around four miles from his home. He descended the shaft of the Number One Pit on the morning of 24 June with mining surveyor Frederick McGill and two colliery firemen to help them carry out an inspection. The men reached the 'pit bottom' shortly before 10.45a.m. Then, in order to get their eyes accustomed to the bright underground electrical lighting which had been installed only two days earlier, the men stepped into the underlooker's cabin, which contained the control panel for the lighting and the electrical pumping systems. After about half an hour, McGill and the firemen left the cabin, and started along the roadway. Finding John Alker was not with them, McGill started back and saw the stricken Alker's head and shoulders leaning out of the cabin doorway. The young man was still holding one of the switches in the control panel. The mining supervisor called to the others that Alker had been 'stuck fast with the electricity.' They threw the main switch turning off the electricity and Alker fell dead.¹⁷

They conveyed the body to the surface and a doctor was summoned who pronounced the young man dead and the police were called to the scene in the shape of PC Grantham of Ashton-in-Makerfield. Standard procedure should have been that the deceased should have been conveyed to the nearest public house, and the coroner's jury summoned to view the body. Arrangements would then be made for an inquest at a later date at the same premises. However, the distressed father of the young man, Robert Alker, arrived at the colliery and demanded to take his son's corpse home with him. Over PC Grantham's protestations and warnings that the body could not be removed without the coroner's consent and order, Mr Alker transported his son's body away from the colliery in a horse-drawn brake provided by the colliery manager.

¹⁵ John Godl, 'The Life and Crimes of Frederick Bailey Deeming. Available at www.casebook.org/dissertations/dst-deeming.html

¹⁶ Quoted in Michael Finney, 'Killed by Electricity.' *Past Forward* (Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust) 40 July-November 2005, 6-7. Available at www.wlct.org/Culture/Heritage/pf40.pdf

¹⁷ All information on the Alker case is from Finney, 'Killed by Electricity.'



Maypole Colliery Disaster, Ahram, Wigan, 18 August 1908.
(Contemporary postcard.)

When the inquest on Alker was convened by Brighouse three days later on the morning of 27 June at the Railway Hotel in Orrell, he made very clear his displeasure with the irregular moving of the body without his say so. He voiced his concern about the irregularity of the occurrence to PC Grantham, the attending policeman on the day of the accident:

I want some explanation as to how it came about that the deceased's body has been removed out of the township of Ashton into the township of Orrell without my consent. I have been told that the deceased's father insisted on removing the body to Orrell. I have been informed that the colliery manager also approved of them being removed. What is the result? The body was removed into the township of Orrell, and the gentlemen of that township have to inquire into the cause of death, when the jury of Ashton ought to have done so. All this inconvenience has been caused by an illegal and irregular action. They might as well have removed the body to London. I quite appreciate and sympathise with the parents wishing the body to be removed home, I would have done so as well, but certain formalities have to be gone through before that can be done, and they could have removed the deceased the same day, if they had communicated with me.¹⁸

Grantham replied that he had warned Mr Alker of the illegality of his actions, to which Brighouse remarked acidly: 'if it occurs again after this explanation, I shall have the body taken back into the township, and then it won't be done again I know.'

Mine surveyor McGill stated that there was no reason for the mining student to go to the electrical panel. The fireman who had turned off the power said that while Alker's hand held the insulated switch with thumb and forefinger, three fingers were touching the live metalwork below the switch. Brighouse summed up the case for the jury:

It is not my rule to order a post mortem examination unless it is absolutely necessary for the enquiry. As far as the immediate cause of death is concerned, your duty seems to be purely formal. That is the lad died from the result of an electric shock received from the switchboard. You are entitled to take into consideration the circumstances under which he received the shock, and if you have a suggestion which would tend to preserve life in the future, you will be entitled to add that suggestion.¹⁹

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death. True to Brighouse's request for them to make suggestions on how to prevent any further such deaths, the jurymen recommended that in future switch boards should be operated by one authorised person. They also suggested that all live components be 'boxed in', and that the switch handles better insulated.

More Horrendous Deaths

As author Michael Finney observed in writing about the Alker tragedy, 'There is a terrible irony in the fact that the unfortunate John Thomas Alker met his death by way of a medium only recently introduced to his colliery as a safety measure.' However, as Finney also noted, 'The Lancashire mining industry claimed many hundreds of lives. Roof falls, flooding and gas explosions were only three of the many ways a man could lose his life in this most dangerous of industries.'²⁰

Thus Brighouse was on hand ten years later for an inquest after an explosion on 18 August 1908 at the Maypole Colliery at Ahram, Wigan, killed seventy-six miners. Only seven bodies were ever recovered but the coroner's jury met for a total of twenty-three sessions through July 1909 as the work of trying to recover the remains of the buried miners continued.

The consensus among the witnesses was that the tragedy was the result of an ignition of gas. His Majesty's Inspector of Mines, Mr Hall, outlined the likeliest causes of this, the most obvious being either a blown-out shot or a defective lamp. Letters were received from around the country blaming the Marsaut safety lamp. One correspondent cited 'the threads in the base fitment [which] wear, allowing gas to travel along the threads' while another suggested a defect caused by corrosion of the pillars supporting the glass, and thus destroying the air-tight fit.

Throughout the hearings, coroner Brighouse dueled with Mr Walsh, the representative of the Miners' Lodge. Brighouse upbraided Walsh for repeating questions which the coroner felt had been satisfactorily answered already, and for wasting the court's time. For his part, Walsh accused the coroner of trying to silence him. When the inquest finally closed on 8 July 1909, the coroner took an hour to sum up, and the jury spent six hours deliberating. In the end, they were unanimous in all their findings:

1. The men died from an explosion caused by a mixture of coal dust and gas, fired by a shot using a permitted explosive and into which too much trust was placed. The supervision during the manager's absence was slack.
2. It appears that due precaution had not previously been taken by some of the men whose lives had been lost.
3. That it was possible that some of the men may have been willing to work in dangerous conditions in order to make 'easy' money.
4. Firemen should not be expected to fire shots as well, but there should always be a man doing the job exclusively.
5. There should be more mines' inspectors.
6. There should be a rule limiting the number of people down a pit when shots are fired.
7. Floors should be swept as well as watered to keep down the dust.²¹

'Inadequate Mortuaries'

Another activist role that Brighouse played was to urge an upgrade of mortuaries in the smaller rural communities of the district he served. As with the woeful conditions of temporary morgues in the East End of London at the time of the Whitechapel murders, many of them being mere sheds, a similar situation pertained in regard to some mortuaries in Lancashire. Indeed, it is somewhat appalling to realise that even in the last few years of his life, the old coroner was still complaining about conditions of mortuaries in his jurisdiction. The following short article from *The British Journal of Nursing* of January 1935 bears quoting in full. Once more the feistiness of Brighouse is in full evidence as he had the strength of will and courage to face up to the Chief Constable of Lancashire in ordering two mortuaries closed over the police official's objection:

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Finney, 7.

21 'Maypole Colliery Disaster 1908' on *This Is Lancashire* website at www.communicate.co.uk/lancs/acl/page3.phtml

Complaint of the inadequate and sometimes even disgusting accommodation at mortuaries outside the London district is, says The Lancet, by no means rare. Decency and humanity require that the place where relatives are brought for the purpose of identifying a dead body should not offend by its unsuitability. Public health standards demand that local authorities should make proper provision and that post-mortem examinations should be conducted in circumstances of reasonable convenience. On Dec. 22nd the Doncaster district coroner, Mr. W. H. Carlile, condemned the mortuary in Thorne old workhouse. A few days later Sir Samuel Brighouse, the coroner for South-West Lancashire, described the Aintree mortuary as a dirty, disreputable outhouse. The police surgeon described the place as little better than a cart-shed: there was no table and no supply of warm water; the little bowl was filthy and not fit for anyone to wash his hands in; the walls were dirty. His box of instruments, he said, had to be left on the floor or put down on the ground outside. The mortuary slab was the kind of slab which was in common use 50 years ago. The coroner gave orders that the Aintree mortuary should be closed and not used even as a resting-place for bodies. He observed that the Chief Constable of Lancashire had objected to his action in closing the mortuaries at Aintree and Maghull, but he himself was not disposed to accept this officer's dictation in such a matter.

The condition of many public mortuaries is a scandal to which we are glad to see coroners drawing attention, but one most important phase is that to which the British College of Nurses drew attention in 1931, and which received sympathetic attention from many coroners, but by no means all, namely that of the lack of provision for the care and handling of the bodies of women by women attendants. It is incredible, in these days that such provision should not be made, and it should not be longer delayed.²²

Death of the Old Coroner

Brighouse was knighted in 1934 for his long service. In January 1935, he and his wife, the former Catherine Woods Lyon, daughter of Edward Woods Lyon of Aughton, Lancashire, celebrated their golden wedding. According to his obituary in *The Times*, Sir Samuel Brighouse 'died in bed [on 15 January 1940] with his diary and notebook open in front of him and his fountain pen in his hand... He had seven children (three sons and four daughters), 17 grand-children, and 13 great-grand-children.' At the time of his death, his eldest son, Robert Wales Brighouse, was serving as deputy coroner for Ormskirk.²³

As if to show how mundane the duties of a coroner could often be, six months after his father's death, on 3 June, the younger Brighouse held a 'treasure trove inquest' in the matter of a gold sovereign found by a schoolboy. A month later, on 8 July it was reported that Cornelius Bolton, Assistant Deputy County Coroner for the West Derby district, a partner in Brighouse, Jones, and Co., solicitors, Ormskirk, was appointed Coroner for West Derby district in succession to the late Sir Samuel Brighouse.²⁴

Acknowledgements

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²² 'Inadequate Mortuaries.' *The British Journal of Nursing*, January 1935, 18.

²³ 'Sir Samuel Brighouse. A Coroner for Over 55 Years.' *The Times*, 16 January 1940. Also, 'Samuel Brighouse' in W Burnett Tracy, compiler, *Lancashire at the Opening of the Twentieth Century: Contemporary Biographies*. Brighton: W T Pike, 1903, L-6.

²⁴ Local chronology 1939-1940. Wiganworld www.wiganworld.co.uk/stuff/chronology10.php?opt=chrono&yr=1940



Sir Samuel Brighouse (1849-1940) photographed in the later years of his life

Apple Fritters and Sarsaparilla

by JANE CORAM

When I was a kid, my grandad used to have a second-hand clothing stall on Kingsland Road Waste, a general market in the East End. The highlight of the day was a trip to buy a bag of piping hot apple fritters, sprinkled with caster sugar—without a doubt the finest dessert ever created.

True, the oil had probably not been changed since 1888, but it didn't seem to make much difference; those apple fritters, washed down with a glass of sarsaparilla, were sublime. Sarsaparilla came in three colours—not flavours, just colours—red, yellow and green. They were supposedly fruit cordials, although it's quite certain they had never even seen sight of a raspberry, lemon or lime, let alone been contaminated by any actual juice—but drunk hot or cold, it was surprisingly delicious. Red teeth and tongue were a small price to pay for such nectar. They still had the old horse-drawn sarsaparilla wagons even in the 1950s; poor old Dobbin patiently standing there all day harnessed to the brightly coloured wagons come rain or shine. Back in Jack's day, congregating around the sarsaparilla or lemonade wagon was a social event, enjoyed by all, a place to put the world to rights and while away a warm Sunday afternoon.

Back in the Victorian era, apples were used for a plethora of delicacies. The apples were sold in penny- or halfpenny-worths, and of course could be bought by the poor who had a spare penny and they were often eaten straight off the barrow. Roasted apples were at one time very popular, but had fallen out of favour by the 1880s, to be replaced by other apple-based naughty-but-nice things like toffee apples. Any poor excuse for an apple could be used to create this teeth-shattering confection, impaled on a rough square stick and coated in mahogany sugar glass—a good way for a trader to get rid of apples that had more wrinkles than Granny Smith herself. Then, of course, there were apple dumplings, apple muffins and apple pies—in fact a list so long that it's no wonder the English had to start importing apples from France to keep up with demand. They were a bit of a luxury, but even the poorest of souls would find the penny they needed to buy a bag of apple fritters from time to time. The poorest could often get a bag of the bits of batter and fragments of fritter that had fallen off for almost nothing, and there would usually be a long line of kids hanging around the stall hoping for some scraps.

Apples were in plentiful supply for much of the year, one of the few fruits that could be stored for months. The sale of apples was big business back in the Late Victorian period, with a fair bit of profit to be made in their buying and selling. I never realised until recently how the costermonger acquired his title. Quite simply it was because they originally sold Costard apples.

A costermonger was, strictly speaking, a man who took fruit and vegetables around streets in a cart or barrow for sale. They sold about half of their apples to the general public in penny or halfpenny measures, and only a few to households and shops. There was obviously a great deal of munching on the East End streets at the time. The traders who carried oranges, chestnuts, walnuts, or Spanish nuts around the streets of London were not considered costermongers, but were generally classed by the regular men with the watercress-women, the sprat-women, the winkle dealer, and such others, whom they generally considered beneath them. Oh the ignominy of being a winkle-seller.

This class system amongst the costers was quite rigid. One-half of the entire class generically called costers were costermongers proper, the business passed down from father to son, and jealously guarded as a business sometimes for many generations. The other half was comprised of three-eighths those of Irish origin, and one-eighth mechanics, tradesmen, and Jews.

It's hard to envisage, looking back, how great the animosity was between true costermongers and those who used the title without having the right to do so. It's not hard to see why Joe Barnett had such a struggle making ends meet after he lost his job in Billingsgate Market, and took up as a casual orange-seller. The wages made selling oranges were a paltry sum compared to the lucrative trade of selling fresh fruit and vegetables from a barrow, not to mention the

indignity of having to admit you were an orange- or nut-seller. Of course, there was already something of a fruit war going on between the Irish orange-sellers and the Jewish contingency in the area. Up until the flood of Irish immigrants that came to Britain following the Irish Potato famine, Jewish youngsters more or less had the monopoly on orange selling in the streets, and did rather well at it, thank you. Their supremacy as orange-peddlers took a serious turn for the worse when the Irish arrived on the scene and took over. The Irish orange-sellers still bought their stock from the Jewish merchants, but I don't think they were ever on the best of terms after that. The sellers of oranges and nuts were generally Irish; in fact, the orange season was said by the costermonger to be the poor Irishman's harvest. The regular costermonger dealt in every other kind of green and dry fruit. Their fruit they usually bought at Covent Garden, Spitalfields, or the Borough markets.

The orange- and nut-sellers would buy their stock from the Orange Market in Duke's place which was adjacent to Mitre Square, and it was a thriving community at the time. It was run entirely by Jewish businessmen from their homes, which they opened up twice a week to supply wholesalers, and many of the street traders favoured it because they found they could get better deals there than going to Covent Garden or Spitalfields. This market was known by the name of "Duke's-place," although its proper title was St. James'-place. Of course as they only sold oranges and nuts, the costermongers proper never set foot there. It was reserved exclusively for the poorer itinerant Irish orange-sellers.

It's perhaps hard for some of us today to imagine just how those streets of Whitechapel and Spitalfields must have been back in 1888—a cacophony of street-vendor cries, of sizzling pans and coffee stalls with clusters of people hanging around them; of pie- and muffin-sellers, apple fritters and sarsaparilla wagons, a mingling mass of sights and sounds and smells and tastes, all crammed into streets so tightly packed that you were constantly shoulder to shoulder with your companion, jostling for space. The hygiene might have left something to be desired, but the food on offer there certainly took some beating.

Here is my recipe for apple fritters. Hope you enjoy them.

Jane Coram's East End Apple Fritters

The fritters should be eaten very hot to get the best out of them, so get everyone lined up with their plates before you start cooking.



Ingredients (serves 4)

3 Medium Cooking apples, peeled and cored
50 Gram Plain flour (2 oz)
Pinch Salt
1 Teaspoon Icing sugar (confectioners' sugar in the USA), sifted
4 Tablespoon Water, lukewarm
2 Teaspoon Butter, melted
1 Egg white
Oil or fat, for deep frying
Icing sugar, for dredging, sifted
Optional: Fresh cream to serve

Method

Cut the apples into 0.5 cm (1/4 inch) thick rings. No need to get the ruler out, you're allowed to guess. Sift the flour and salt into a bowl.

Add the sugar. Gradually mix to a thick, smooth batter with the water and butter. Whisk the egg white to a stiff snowy consistency. It should stand up in peaks when it's ready when you pull the whisker out.. Fold gently into the flour mixture. Coat the apple rings with the batter. Fry in deep hot fat or oil for 2-3 minutes or until golden. The oil does need to be very hot, or the batter soaks up too much oil, so not a good time to answer the phone. Remove from the pan and drain on absorbent kitchen paper. Dredge thickly with sifted icing sugar and serve as soon as you can. Delicious served with whipped cream.

Sources: *London Labour and the London Poor*; 1851, 1861-2; Henry Mayhew; *Toilers in London*, by One of the Crowd [James Greenwood], [1883] - Covent Garden Market; *Cassell's Household Guide*, New and Revised Edition (4 Vol.) c.1880s [no date]; *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*, by Isabella Beeton, 1861 - Recipes - Chapter 29 - Creams, Jellies, Soufflés, Omelets, & Sweet Dishes.

CHRIS SCOTT's

Press Trawl

North Eastern Daily Gazette
3 October 1888

Yesterday a representative of the Central News interviewed two eminent physicians for the purpose of ascertaining whether they could throw any useful light on the East End murders.

Sir James Risdon Bennett, of Cavendish square West, in the course of a conversation with the reporter, said:

I have no desire to promulgate any theory in reference to these murders. My purpose in writing to The Times the other day was simply to demonstrate the absurdity of the theory that the crimes were being committed for the purpose of supplying an American physiologist with uteruses. I cannot believe for a moment that any compensation has been given out for the collection of uteruses. It would be extremely easy, here or in America either, for a physiologist to acquire this portion of the intestine. All he would have to do would be to apply to the public hospitals where there are always many paupers or unclaimed persons who are made the subjects of experiments, and his demands would be easily met. Supposing, for instance, that a specialist proposed to operate in the theatre of his hospital upon the uterus. He would communicate with the surgeon, who would have no difficulty in providing him with a sufficient number of specimens for all his purposes. The notion that the uteruses were washed in order that they might be sent out along with copies of a medical publication is ridiculous, not only ridiculous, indeed, but absolutely impossible of realisation. I attach no importance whatever to that. If one sane man had instructed another sane man to procure a number of specimens of the uterus, the means followed would have been very different from that which has been pursued in these cases. The murderer has run a fearful and quite unnecessary risk. The mutilations are to a great extent wanton, and would not assist him in the accomplishment of his intention. My impression is that the miscreant is a homicidal maniac. He has a specific delusion, and that delusion is erotic. Of course, we have at the moment very little evidence indeed - in fact, I may say that we have no evidence at all - as to the state of the man's mind, except as far as it is suggested by the character of the injuries which he has inflicted upon his victims. I repeat that my impression is that he is suffering under an erotic delusion but it may be that he is a religious fanatic. It is possible that he is labouring under the delusion that he has a mandate from the Almighty to purge the world of prostitutes, and, in the prosecution of his mad theory, he has determined upon a crusade against the unfortunates of London, whom he seeks to mutilate by deprivation of the uterus. There are, on the other hand, a number of theories which might be speculated upon as to the particular form that his mania takes, but inasmuch as we have no knowledge of the man himself, but only of the characteristics which surround the commission of his crimes wherewith to guide us, I have come to the conclusion that his delusion has relevance to matters of a social character. The two crimes which were perpetrated yesterday morning do not lead me to modify my opinion that the assassin is a lunatic. Even if it should transpire that in the case of the Mitre square victim the uterus is missing, I should not be disposed to favour what I may call the American theory in the slightest degree, and I must confess that it was with considerable surprise that I noticed in certain newspapers a disposition so readily to accept the theory which the Coroner who investigated the circumstances attending the murder of the woman Chapman first suggested. It is my opinion that if any person wanted a number of specimens of the uterus and was himself a man possessed of surgical skill he would himself undertake to acquire them rather than employ an agent. No love of gain could possibly induce a sane man to commit such atrocities as these, and, besides this, there is the circumstance remaining as I have previously said, that they might all be secured at the Medical Institutes either of England or America - that is to say, if they were needed for legitimate purposes

- practically without any consideration at all. It has been said, and it is a very natural observation, that if the murderer were a lunatic he could not commit these crimes and escape with impunity. That is a comment which any person not fully acquainted with the peculiarities of lunatic subjects might very well make. In my view, however, the extraordinary cunning which is evinced by the homicide is a convincing proof of his insanity. No sane man could have escaped in just the same fashion as this man seems to have done. He must almost necessarily have betrayed himself. It is a matter of common knowledge, however, amongst "mad doctors" that lunatics display a wonderful intelligence, if it may be called so, in their criminal operations, and I have little doubt that if the murderer were other than a madman he would ere this have been captured by the police. In many instances a madman's delusion is directed to only one subject, and he is mad upon that subject alone. I doubt, however, that the murderer of these women is other than a man suffering from acute mania, and, that being so, his infirmity would be obvious to almost every person with whom he came into contact; that is to say, if he were in the presence of either of us we should probably say, "Oh, he's a madman." There are many instances in which the common test is for the doctor to enter into conversation with the suspect, to touch upon a variety of topics, and then as if by accident to mention the matters in regard to which the patient has a special delusion. Then, the person's madness is manifested, although upon every other point he converses rationally. But here the disease is mental, and I should say that the persons with whom he comes into daily contact cannot regard him as a sane person. Dr. Phillip (sic) has stated that the injuries inflicted upon these women have been apparently performed by a person possessing some anatomical knowledge. That is likely enough, but would not a butcher be quite capable of treating the body in this way? Since I wrote my letter to the Times I have received several communications in support of my view. One of these comes from the Bishop of Hertford, who agrees me that the theory of the American physiologist has no claims to credit. I wish to have it understood that my only desire is to remove from the public mind the false impression that has been made by the suggestion that a member of the medical profession is more or less responsible for these murders. I have never believed in that theory, and these two last murders confirm me in the opinion that they are the work of a man suffering from acute mania, to whom the ordinary rules of manner and procedure do not apply.

R. WINSLOW'S OPINION "A MONOMANIAC WITH A LUST FOR BLOOD"

Dr. Forbes Winslow, the eminent specialist in lunacy cases, said to the representative of the Central News:-

I am more certain than ever that these murders are committed by a homicidal maniac, and there is no moral doubt in my mind that the assassin in each case is the same man. I have carefully read the reports in the morning papers, and they confirm me in the opinion that I had previously formed, while I am clearly of opinion that the murderer is a homicidal lunatic. I also believe him to be a monomaniac; and I see no reason why he should not - excepting at the periods when the fit is upon him - exhibit a cool and rational exterior. I have here in my book - a work on physiology - a case, in which a man had a lust for blood as in this case; and he was generally a person of bland and pleasant exterior. In all probability the whole of the murders have been committed by the same hand, but I may point out that the imitative faculty is very strong in persons of unsound mind, and that is the reason why there has been a sort of epidemic of knives. We shall probably find that a good many knives will be displayed to people within the next few weeks. Still, all the evidence that is forthcoming up to the present moment show clearly enough that the Whitechapel crimes have been perpetrated by the same hand. My idea is that, under the circumstances, the police ought to employ for the protection of the neighbourhood, and with a view of detecting the criminal, a number of officers who have been in the habit of guarding lunatics - that is to say, warders from asylums, and other persons who had charge of the insane. These men, if properly disposed in the neighbourhood, would assuredly note any person of unsound mind. I have sent a letter embodying this suggestion to Sir Charles Warren, but I have received only a formal communication acknowledging its receipt. It is not easy to prevail upon the police to accept a suggestion from outside sources. This discovered the other day when a man, in imitation of the Whitechapel murderer, drew a knife and sharpened it in the presence of a relative of mine at Brighton in circumstances which have been published in the newspapers. When I made a statement to the police on that occasion they thought very little of it indeed. I attach not the least importance to the American physiologist story. It is a theory which is utterly untenable, and I should think there were very few medical men who ever entertained it seriously. All that has recently happened appears to me to be strong confirmation of the views which I have previously given upon this subject - that the murderer is a homicidal monomaniac of infinite cunning, and I fear he will not be brought to justice unless he be caught while engaged in the commission of one of his awful crimes.

PROMPT ACTION OF THE LONDON CORPORATION A REWARD OF £500

Mr. Phillips, member of the Common Council of London, gave notice of his intention to move at the next Council meeting that the Corporation offer a reward of £500 for the detection of the murderer of the woman found in Mitre square, which is within the City precincts. This has, however, been anticipated by the Lord mayor, who has, on behalf of the Corporation, issued an offer of £500 reward for the apprehension of the criminal.

SHOWING THE HOME SECRETARY HIS DUTY

The feeling of indignation against the Home Secretary for not offering a reward has immensely increased since the discovery of the last two murders. The following practical letter has been forwarded to the Home Office:-

The Financial News

London, October 1st, 1888.

Sir,

In view of your refusal to offer a reward out of the Government funds for the discovery of the perpetrator or perpetrators of the recent murders in the East End of London, I am instructed on behalf of several readers of the Financial News, whose names and addresses I enclose, to forward you the accompanying cheque for £500, and to request you to offer that sum for this purpose in the name of the Government.

Awaiting the favour of your reply,

I have the honour to be

Your obedient servant

Harry H. Marks

To the Right Hon. Henry Matthews, Q.C., M.P.

MR. MATTHEWS DECLINES TO OFFER A REWARD

To this the following reply was received:-

October 1st 1888.

My Dear Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Matthews to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, containing a cheque for £500, which you say has been contributed on behalf of several readers of the Financial News, and which you are desirous should be offered as a reward for the discovery of the recent murders in the East End of London. If Mr. Matthews had been of opinion that the offer of a reward in these cases would have been attended by useful result he would himself have at once made such an offer; but he is not of that opinion. Under these circumstances I am directed to return you the cheque, which I enclose, and to thank you and the gentlemen whose names you have forwarded for the liberality of their offer, which Mr. Matthews much regrets he is unable to accept.

I am, sir, your very obedient servant,

E. Leigh Pemberton.

Harry H. Marks Esq.

ANOTHER REWARD

Colonel Sir Alfred Kirby, J.P., the officer commanding the Tower Hamlets Battalion, Royal Engineers, has offered, on behalf of his officers, a reward of £100 to be paid to anyone who may give information that will lead to the discovery and conviction of the perpetrator or perpetrators of the recent murders committed in the district in which his regiment is situated. Sir Alfred Kirby has also expressed his willingness to place the services of fifty members of his corps at the disposal of the authorities to be used in any way they may consider desirable at this juncture, either for the protection of the public or the detection of the criminals.

THE WHITECHAPEL AUTHORITIES DEMAND MORE POLICE

A meeting of the Whitechapel District Board of Works was held last evening. Mr. Catmur said he thought the Board, as the local authority, should express their horror and abhorrence of the crimes which had been perpetrated in the district. The result of these tragedies had been loss of trade to the district and the stoppage of certain trades by reason of the women being afraid to pass through the streets without an escort. The inefficiency of the police was shown by the fact that but an hour or two later than the tragedies in Berner street and Mitre square the post office in the vicinity had been broken into and much property stolen. The Rev. Daniel Greatorex said the emigrants' houses of call were

feeling the panic to such an extent that emigrants refused to locate themselves in Whitechapel even temporarily. He asserted the inefficiency of the police in the frequent changes of the police from one district to another, whereby the men were kept ignorant of their beats. Mr. Teller said he hoped that these recent crimes might result in a reversion to the old system by which constables were acquainted with every corner of their beats. Mr. G.T. Brown suggested that the Government should be communicated with rather than the Home Secretary or the Chief Commissioner of Police, who were themselves really on their trial. Mr. Caramanelli(?) said the changes in the condition of Whitechapel in recent years would suggest an entire reversion of the police arrangements. Whitechapel was now a place for the residuum of the whole country and the Continent, but it was not so a century ago. After further discussion the following resolution was carried, on the motion of Mr. Catmur, seconded by Mr. Bonham:-

"That this Board regrets with horror and alarm the several atrocious murders recently perpetrated within the district of Whitechapel and its vicinity; and calls upon Sir Charles Warren so to locate and strengthen the police force in the neighbourhood as to guard against any repetition of such atrocities; and that the Home Secretary be addressed in the same terms."

THE RECENT BUTCHERY OF WOMEN IN TEXAS ARE THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS BY THE SAME HAND?

A few months ago a series of remarkable brutal murders of women occurred in Texas. The matter caused an amount of local excitement, but aroused less interest than would otherwise have been the case because the victims were chiefly Negro women. The crimes were characterised by the same brutal methods as those of the Whitechapel murders. The theory has been suggested that the perpetrator of the latter may be the Texas criminal, who was never discovered. *The Atlanta Constitution*, a leading Southern newspaper, thus puts the argument:-

"In our recent annals of crime there has been no other man capable of committing such deeds. The mysterious crimes in Texas have ceased. They have just commenced in London. Is the man from Texas at the bottom of them all? If he is the monster or lunatic, he may be expected to appear anywhere. The fact that he no longer at work in Texas argues his presence elsewhere. His peculiar line of work was executed in precisely the same manner as now in London. Why would he not be there? The more one thinks of it the more irresistible becomes the conviction that it is the man from Texas. In these days of steam and cheap travelling, distance is comparatively nothing. The man who would kill a dozen women in Texas would not mind the inconvenience of a trip across the water, and once there he would not have any scruples about killing more women. The superintendent of the New York police admits the possibility of this theory being correct, but he does not, however, think it probable. "There is," he says, "the same brutality and mutilation, the same suspicion that the criminal is a monster or lunatic who has declared war literally to the knife against all womankind; but I hardly believe it is the same individual."

Here is what Carlyle wrote on the condition of London forty years ago:

"Thirty thousand wretched women, sunk in that putrefying well of abominations; they have oozed in upon London from the universal Stygian quagmire of British industrial life; are accumulated in the well of the concern, to that extent. British charity is smitten to the heart at the laying bare of such a scene; passionately undertakes, by enormous subscription of money, or by other enormous effort, to redress that individual horror; as I and all men hope it may. But, alas! what next? This general well and cesspool once baled clean out today will begin before night to fill itself anew. The universal Stygian quagmire is still there; opulent in women ready to be ruined, and in men ready. Towards the same sad cesspool will these waste currents of human ruin ooze and gravitate as heretofore; except in draining the universal quagmire itself there is no remedy."

Only that the evil has become vastly larger in extent, and in some respects viler in character, these words are as correctly descriptive of London today as they were in 1850, the time they were written. What Carlyle terms the "universal quagmire," and which in plainer prose is the general character and tendency of English life, must undergo real change before we can be free from these pestilential social deposits. And is it not because this is not being accomplished that all the philanthropic work of self denying men and women toiling with most praiseworthy and beautiful endeavour to "bale out the cesspool" fails in its purpose? The little bit of vacuum left when some have been rescued is speedily filled, and the weltering mass continues to enlarge. Unless we had a very good case against him, it would be ridiculous on such a subject to contradict a reformer so experienced, so kindly disposed, and as able as "S.G.O." But when he speaks of what he calls "this human sewage" as the result mainly of bad physical surroundings to be found in the low parts of our towns and cities he forgets that the physical conditions are to a great extent created by the persons who go there; that the surroundings and the people are mutually suitable; and that if not the question still is - What causes so much degraded humanity to "ooze" into or settle down in the midst of such loathsome surroundings? While these causes remain in full force in myriads of little poisonous springs in the invisible region of thought and

feeling and habit engendered by our mode of living the evil, we repeat, must continue. "Is Philip dead?" asked the Athenians. "If Philip were dead," replied Demosthenes, "your conduct would soon produce another." many changes are unquestionably necessary in the lodging houses and streets; but if these changes were made tomorrow, and nothing else done in purifying and elevating our general life, the changes would all be in vain.

That this would be the case ought to be clear enough from the fact that what is peculiar in the licentiousness of a Whitechapel neighbourhood is not its wickedness, but its poverty and misery. It is lust plus want. If there were no such thing as lust plus riches one might suppose that healthy, well furnished houses, with "regular meals" would alone suffice to renovate society and ennoble character. But with our knowledge of the Divorce Court is it possible to deny that there is as much vice in the purlieu of Belgravia as in the alleys of Whitechapel or in Bethnal Green? The fashionable square may require the apostle of social purity quite as much as the veriest slum; but in the fashionable square vice is seen "leaning back on a brilliant sofa, supported by many cushions, and great personages with blue ribbons hang on her animated and inspiring accents." What shocks us in her sister at the East End is not the wickedness, but the accessories of want, misery, and coarse vulgarity. But the moral and social leprosy is the same in the Marquis of Steyne in Gaunt House as it is in any "Leather Apron" in an East End eightpenny lodging house. The differences are simply accidental and local, while there is absolute sameness in the disease. Why, then, should it be thought that cleaner streets and better ventilated dwellings would be like a miraculous dip in Jordan to poor "Leather Apron" when they have not produced the slightest improvement in the Marquis of Steyne? Be it understood that we would improve all physical surroundings to every possible degree. But the truth is that while our mode of life fosters what is low and hard animalism will come out in all classes. With the rich it will be concealed or draped, and so adorned that it will not make us turn away in loathsome pity; with the outcast and the poor it will associate itself with every form of misery and repulsive horror. And the cure for it in both types is such a change of sentiment, such an awakening of conscience as will cause men to place before them higher and purer ideals.

THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS THE POLICE STILL AT FAULT EXTRAORDINARY AFFAIR IN A CHURCH

The Whitechapel authorities are still matters of speculation, nothing leading to the discovery of the perpetrator or perpetrators having been discovered yesterday. The police are still busy with suggested clues, but so far without success; and the resumed inquest on Elizabeth Stride yesterday revealed very little. The name of the Mitre square victim is supposed to be Kelly. A parcel was found yesterday at the works for the erection of the new police headquarters which contained the dismembered trunk of a woman. This is believed to have some connection with what is known as the Pimlico mystery. Full particulars will be found in another column.

ALARM AT WOOD GREEN

Great consternation has been caused locally by a report that "Jack the Ripper" has sent a post card to Barrett's confectionery factory at Wood green saying that he should visit the neighbourhood and "do for six of the girls employed at the factory." It is further said that a man answering the published description of the supposed murderer has been seen in Wood green. People speak of their intentions to carry arms to be prepared for a sudden attack.

STREET SCENES LAST NIGHT THE LOOSE WOMEN ARMING THEMSELVES

There was nothing unusual about the appearance of the streets in Whitechapel and the adjoining districts last night, unless it were that there were fewer women parading the footways after a late hour. In the evening from eight o'clock onward there was the usual busy current of foot passengers, some returning from work, others promenading for pleasure. In the close of the evening the rumour spread rapidly that another terrible murder had been committed, the body, too, being horribly mutilated. This caused the liveliest excitement, everyone asking everyone else "Where was it?" The arrival of the evening papers, however, had the effect of subduing the alarm, for on finding that - to use the common pronunciation of the pavement - the tragedy was "down Westminster way," the sting was taken out of the news, and when it was further learnt that there was really nothing to indicate that the Westminster affair was the work of the East End fiend, the matter hardly obtained any further attention. An enterprising show proprietor in the Mile End road displayed a highly coloured and sensational picture of a murderous tragedy, which was introduced to the public as "the murder in Berners street." This attracted the attention of vast crowds, many of whom evidently placed implicit reliance upon the accuracy of the representation. As the evening wore on and closing time for the "houses" came the streets were more and more deserted by the "ladies of the pavement," most of them withdrawing earlier than usual. One of those who stayed on till the small hours of the morning was asked "Aren't you afraid to be out at this time of morning?" She replied, "No." She said the murders were "shocking, but we have no place to go to, so we're compelled to be out looking for our lodgings." Another woman, in reply to a similar question, said, "Afraid? No, I'm armed, Look 'ere," and she drew a knife from her pocket. She further declared, "I'm not the only one armed; there's

plenty more carry knives now." The coffee stall keepers are grumbling that their trade has been much injured by the terror in the district, for although the condition of the thoroughfares is as usual up to "closing time," there is a great diminution in the numbers of their customers after midnight; indeed some of them say that the trade they get is not worth coming out for. There is no lack of constables in the streets; they are to be met everywhere. Detectives parade the alleys and courts in twos and threes, and it is impossible to be many minutes out of their sight or hearing. Shortly after four o'clock this morning a man came up to a coffee stall in Commercial street and as he drank a cup of coffee it was noticed that his hand was covered with blood. A constable was called and examined the man, but the cause of the blood stain being obvious he was not detained in custody. The sight of blood upon any person or thing in the district just now is as the proverbial red rag to a bull. Upon enquiry at seven o'clock this morning at Leman street Police Station the officer on duty stated that no arrests had been made during the night.

SOCIAL HORRORS

The cartoon in *Punch* last week, called the "Nemesis of neglect," carried to a climax the mingled feeling of shame and dread at the condition of social degradation which the Whitechapel murders brought so shockingly to light. The sensation has been revived and intensified by the murders of Saturday night last, and by the revelations made again this morning. We may fairly take some credit to ourselves upon being the first to point out that the most alarming fact in connection with these horrors was the revelation they afforded of the life and habits of no inconsiderable portion of the population of our towns. Some time after "S.G.O.'s" letter in *The Times* caused, probably, all the journals in the country to follow in the same strain. Since then much has been written upon the revolting state of morals and of existence generally which is to be met with in such localities as Whitechapel and in similar places elsewhere. But when a remedy is proposed it seems to us that in most cases the conditions of the problem are not understood. Something so comparatively easy to deal with as overcrowding, with the certainty of its impairing the bodily health and its morally debasing associations, must both directly and indirectly demoralise and degrade. But what is the cause of the overcrowding? When the right answer to this question has been given it will probably be found that overcrowding is only the last link in a chain of causes to which the vice and misery can be traced. Of course, cleaner and better lighted streets, better ventilated and healthier dwellings, better conducted lodging houses would all exert an influence in the right direction. At all events, a few more gas lights in the lanes and alleys, with a more efficient police, would enable us better to detect criminals, and would deter would be criminals from their fiendish work. But if all this were done - and it certainly ought to be done - the real cause of this festering sore of our Christianised civilisation would not be reached. What gives shape to society are the aims and purposes kept in view and regarded allowable and righteous by the community considered as a whole. If these aims and purposes in any way tend to stimulate passion and to deaden conscience, to vulgarise the taste and imbrute the feeling, to overrate the value of material prosperity and to depreciate calming, refining, spiritualising agencies; if our habits and pursuits lower man's spiritual nature; if the conditions of what is called a successful life be made increasingly secure to the great multitude; if circumstances present increasing temptations of vice to characters increasingly disinclined to resist them; if these things be there will be sure to be produced for many myriads of unfortunate human creatures the Whitechapel life. And when it is forced upon our view, as it has been by these startling horrors, we shall show ourselves very simple minded if we suppose that a little tinkering in the shape of lodging house improvements, with the mere outside of the evil will put an end to it for evermore.



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Obituary: David Radka

Ripper theorist; 8 November 1952 - 6 January 2007

David Radka, 54, of Newington, Conn., died on January 6, 2007, at the Connecticut Hospice in Branford, Conn., after a long illness. Mr. Radka was born in nearby New Britain, Conn., and moved with his family to Newington when he was 12.

He was graduated from Newington High School in 1970 and went on to earn Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Hartford. He later received a Master of Philosophy degree from Trinity (Conn.) College.

He was for many years a self-employed Certified Public Accountant and in addition to many individual and corporate accounts, he counted among his clients such non-profit organizations as chapters of the Colonial Dames, the

Daughters of the American Revolution and several local lodges of the Freemasons. Mr. Radka also had experience handling the idiosyncrasies of state taxes in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, California, Florida, West Virginia, Minnesota, Oregon, Wisconsin, and the Territory of Guam. About his familiarity with Guam's tax laws, Mr. Radka would add characteristically "believe it or not!"

It was as a CPA that Mr. Radka acted for a period as financial advisor to Casebook Productions, Inc., which began *Ripper Notes*, the U.S. journal on the Whitechapel murders, in 1999, and that also organized the first U.S. Jack the Ripper convention in Park Ridge, New Jersey, in April 2000.

Someone who had worked closely with Mr. Radka at Casebook Productions, David Yost, remembered him fondly: "I remember David well, even though we never had the opportunity to meet for a sit-down. I knew David from quite a few years ago, and among his passions, was the Ripper case. His discussions were engaging, and readily made one think beyond the typical limits. His friendship and helpfulness were greatly appreciated by Casebook Productions. May his family have peace and comfort in knowing what their David meant to many. He will be sorely missed."

That the Jack the Ripper case was among Mr. Radka's passions is eminently so and it is because of his long-time interest that most readers of this magazine will be familiar with him. Under a number of aliases as well as eventually his own name, Mr. Radka was a frequent and irrepressible poster on the Casebook.org message boards. If he had not been there at "the creation," so to speak, long-term members have said it is hard to remember a time before he was active.

As a poster, Mr. Radka was often contentious, even abrasive, with his critics but he also had a ready wit and a way of making even the most cutting insults seem somehow less outrageous because they were crafted so cleverly. Indeed, after the fact of his death had been learned, many of those who had felt his verbal lash on Casebook.org's message boards (which at one time or another included almost every member) recalled with admiring good humor his inspired way with a put down.

The culmination of his Jack the Ripper research was what he termed his "A?R" unified theory that was presented to the world at Casebook.org on April 24, 2004. Some close to Mr. Radka suggest that his deteriorating health made him publish this lengthy precis of his theory before he was fully satisfied. In any case, "A?R" became an immediate sensation among Ripperologists, as much for its conclusions as for its method of examining the mystery. As Mr. Radka himself wrote: "Don't think that I am a traditional, mainstream Ripperologist. Don't default to trying to imagine my solution along the lines of a suspect, history, research, housewives' heartthrobs, science, or any of the other false messiahs of this century-old field. When you read me, you put on your philosopher's cap."

Mr. Radka, with his Master's degree in philosophy, may have been quite correct, though overly optimistic, in the last sentence of the previous paragraph. That is, most of his critics were not nearly so interested in the philosophical underpinnings of his theory as in the factual basis of many of the details. The result was a series of highly charged exchanges on the message boards that created considerable heat and little light.

Still, "A?R" remains accessible, even if not in the final form Mr. Radka would have chosen, for current and future researchers. There can be no question that others in the field will read it and either champion or castigate both its conclusions and its analytic method. What history's verdict will be on the theory remains an open question, but for now it seems fair to let Mr. Radka render his own judgment: "A?R is the divide between the old, candidate-based Ripperology of Evans, Rumbelow, Cornwell and many others, and the reason-modality of what might be termed the second wave. I am the point of origin of the second wave. A Ripperologist either wrote before me, or after."

Mr. Radka was, of course, much more than simply a Ripperologist and many of those who saw other sides of his personality found him charming and interesting. He was an avid angler, with the all-consuming ardor for the activity that seems matched only by golfers. He would often talk of a trophy trout he caught as a teen that got his picture on the front page of the local newspaper and he continued to fish the streams and lakes of his native Connecticut as long as health permitted.

He was also an informed baseball fan and former player. It was with pride that he would mention he had been a third baseman in youth leagues. And for those who identify more with cricket than baseball, patrolling the "hot-corner" is much like being a silly mid-off and calls for the same fearlessness and quick hands.

Moreover, judging from his posts, Mr. Radka was also a man of abiding religious faith and an unabashed American patriot. He will be missed by many within the Ripperology community, not least because in his strange way he helped to keep the field honest.

Mr. Radka is survived by his father, Reinhard, and was predeceased by his mother, Anna Elizabeth Larson Radka. The family asked that any memorial contributions be made to St. Matthews Lutheran Church, New Britain, CT 06051, USA.

The A?R theory

The A?R theory is basically a spin-off of the "Polish Jew" theory presented by Martin Fido and other Ripperologists. It is thus derived from the assertion of former Deputy Commissioner of Scotland Yard Sir Robert Anderson that it was a "definitely ascertained fact" that the murderer was a "poor Polish Jew" - generally thought, on the basis of Detective Chief Superintendent Donald S. Swanson's marginalia naming "Kosminski" as the suspect, to have been Aaron Kosminski. Mr. Radka though does not accept Kosminski as the murderer but instead deems the killer to have been a relative or in-law of Anderson's supposed suspect and that Kosminski was the "fall guy" for the murders. Thus he describes the murderer as: "A man who would have deemed, at the beginning of the Terror, his position of authority in his household to have been commandeered by his significant other's exercising her maternal authority in mandating his acceptance of Aaron Kosminski's presence in it. According to the evidence, therefore, likely either Woolf Abrahams or Morris Lubnowski committed the crimes. If neither, then another member or in-law of the greater Kosminski-Lubnowski-Cohen family did."

The theory accepts, as victims of the murderer, Tabram, Nichols, Chapman, Stride, Eddowes, and Kelly. Mr. Radka claims that on the night of the Double Event the murderer was purposely selecting Jewish witnesses in order to point the finger of blame at Aaron Kosminski. Thus the facial cuts to Catherine Eddowes were, he claimed, done to resemble tailor's marks and were aimed at Duke Street witness Joseph Hyam Levy. Thus he claims that there were on Eddowes' face, "TWO TAILORING ARROWS, EACH POINTING TO AN EYE: When chalked onto a garment in tailoring, the arrow means to direct the attention of the operative tailor to the indicated spot, usually to make some alteration there. It is as if to say, 'Look at this,' or 'Don't miss this.' E.g., may be drawn by a fitting tailor pointing to a seam to be opened or to a hem to be lengthened."

Mr. Radka further states that: "The cry 'Lipski!' in Berner Street [directed at witness Israel Schwartz] and the Wentworth graffiti convey to the Jewish witness the great danger in which they would be placing themselves if they were to identify the murderer. They know by his appearance that he is a Jewish man. Additionally, sharp anti-Semitic and various internecine Semitic civil disturbances erupt related to the double event, further terrifying them of, respectively, pogrom and disavowal. Thus, temporarily, they cooperate with the police only up to a point, and although seen, the murderer remains safe." The theorist claims that by intimidating the Jewish witnesses he was able to extort money from them. He states, "Thus the psychopath achieves both his objectives: He gets Aaron Kosminski out of his life, restoring himself as the center of authority and maternal attention at home, and he gets very rich."

All the news that's fit to print...

I Beg to Report

BRICK LANE NAIL BOMBER MUST SERVE 50 YEARS. In April 1999, David Copeland placed explosive devices in Brixton, Brick Lane and Soho. The final explosion at the Admiral Duncan, a Soho gay pub, killed Andrea Dykes, who was pregnant, and friends John Light and Nik Moore. Copeland, now 30, was given six life sentences in June 2000 for three counts of murder and three counts of causing explosions in order to endanger life. The man from Cove, Hampshire, admitted killing three and injuring 139 in the bombing spree. The recommendation was that he should serve a minimum of 30 years before he can be considered for parole. But on 2 February 2007 High Court judge Mr Justice Burton described the case as a 'really exceptional case of deliberate, multiple murder' and set a minimum term of 50 years. He added that the only mitigating factor was Copeland's age: he was 22 at the time. 'When the defendant has served the minimum term, and if the parole board decides to direct his release, he will remain on licence for the rest of his life and may be recalled to prison at any time,' concluded the judge.

Copeland was tried for murder when the prosecution refused to accept his plea of guilty to manslaughter on the grounds that he was suffering a mental illness - paranoid schizophrenia. The trial judge, Michael Hyam, found that Copeland's crimes were motivated by his hatred of black and Asian people and homosexuals. He said: '[Copeland's] avowed aim was to kill, maim and terrorise. His motivation was hatred of the communities he attacked. The making and laying of the explosive device was long planned and carried out without compunction.'

Mr Justice Burton said: 'A defence was put forward by the defendant of diminished responsibility, which the jury rejected, but it was in any event clear that the defendant suffered from a serious mental condition.' A Broadmoor Hospital consultant had described him as psychotic and diagnosed schizophrenia.

The period of 13 months and 26 days served on remand by Copeland will be taken into account, so he must serve a minimum prison sentence of 48 years, 10 months and four days from the date in 2000 when he was originally sentenced.

BBC News, London, UK, 2 March 2007.



David Copeland

MURDER ON THE THAMES. *Forbes Traveller* touts a 'trip to die for': 'this cruise will feature an expert on ghosts and the supernatural who will take you on the trail of Jack the Ripper and other haunted locations around England.' *Murder and Mystery, Ghosts and Ghouls* is the name of this tour and, fellow Ripperologists, this is no ordinary junket. We checked the [tour operators' website](#).

The GoBarging.com luxury cruise on board the 8-passenger barge *Magna Carta* will take you for one full week on the Thames from St Katharine's Dock to Chiswick Pier, Hampton Court, Runnymede, Windsor, Oakley Court, Hurley and back to London, taking in all the sights in between - every single ghost and miscreant in the area. Not only that, but the expert is a real expert, for a change: none other than Richard Jones, the tour guide who wrote and presented the celebrated documentary *On the Trail of Jack the Ripper*. On the very first evening of the cruise, Mr Jones 'will take you ON THE TRAIL OF JACK THE RIPPER. Dare you walk in his shadow as you delve into the crooked, cobbled alleyways of Whitechapel to follow the Ripper's bloodstained trail of terror? Step by bloodcurdling step you are spirited back to the era of gaslit horror, to join the Victorian police as they hunt the Ripper through a warren of crumbling back-streets.' We couldn't have put it better ourselves. All you need now is a solid bank account - this tour doesn't come cheap.

Forbes Traveller, World's Wackiest Cruises, MSNBC.com, 27 February 2007.

THE RIPPER READER. 'I guess I spent a lot of time in libraries... I used to wander down aisles and pick out the books that were on the really high shelves or the really low shelves and didn't get read as much. I liked to wander down aisles I didn't normally go down and just stop and read something. I spent hours, days, just bopping along the surface of information like that, opening up old books and finding new things to look into: Jack the Ripper - Marilyn Monroe - Iroquois - Israel - Alcoholics Anonymous - Jazz - Ku Klux Klan - Slovenia - Nat Turner - and on and on.'

Daniel Silliman, 'Melville, Homer, Nixon and the library', Henry Daily Herald, McDonough, GA, USA, 26 February 2007.



The cast of Mr Hell

AAAGH! IT'S THE MR HELL SHOW! The cult British animation *The Mr Hell Show!* is being released on DVD in the UK in April by Anime label MVM. Apart from Mr Hell, a suave demon voiced by the late British comedian Bob Monkhouse, the show features the Victorian Lady Detective, whose attempts to track down Jack the Ripper are hampered by the dangers of accidentally exposing her ankle in public, and Serge the Seal of Death, a seal cub armed with a machine gun whose sole aim in life is to wreak bloody revenge on the fashion industry for killing its parents.

Commissioned by the BBC as the world's first prime-time animated sketch show, *Mr Hell* turned out to be the most violent and blood-soaked cartoon ever broadcast on mainstream television, averaging 19

onscreen deaths in each of its 13 half-hour episodes. 'We set out to make a kids' show that kids shouldn't watch,' says David Freedman, who created the series with Alan Gilbey. 'In fact, that was the brief. Watching our show marked the end of innocence for any young tyke. We always felt that the devil wasn't a bad person, just honest. So in making a show that takes an honest view of mankind, you get lies, more lies and shedloads of violence. *Mr Hell* believes... ahem, *Mr Hell* knows that people are basically shit and out for personal gain - even Mother Theresa had a publicist. So let the fun begin!'

M J Simpson, 'MR HELL cartoon finally assaults DVD', Fangoria - America's Horror Magazine, USA, 28 February 2007.

SOUL RIPPER. '...Asbury Lanes presents *The 45 Sessions*, featuring local talents DJ Prestige, Connie T. Empress, Sport Casual, Jack the Ripper, Larry Grogan, DJ Prime and Jay Boxcar spinning authentic, dusky funk and heavy soul on 7-inch vinyl.' This happened at a special Fourth Avenue Black History Month double bill on 23 February 2007 on the Jersey shore in the old USA, as The Baronet Theatre and Asbury Lanes each presented 'a unique tribute to the men and women whose fundamental contributions provide the foundation for the music landscape of today.' Jack, a local talent on the Jersey shore? Who'da thunk it? The lad sure gets around.

Stephen Bove, 'Come Together, Asbury Park shows span history of black music', Asbury Park Press, Neptune, NJ, USA, 23 February 2007.

TENNESSEE RIPPER. 'Can you solve Law & Order cases before the detectives? Have you read every Agatha Christie mystery the library has to offer? Think you know who Jack the Ripper really was?' As Inspector Abberline would say, not many people know that. The above lines are from an announcement for *A Murder Is Announced*, a reality show on the American cable network Spike TV. The show re-creates crime scenes from some of the 'most difficult and complex homicide cases ever to be solved by our nation's finest detectives.' Names and locations have been changed to protect the innocent, but everything else comes directly from real crimes. And it's the reality show contestants' job to solve them. Reality-show hopefuls must download an application from Spike TV's website and fax their completed application to (818) 989-8969 in Tennessee, USA. A casting director will then call them to set up an interview. If you follow up on this, Ripperphiles, do tell them the *Rip* sent you!

Claire Suddath, A Murder Is Announced, Pith in the Wind, Nashville Scene Weblog, Nashville, TN, USA, 7 March 2007.

PAUL THE RIPPER. According to the Internet site *Pro Wrestling Insider*, Ohio Valley Wrestling champion Paul Burchill now 'comes out wearing a ski cap and a ski mask, his new trademark look. His new nickname is "The Ripper".' A ski mask? Whatever happened to top hat and cloak?

Pro Wrestling Insider, PWINSIDER.COM, 23 February 2007.

THE RIPPER AND WAR DEAD. '...the Tofflers tell us that the super-brains behind this lovely little war [the First Gulf War] really did minimize "collateral damage." Total Iraqis killed, they cheerfully inform us, number "several hundred or at most several thousand." How marvelous, I think. Perhaps next they will write a glorification of Jack the Ripper, reminding us that his victims totaled "six or at most eight."'

Robert Anton Wilson describing the May 1991 article by Alvin and Heidi Toffler, 'War, Wealth and a New Era in History' on 'Third Wave' (computerized) warfare in World Monitor. Robert Anton Wilson, 'Alvin and Heidi Toffler In Praise of Our Kinder, Gentler War Machine', Infoshop News, 23 February 2007.



Paul 'the Ripper' Burchill

SING, RIPPER, SING. *Ripper*, a new musical about our boy Jack, was presented as a free reading at New World Stages, 340 W 50th St, New York, USA, on 19 March. Annie Golden (*The Full Monty*, *Assassins*) starred as Ratkin and Davis Gaines (*The Phantom of the Opera*) as Eddie. Others at the reading were Carey Brown (Mary), Collin Donnell (Chester), Kevyn Morrow (Constable Neill) and Erica Schroeder (Kate). The director was Stephen Amato and the musical's director Mike Morris. *Ripper's* book, music and lyrics are all by Duane Nelsen. According to the musical's website 'the Dickensian characters of the show - from the reporter who covers the story, to the brothel owner, the police, and of course the prostitutes - are brought together by an intricate plot that interweaves multiple story lines, the everyday bustle of London's East End, the lively nightlife of the music halls, and the ever-present danger of a killer lurking in the shadows.' Amen, brother.

Golden and Gaines Star in Free 3/19 'Ripper' Reading, Broadway World, broadwayworld.com, 5 March 2007.

HUSH, LULU, HUSH. 'Tonnika Todorova: "...Instead of having dialogue, we had words projected on the walls with blackouts and black-ins. We had a piano player who composed original music and performed it throughout the piece. The actors used a lot of the same histrionics that you'd see in a black and white silent film. And then adding that vaudevillian type acting... we included a lot of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin references. We set our play just a little bit later, in post World War I.'

'John Brownlee: "So Lulu's a bright young thing?"'

'TT: "She is and she isn't! Wedekind's story ends with Jack the Ripper killing her. But we kept on not being sure how we were going to pull this off, since Jack the Ripper wasn't around in the time period. But then we realized that Jack the Ripper was never caught, so we set our story in the flapper era and hoped no one would come down on us too much. Some dramatic license!"'

John Brownlee's interview with Tonnika Todorova, the director of Lulu, a new, silent, black-and-white stage play based upon G W Pabst's silent film Pandora's Box. Wired News, Table of Malcontents, 1 March 2007.



The Horrors

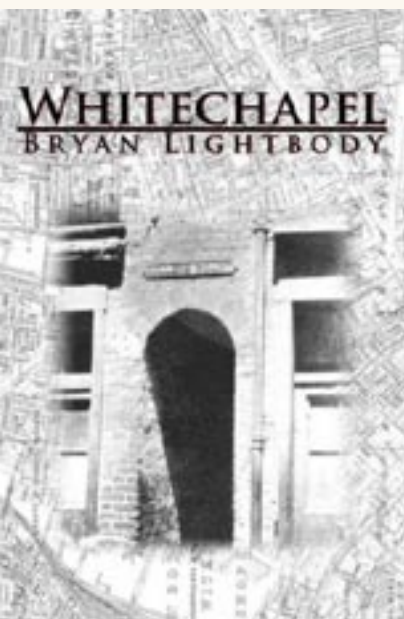
OH! THE HORRORS! 'Ravenous, raucous, striking, stomping, pop... The first thing to realise when you listen to *Strange House* is that Faris Rotter, the young and lanky frontman of the Horrors, doesn't sound like a kid. He's got a great voice which can screech, yell, shout and issue orders in equal abundance. They may all have silly names (Coffin Joe - my personal favourite) and look like the attendees of a Russell Brand fan reunion convention, but they have the tunes to backcomb any hair... Noteworthy is the Horrors' resurrection of Screaming Lord Sutch's *Jack the Ripper*, a fairly surreal experience even on paper... When the Horrors hit the mark, the results are impressive. *Count in Fives*, *Jack the Ripper* and *Little Victories* make up a strong bunch of songs which are well within the band's ability.'

From the review of Strange House, the latest CD by Goth band The Horrors. Inthenews.co.uk, 7 March 2007.

WHITECHAPEL FILM FOOTAGE. During a recent trip to England, Ron Edgar, a native of Scotland who works as a cameraman for Raymond Community Television, Raymond, New Hampshire, USA, shot footage of little-known aspects of London which he is editing into four half-hour programs for RCTV. Two of these programmes showed London walks. One, narrated by his niece, concerned the Whitechapel district. 'Everyone does Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London,' Mr Edgar said. 'But Whitechapel is a working-class, immigrant area, and has been for more than 300 years.' He started his walk at Aldgate. 'It's literally an "old gate," and it has a pump where people went to get water in the 11th and 12th centuries. Because of public health laws, we can't get water there any more, but the pump is still there.' Mr Edgar's niece stopped at the bell foundry where Big Ben, the famous bell in the clock symbolizing London and British might, was cast. 'Big Ben was recently in for repairs,' Mr Edgar noted.

The second walk covered the Brick Lane area. During the 16th and 17th centuries, many Europeans immigrated to the East End. Among them were Flemish lace-makers, who lived in a 'beautiful row of houses.' The area still welcomes immigrants, most of whom are now East Indians. 'A back alley is reportedly the site of several of Jack the Ripper's dastardly deeds,' notes our source. Mr Edgar hasn't yet edited the two London walks. 'It's all raw footage,' he said.

Kathleen D. Bailey, From London to Raymond, Rockingham News, Exeter, NH, USA, 2 March 2007



THE CONSTABLE'S CONUNDRUM. Bryan Lightbody's day job requires him to ride bikes, drive cars and carry guns. He is a member of the Royal Protection team that helps safeguard VIPs - including the Queen and the Prime Minister - and escorts defendants facing terrorism charges between courts and prisons. His parents were from the East End: his mum, a teacher, from Bow; his dad a policeman from East Ham. He joined the Metropolitan Police in 1988, the centenary of the Whitechapel murders. He spent five years on the beat in Ilford, did traffic patrol in the East End and served as a car and motorcycle instructor at the police driving school in Hendon, before joining the Special Escort Group. In his free time, Bryan Lightbody shares with *Ripperologist* readers a fascination with the London of the late 1880s, the Whitechapel Murders and the shadowy figure of Jack the Ripper. After many years of exposure to books, theories and films on the Ripper, he decided to write a book himself: a thriller based on the case and its investigation. The result is *Whitechapel*, a 178,000-word story of love, duty, romance, tragedy and revenge linking London with Paris and Missouri.

Bryan Lightbody has his own ideas about the suspects that have been fingered as the Ripper over the years. 'If you take, for example, *Murder by Decree*, the film in the late 1970s with Christopher Plummer, *Jack the Ripper* with Michael Caine, and *From Hell*, they all point to this Masonic/royal conspiracy, with Sir William Gull as being the murderer,' he says. 'Well, I just don't think physically he'd have been able to do it, because he'd suffered a stroke. Something about it I've never found terribly convincing.'

He names his own suspect in the book, but you'll have to buy it to see who it is. We are not telling. Bryan Lightbody says: 'I think the guys that produced the evidence against him put together a really good, strong case, with a lot of credibility. He is a strong, if not the strongest, suspect. He's not the only one - there's compelling evidence against other people.'

Bryan Lightbody underlines that it is by no means definite how many women were killed by the same hand. There were five 'canonical' victims: Mary Ann 'Polly' Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes and Mary Jane Kelly. 'Well, I think only four of them were murdered by the same person,' he says. At least one victim, 'Long Liz' Stride, wasn't mutilated in the same way as the others. The Whitechapel Murders are indeed an enduring enigma, 'and I think that is the draw for most people - because nobody knows.'

He finds it amazing the perpetrator wasn't caught and that the police didn't stumble across him in the act. About 1,400 or 1,500 constables were then based at a handful of police stations in east London. 'OK, they were working different shifts; but that's more than there is now! You think that with all those, and detectives, and people drafted in, and plain-clothes patrols, how come no-one found him?' That failure has helped feed the suspicion the authorities must have colluded in a cover-up. 'We do live in a world of conspiracy theories - and, I've got to say, I take great interest in them! But I just think that if they've tried to cover up anything with Jack the Ripper, perhaps all it is ineptitude. Perhaps it was missed opportunities.'

'I'm not a great believer in the story that Prince Albert Victor had an illegal, secret marriage to a Catholic woman and fathered a child, and the only people who knew were five prostitutes who were all murdered as a result. And so it stops as soon as it began,' says Bryan Lightbody. 'It's a great romantic story; but it was just a depraved killer whose fury became worse - as most modern serial killers' does.'

He adds: 'I liked the idea of using a true story and weaving some fictional characters. I thought I could do that with the Ripper.' His time as a traffic patrol officer in the 1990s, working out of Bow, helped provide a sense of atmosphere. 'When you were working night duty, you would creep around different parts of the East End in the early hours, and quite often I'd find myself around Shoreditch and Whitechapel, and off Commercial Road and Bethnal Green, and it gave a sense of what it would have been like. There are a lot of streets there that are as they were. If it was quiet and you turned the engine off and went to have a look around - maybe under some railway arches - you did get a sense of what it might have been like, because the buildings are effectively the same.' In fact, in some ways life still goes on as it did in 1888. The area has traditionally had a transient, shifting population. Whereas problems used to be fuelled by alcohol, now it's drugs. Similarly, street gangs and turf wars are nothing new; instead of yesteryear's flat caps and scarves, contemporary gangs wear hoodies.

Terrorism is not a modern phenomenon either. In the 1860s and 1870s, London saw attacks by Irish-American groups. Six people were killed in Clerkenwell, for instance. The Home Office, the House of Commons and Scotland Yard were also targeted. As Bryan Lightbody says: 'There are many parallels with today's society.'

When it came to writing, he didn't find it too difficult to hit the right spot with his dialogue. 'I tried to avoid cliché. And it's only 100 years ago; the way people spoke wasn't that much different. In fact, many people then were probably more articulate than now!' He smiles at the thought of one episode: a drunken prostitute's rant. 'Having worked in the East End and seen people lose it, and having listened to their tirades, I know exactly how people talk! Every time I read that bit, it makes me laugh.'

The main character of Whitechapel is a Victorian constable called Robert Ford. If Bryan Lightbody has his way, it won't be the last we hear of the fictional policeman. The author's working on a new book about a political scandal set in Edwardian London, 15 years on from the Ripper murders. Ford is now a detective inspector, working as a protection officer. In a third tale, Ford will probably be a detective chief superintendent involved in a story leading up to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne - the event that precipitated the First World War. 'It would be nice to see someone reading a book of mine on the Tube,' says Bryan Lightbody.

Whitechapel is self-published, but its author hopes his work might attract the eye of a publisher. The book is available on www.amazon.co.uk, www.authorhouse.co.uk, at Hannays bookstore in Braintree, or via bookshops by giving the ISBN number: 978-1-4259-6181-7.

Steven Russell, 'Policeman pens Jack the Ripper thriller', East Anglian Daily Times, Suffolk, England, UK, 5 March 2007.

FOOD FOR THE RIPPERATI. In our constant endeavour to help *Ripperologist's* readers improve themselves and impress their friends, relatives and co-workers, we bring to your attention selected items no serious Ripper collector will want to do without. First, we have come across a 1983 French vinyl record entitled *Blaspheme - Self Titled* by *Blaspheme*, a French Heavy Speed Metal band. The first song in the Lizard label, 12-inch LP is, predictably, *Jack L'éventreur*. If that sort of investment is not what you had in mind, how about some French Jack the Ripper comic books? Apart from that old stalwart *From Hell* in French translation, we've found *London 2, Le carnet volé* by Rodolphe and Isaac Wens, and *Les nouvelles aventures de Carland Cross 1, L'ombre de l'Éventreur* by Michel Oleffe, Olivier Grenson and Isaac Wens. They look promising. Get a closer look at Amazon.ca or Amazon.fr.

Vinyl Record Collectors information, 3 March 2007

AUSSIE MODEL TO STAR IN NEW RIPPER FLICK. Australian bikini model Emily Scott has landed a 'plum role' in a Hollywood thriller about Jack the Ripper with filming set to start in the summer [reported the Daily Star on 11 March](#). Ms Scott, 23, came to the attention of the producers after she appeared in a *Daily Star Sunday* photoshoot. The *Star* noted: 'The Gold Coast-born beauty was then signed up to appear on *Celebrity Love Island* where her 32D - 24 - 32 figure thrilled the great viewing public. They enjoyed an on-off romance until January when Emily decided she wanted to concentrate on her career. And it's proved to be the best decision she could have made - with Tinseltown calling soon after... Emily is now getting ready to look for a new home in Los Angeles in preparation for the Ripper film, which is set in Victorian London. The as-yet untitled flick could help boost her up to A-list status - and a string of Hollywood's leading men are being sought to star alongside her.'

RIPPER OBSESSION. 'I had my own experience with serial-killer obsessionism, involving Jack the Ripper. I became fascinated by the case and bought several books, determined to come to my own conclusions. But at some point I began to see the truth: from this distance, with the evidence long fading, there are many, many suspects, and convincing reasons to consider nearly every one "likely." And none will ever be conclusively proved or disproved. I tossed the books aside, half read. Yet the unanswered mystery still gnaws at me. This tantalizing, exasperating mood of discovery and frustration is what Fincher's movie is all about.'

Randall A Byrn on David Fincher's film Zodiac, Blogcritics.org, Aurora, OH, USA, 12 March 2007.

I BEG TO REPORT

Shawl for Sale

Lacy Scott & Knight, fine art auctioners in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, recently listed a possible item of Ripper ephemera; the shawl which allegedly belonged to Catherine Eddowes.

Supposedly taken from the body by an officer from the Metropolitan Police, Acting Sergeant Amos Simpson, the provenance of the shawl has been hotly disputed since it came to the attention of the public when loaned to the Black Museum circa May 1997. Our sources reveal that doubt was so strongly cast on the authenticity of the shawl - actually a length of silk measuring 8ft x 2ft - that the then Curator preferred to store it in a filing cabinet rather than put it on display.

A dissertation on the possibility of the shawl being genuine is [available on the Casebook](#). The current owner, David Melville Hayes, is Simpson's Great Great Nephew. Since reclaiming the shawl from the Black Museum, Mr Melville Hayes has made the item available for inspection on several occasions, notably when he allowed Andy and Sue Parlour to place it on display at the 2001 Ripper conference in Bournemouth.

A press release by Lacy Scott & Knight announcing the appearance of the shawl in their auction of 17 March resulted in widespread media coverage, from the local radio station to the *East London Advertiser* and the *Sun*.

The press release acknowledged the uncertainty over the shawl:

As auctioneers we are often presented with items of historical interest. Certainly one of the most intriguing lots to have found its way into our salerooms is lot 235 in our 17th March Fine Art & Antique sale - 'A late 19th century brown silk screen printed shawl decorated with Michaelmas daisies'.

This item was brought in to us by the great, great nephew of a certain Acting Sergeant Amos Simpson who was 'on the beat' around the East End of London during the Jack the Ripper murder spree. Family history has it that the shawl belonged to Jack the Ripper's fourth victim Catherine Eddowes, who was murdered on 30th September 1888 in Mitre Square (on the edge of Amos Simpson's route as a Metropolitan Police officer).

A lot of controversy surrounds the authenticity of the shawl, and the subject has been much debated in Ripper literature and on Ripperologist websites. The shawl spent some time in The Metropolitan Police Crime (Black) Museum, and in 2006 was subject to inconclusive forensic testing for a programme on Channel 5.

Lacy Scott and Knight offer the shawl with no guarantees as to its validity - but we cannot deny that its an attention-grabbing story!

In an email to *Ripperologist* after the auction, Helen Robson, Fine Art Administrator of Lacy Scott & Knight, revealed that while bidding on the shawl had reached £5,200, the shawl remained unsold as Mr Melville Hayes had specified just prior to sale that he wanted "a little more than that". Rumours on the Casebook message boards insist the actual reserve was £10,000. Ms Robson continued:

There was a large crowd as you can imagine, and a couple of people approached us afterwards with possible offers. We are currently awaiting the outcome of those because the vendor is willing to be more flexible with price now.

Watch this space!



The shawl as photographed in the Black Museum on 29 May 1997. Courtesy Evans/Skinner Crime Library

I BEG TO REPORT

Proposed Plan for a Headstone for Chief Inspector Abberline and Wife Emma

Ripperologist has learned that plans have been approved by Bournemouth Borough Council for a headstone to be placed in Wimborne Road Cemetery, Bournemouth, at the grave of Chief Inspector Frederick George Abberline and his wife Emma, *née* Beament. The noted Scotland Yard detective died in retirement in 1929 while living at 195 Holdenhurst Road in Bournemouth. He and his wife, who died the year following her husband, lie in grave Z259N in the north sector of the cemetery, not far from the chapel, near Idlesleigh Road, which skirts the cemetery's north boundary.



Michael Stead

Mr. Michael Stead, Technical Assistant for Conservation, with Bournemouth Borough Council in an email of 16 March to interested parties, reported on progress on arrangements for the headstone. The grave marker is being supplied by the Williams Monumental Company with cost of the grave marker partly paid by the Metropolitan Police and the Pinkerton Detective Company, for whom Abberline worked as a detective at the famous casino in Monte Carlo following his retirement from the Met on 7 February 1892.

Mr Stead reports:

Attached is a layout showing how the Abberline Headstone could look. Thank you to those of you who commented on the draft version.

A couple of points to note:-

First, Emma's birth date is taken from her birth certificate, which I ordered a couple of months ago. The certificate showed the following details:

Birth: Mar qtr 1845, BEAMENT, Emma, at Shoreditch, vol 2, page 43.

Born 26 September 1844 at 1 Napier Street, Hoxton New Town;

father Henry Beament, warehouseman, mother Harriet Beament, formerly Rogerson. Registered 26th March 1845.

This ties in with the marriage certificate, which gives her father's name as Henry (although she lies about her age on her 1876 marriage certificate, claiming to be 28, when she was actually 31) and ties in with her age given on her death certificate - where she wasn't able to influence what was written...

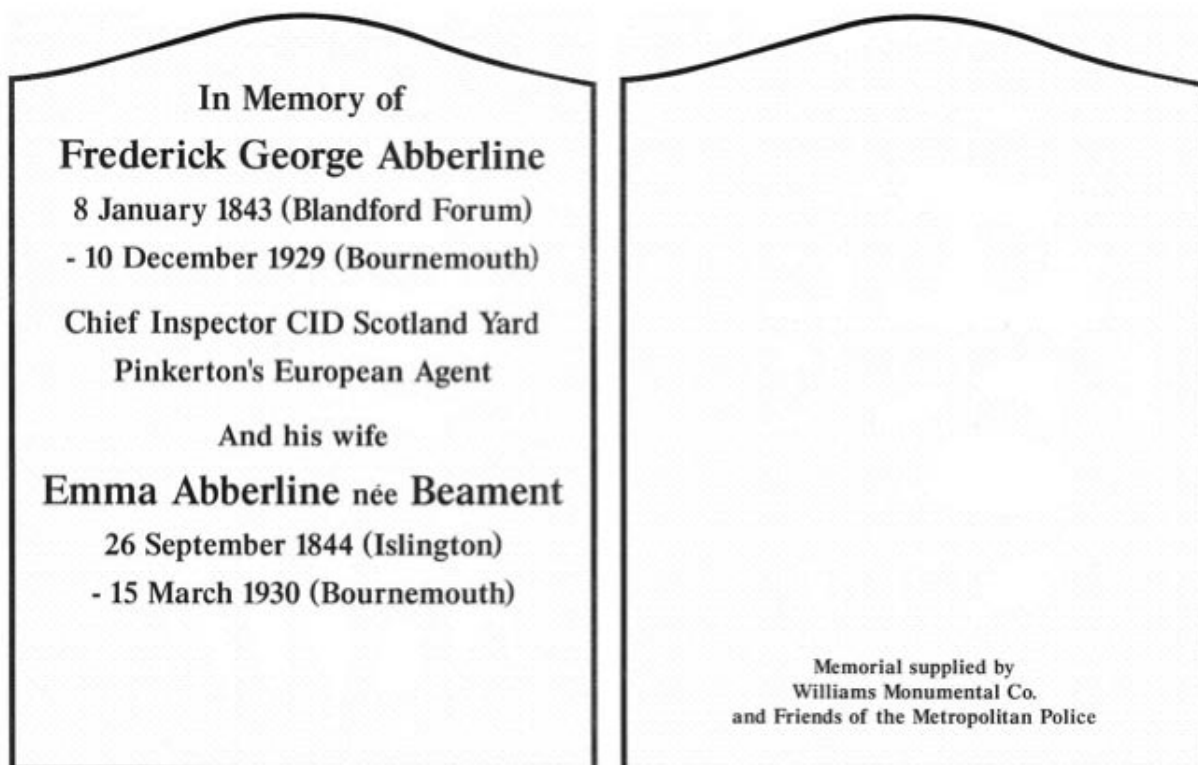
Second, the Pinkerton's name is being included, as they have donated some money to the headstone fund. The issue of whether or not anyone would know who Pinkerton's are/were has been raised, my feeling is that everyone who seeks the headstone out will know, but I'd welcome comments on this matter.

The aim of the headstone is not to draw unseemly or sensationalist attention to the grave, but to mark it with sufficient information to be of interest to those who take the time to seek it out.

I believe that all the money needed has been raised now, so once the wording has been given the thumbs up, I can ask the stonemason to get to work.



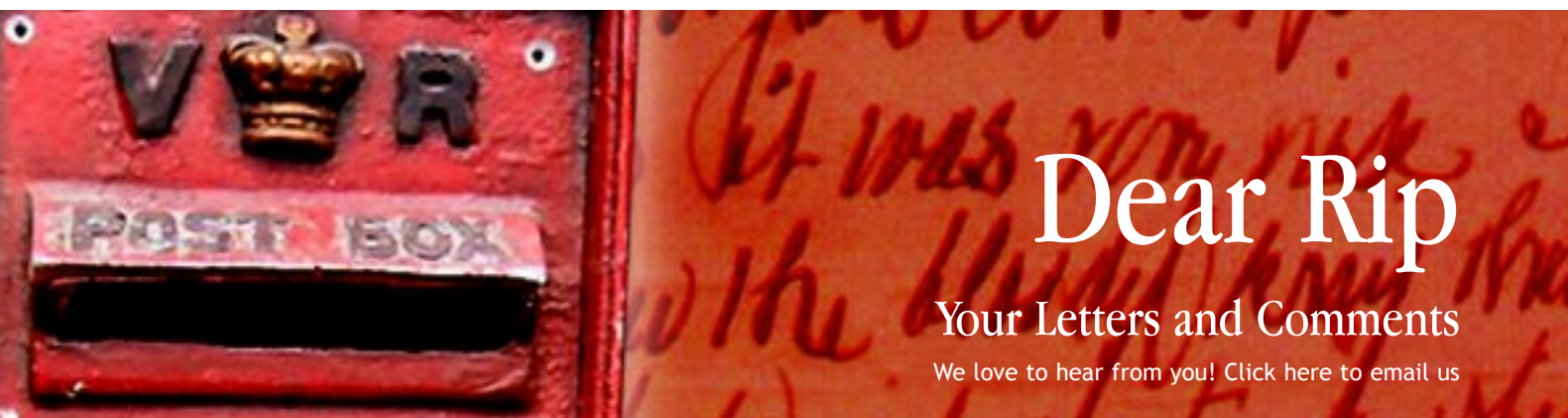
Handwritten marker placed on the site of Abberline's grave during the 2001 Bournemouth Conference



Proposed headstone for Detective Chief Inspector Frederick George Abberline and wife Emma.

Asked whether an official unveiling was planned, Mr. Stead stated that while at the moment there are no firm plans, it's felt that sort of event such as a brief service of remembrance at the graveside would be appropriate.

At the 2001 Bournemouth conference, after an approach by organisers Paul Begg and Adam Wood, Mr. Stead was responsible for the arrangements and erection of a commemorative plaque to mark the site of Abberline's home at Holdenhurst Road.



Rip 75

Dear Rip

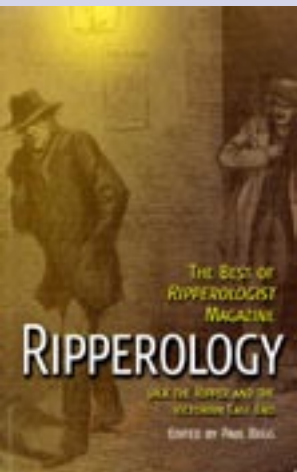
I meant to drop you a line after I read *Rip 75* to let you know that I was pleased to see the item on Pickton. That's a local case for me, and very disturbing. I'll keep my opinion of Vancouver PD to myself, but will say that I think there was less concern for the "unfortunates" of East End Vancouver in the late 1900s than there was in the East End of London in the late 1800s. It goes to show once again in this country, if you want anything done, give it to the horsemen! Good article, thanks.

Glad to see #76 in my inbox today. I'm off to read that and take my mind of my car woes.

MAUREEN ADAMSON
Canada, 10 March 2007

Ripping Yarns

BOOK NEWS AND VIEWS



RIPPEROLOGY: THE BEST OF RIPPEROLOGIST MAGAZINE

As reviewed by Dave Yost

Over nineteen years ago, the world somberly honored the centennial of when an individual wrought death on East End prostitutes in London. And many speculations and myths have abounded about the murders, ranging from a giant vulture to the fictitious "Fairy Fay." But 1988 saw something more than TV specials or Michael Caine's portrayal of Inspector Abberline. The anniversary saw the start of what has been classified as, Ripperology.

Since that ground breaking year, many have taken up the gauntlet, and through their investigative talents continued pushing the envelope - Ripperologists, a group of individuals determined to wipe away the mysterious fog that seemingly shrouds the Victorian murders. Their efforts have produced highly regarded works that are well known and respected for their history and scope-broadening advances. Each of these brought the curious and the problem-solver closer to what really happened while providing a better understanding of how the contemporary people reacted and of the lives they led. And now upon the scene comes a new arrival, one worthy of being a lot more than a collector's piece.

Ripperology: The Best of Ripperologist Magazine

In its thirteen-year existence, *Ripperologist* has published some of the best thought out dissertations, covering a wide variety of nuances that have either plagued the case or screamed for greater attention. This insightful compilation presents twenty-seven intelligent discussions, providing a good mixture of victims, suspects, police, and beyond intuitively organized for a fast-paced, eye opening read. Among the well-respected and very capable contributors are Andy Aliffe, Martin Fido, Christopher T. George, and Stephen Ryder. And, below are some tantalizing tid bits that come from just a few of the noteworthy researchers who grace the pages.

At some point, a discussion on Jack the Ripper will invariably turn to the question of, how many? The Scotland Yard files list eleven unsolved deaths under the simple title, "Whitechapel Murders." The contemporary press readily informed its readers that the double event gave us victims five and six, while Chief Constable Macnaghten maintained that the death toll was only five. But as researchers expanded the scope of their investigations, other new and similar killings came to light while older known murders were brought from the shadows. One of these brutal assaults took place in the George Yard Buildings. Jon Ogan zeros in on a primary reason for Martha Tabram's exclusion. And through comparison of descriptive evidence, Jon succinctly deduces a strategic strike to a grey area. From August 1888 in London's East End, we travel across the ocean to New York and the spring of 1891, where Michael Conlon presents an excellent analysis of Carrie Brown's mutilation. Simplifying a myriad of dyslexic information for the reader, Michael presents a compelling conclusion for Jack's handiwork.

But no conversation on the infamous murderer is complete without asking the sphinx's riddle, who? Within this more than 100 years, many documents had their dust blown off, the cobwebs wiped away, and with a pocket lantern, the unknown became historical, and the face-less killer began to take on a name. Carman Cumming presents an in-depth analysis of a contemporary view against the suspect, Francis Tumblety, revealing more insight into the personality of this quirky, self-proclaimed doctor. From New York we fly to Russia, where Stephen Poberowski tackles the question with a strong deduction about the legendary Vasiliev, and how the Russian Secret Police brought about his demise. But Jack the Ripper is more than just victims and suspects. It is dun-colored houses, horse-drawn carriages, and life at 16 and 6. It is an era long gone by. And Deborah McDonald, Madeleine Murphy, and Robin Odell take us on a mind expanding journey through life in the East of London, giving so much more than a mere glimpse of what it was like to stroll down cobble stone streets amidst the greenish-yellow flicker of gas lamps.

Yet, others look deep into the story behind the story. Old information scrutinized... the minutiae examined and brought out from under the spyglass for the world to see. Situated within the "wicked quarter mile," Paul Begg gives Annie Chapman a sobriety test in Dorset Street. And in a reexamination of the evidence, Paul alerts the attention to the telltale differences between beer and "strong alcohol." Quickly moving into the City of London, we head to Mitre Square. There, Neil Bell focuses on the darkness to determine just what Jack could have seen when he tore open Catharine Eddowes. Through his hands on research with gas lamps, Neil puts a brilliant illumination on an age-old question. Following in Jack's footsteps back to Whitechapel, we come across Paul Begg with chalk in hand, evaluating a "school boy's round hand" in Goulston Street. From a solid foundation, Paul presents an insightful education on the graffito, while delving into the temporal mysteries of the apron piece. We now travel across the North Sea to Sweden, where Daniel Olsson demonstrates his historical prowess. From exhaustive genealogical efforts, Daniel presents information on Elizabeth Stride, not readily seen, let alone found.

Ripperology: The Best of Ripperologist Magazine is greatly welcomed as a valuable and insightful edition, whether a person has an interest in the dark mystique of Jack the Ripper or a fascination with the mystical era of Victorian London. With such excellent investigative and deductive abilities from these and other notable researchers, Jack the Ripper may yet be brought to ground. So relax with a piping cup of nut-brown tea and prepare yourself to be dazzled and enthralled.

On the Crimebeat With WILF GREGG

GASKIN

Paul Bedford

S/B, 94pp., Illus., History into Print, £7.95

In 1919 Henry Thomas Gaskin was convicted and executed for the murder of his wife. Behind that rather bare statement lies the story of arguably one of the most brutal and horrendous murders of the twentieth century.

Gaskin had a troubled youth, accumulating a record for mainly petty crime which resulted in him being sent to an approved school. In 1913 he made pregnant and married Lizzie Talbot, the pressures of marriage and fatherhood seemingly setting him off on a string of burglaries. When caught he pleaded guilty at Staffordshire Quarter Sessions and was sentenced to three years penal servitude. On his release in 1916 he surprisingly did not return to his home town of Hednesford, but instead joined the Army. He was attached to the Royal Engineers, and after training was sent to fight for King and country. Gaskin obviously acquitted himself well in the Army and was promoted to Sergeant.

In 1917 he returned home on his first leave and discovered that Lizzie had given birth to an illegitimate child and taken up prostitution. Gaskin was incensed and threatened to kill her. However, they did link up again in spite of her conduct before he returned to France. In 1918 he was temporarily buried alive when a tunnel collapsed and required prolonged treatment.

In January 1919 Gaskin was demobilised and returned home to live with his parents at about the same time Lizzie had a second illegitimate child. Soon after this he sent Lizzie a note asking her to meet him. The only evidence as to this meeting is Gaskin's later statement to the police.

At some point in this fateful meeting, he attacked her, inflicting severe injuries, including an attempt to pull out her womb. When this failed, he slashed her abdomen open and pulled out her bowels before leaving her dead or dying to return home. Lizzie's family duly reported her missing and police enquiries commenced. Gaskin returned to the scene of the crime and decapitated her body before throwing the eviscerated remains into water round a nearby gasholder. Gaskin was interviewed by police and took them to where he had thrown the body parts.

He was duly charged with murder and faced trial at Staffordshire Assizes on 4 July 1919. He pleaded not guilty and a defence of insanity was raised on his behalf but this was rejected by the jury after a retirement of only twenty four minutes and he was sentenced to death. Gaskin was hanged at Winson Green Prison on 8 August 1919.

I do have to declare an interest in the Gaskin case, since some years ago I contributed an article to the then paper *Ripperologist* and this was one of the cases featured.

It is often claimed for a book that it is the last word on the subject. This is certainly true of this book which gives a complete history of the lives and antecedents of both Harry and Lizzie Gaskin. Paul Bedford is to be congratulated for what was obviously a labour of love, as well as his publishers, who have backed him up with an excellent production. Buy this book, it is a minor classic.





Brick Lane in the aftermath of an explosion caused by the nail bomb left by David Copeland, who was told this month that he must serve at least 50 years in prison.

See I Beg to Report.