

Ripperologist

No. 65

March 2006

Roderick Macdonald

ROBERT LINFORD,
JOHN SAVAGE and
DAVID O'FLAHERTY
on the Scottish Coroner
and the Ripper Victim

ROBERT HOUSE on the
Polish Immigrant and
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CHRIS SCOTT's Press Trawl
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MONTY's Cyberjack

Paul Begg, Christopher-Michael DiGrazia,
Christopher T George, Adam Wood

...taken for our Sovereign Lady the
the Name of the Town Hall
in the County of M
day of November A.D. 1888 *[and by adjourn*
day of and the
before RODERICK MACDONALD, ESQUIRE, *one of the Cor*

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Quote for March

'I'm standing outside the perimeter of what is turning out to be the most terrific crime scene since Jack the Ripper stalked the streets of London.'
Glenn Taranto as the Anchorman in The Devil's Rejects (2005).

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We would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance given by the following people in the production of this issue of *Ripperologist*: Howard Brown, Martin Fido, Ally Reinecke and Stephen P Ryder. Thank you!

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Michaela Koristova holds a degree in History from the University of Brno, Czech Republic. She has worked as a teacher, a translator and a project manager - including a three-year assignment in Teheran, Iran. More recently, Michaela has returned to her first love, history, particularly 19th century history. She lives in Brno with her husband Milan and their 8-year-old son Emil.

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John Savage is a shipping consultant living in Hull, East Yorkshire. He has been taking an interest in Jack the Ripper for over 30 years and first became "hooked" through watching the BBC *Barlow and Watt* series.



ADAM WOOD
UK EDITOR

Editorial

When Cats Run Home

*When cats run home and light is come.
Tennyson, The Owl*

Sad news filtered through to Ripperologist HQ on 19 March, when it was announced that Humphrey, *aka* the 'Downing Street Cat' and the 'Chief Mouser to the Cabinet Office,' had died. A spokesman for the Prime Minister confirmed that the black and white moggy had passed away at the home of a Cabinet Office worker who took him in when he 'retired'.

Humphrey was a stray adopted by Number 10 after wandering into the building in 1989, when Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister. Six months after Labour's 1997 general election win, he moved out. His absence did not go unnoticed and peremptory questions were asked in the House of Commons. A Conservative MP demanded proof that the moggy was alive and well. Downing Street explained that Humphrey had been suffering from a kidney complaint. The media were later invited to a South London property where Humphrey was photographed, hostage-style, with copies of the day's newspapers.

Humphrey was the last in a long line of official Home Office cats, details of which were revealed on 4 January 2005 in papers that were among 50,000 files delivered to the National Archives. A series of cats have been employed in that capacity, from a humble mouser in 1929 to a pedigree feline who could not be sacked for 'diplomatic' reasons. The records start in 1929 with a request for a penny a day from petty cash to feed Peter, the office cat. After an ailing Peter had to be put down at the age of 17 in 1946, he was replaced by Peter, second of that name. But Peter II was run over in Whitehall and also had to be put down, to be replaced by another kitten called Peter, who shot to stardom after appearing on BBC's *Tonight* programme in 1958.

In March 1964, at the age of 16, Peter III succumbed to a liver infection. As a replacement, the Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man, Sir Ronald Garvey, sent one of the island's pedigree Manx cats, a female kitten named Peta in honour of her male predecessors. When staff complained that she was lazy and not toilet trained and suggested she be 'put out to grass', a stern official memorandum ruled that she must remain at all costs. Her appointment had been so public that she had gained 'diplomatic status' and letting her go could result in adverse publicity. A memorandum from 1976 reveals that Peta had retired to the country home of a member of the staff.

Mrs Thatcher was not, of course, the first person to fall for the charms of a cat. Some authorities believe the discovery of a complete cat skeleton buried alongside a Neolithic human at Shillourokambos, Cyprus, shows that domestication of cats began 9,500 years ago. Both skeletons were positioned symmetrically with the heads pointing west, towards the setting sun, and were in an identical state of preservation, which indicated that they had been buried at the same time.

By 1700 BC, the cat was depicted in domestic poses in Israel, and by 1400 BC house cats were present in Greece. Cats had travelled northwards across the Mediterranean aboard ships by 1000 BC and from there they spread along trade routes, going eastwards to China and Japan. The Romans regarded cats as rare and exotic pets, preferring the mongoose for vermin control. By 500 BC, domestic cats were familiar in southern Europe. Our feline friends may have arrived in Britain with the Phoenicians, who traded for tin in Cornwall, though it was most likely the Romans who first brought cats with them some time before 4 AD. Cat footprints have been discovered in clay tiles at Chelmsford.

On 9 November 1888, our feline friend made his one and only recorded appearance in the events we recall as the Autumn of Terror. Everybody has noticed at some time or another that cats see and hear things that we neither see nor hear. In the early hours of that day, a moggy by the name of Diddles must have felt the presence of a larger, deadlier predator nearby. At around 3.30am Diddles woke his owner, Elizabeth Prater, by jumping on her. Shortly afterwards Mrs Prater heard a faint voice cry 'Oh, murder!' from Millers Court. A few hours later, the tenant of the room below Mrs Prater's was found dead in her bed. Her name was Mary Kelly.

At some time before the turn of the century, death came to Diddles. No official memorandum, no newspaper report, no document remains to mark his passing. But we are sure that his last run home did not go unnoticed. And, one century later, he is still remembered.



*Humphrey,
Chief Mouser to the Cabinet Office*



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MICHAELA
KORISTOVA

A Scandal in Bohemia

The Story of Three Lost Lives

No one was ever condemned for the Whitechapel murders. Is it worse to let a criminal go unpunished or to condemn an obviously innocent person in order to appease an inflamed populace? Eleven years after Jack the Ripper walked in the streets of Whitechapel, twelve years after Sherlock Holmes made his first appearance in the pages of *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, there was a scandal in Bohemia which involved neither the great detective nor the glamorous Irene Adler. It all started with the murder of a young girl.

In 1899, a 19-year-old seamstress lived in Mala Veznice (today Vežnička), a small village in Bohemia, then part of the Habsburg Empire. She was called Anezka Hruzova - a name with ominous connotations, since the root of her surname was 'hruza', a word that means 'abhorrence' in the Czech language. On 29 March, Ash Wednesday, Anezka started on a two-mile walk to the town of Polná, where she was taught sewing by the local dressmaker. She did not return home that evening. Oddly enough, nobody seemed to miss her, though it was the first time she had spent the night away from home. On Holy Friday, her mother went to the dressmaker's at Polná. She did not ask for her daughter, however, but for a basket Anezka had taken with her. When she was told that Anezka had not been seen since Wednesday, she became concerned. Only then did she go to the local police, the *gendarmérie*, to report her daughter as missing.

On 1 April, Holy Saturday, the *gendarmérie* enlisted the assistance of some 100 local people to search for the missing girl. They looked for her particularly in Březina, a thick forest in the way from Mala Veznice to Polná. When she went to Polná, Anezka always took a path across the forest.



The discovery of Anezka Hruzova

The searching party found Anezka's half-naked body lying close to the path. Her murderer had struck her from behind with a stick that was found close to the body, hit her several times in the head with stones, half-strangled her with a rope and, finally, slit her throat from ear to ear with a long-bladed knife and let her bleed to death. He then dragged the still warm body deeper into the woods. The murderer did not attempt sexual intercourse with the dead girl. He dropped her face down on the ground, covered her with young spruce trees and hid most of her clothes nearby. He took away with him several items belonging to her as well as a portion of her shift which he cut off with his knife.

What immediately drew the attention of the searching party was the deep gash across Anezka's throat and the little blood that had gathered under her body. They were reminded of the manner in which Jewish butchers slaughter cattle. As they stood round the dead girl, a cry came out from their midst: 'She has been killed in the *kosher* way!'

Rumours rapidly spread round Polná that a ritual murder had been committed in the woods. The centuries-old legend that the Jews use the blood of Christian virgins mixed with their unleavened bread in Passover rites - known as the 'blood libel' - was quickly revived. While the *gendarmérie* followed their usual procedures in the search for the murderer, the enraged citizenship, led by the Mayor of Polná, conducted a parallel investigation fuelled by their unshakeable belief in Jewish ritual murder.

Unsurprisingly, 22-year-old Leopold Hilsner, a local Jewish drifter, was suspected of being the murderer. He had no

alibi for the time of the murder and might in fact have been in the woods on that day, although there was no other evidence against him. On 4 April 1899, however, he was arrested. On hearing about his arrest, tumultuous mobs broke the windows of Jewish shops and pillaged Jewish homes in Polná and its environments. Half of the 250 Jews who lived in the area were forced to leave their homes, the workers in Jewish-owned factories went on strike and hundreds of postcards showing Anezka dead in the woods flooded all Europe.

Hilsner never admitted the crime of which he was accused. He did not have the murder weapon in his possession at the time of his arrest and his clothes were not bloodstained. He neither knew Anezka nor had any reason to kill her. Medical specialists confirmed that, though he was of low intelligence, he was neither insane nor a sex maniac. But he was a simple-minded man, known to dispute even totally unimportant facts, and seriously damaged his case by telling inconsequential lies. He rapidly became the prime suspect.

Yet he was not the only one. Anezka's brother, Jan Hruza, was a brutal and cruel man who had quarrelled violently with his sister some ten days before she was murdered. At the time of her death, he was ploughing a field not far from the murder site. He had been in Polná on Thursday, 30 March, but did not ask the dressmaker for Anezka, although she had not returned home the previous evening. This was not all. Not far from where Anezka's body lay had been found a piece of cloth, obviously cut from an apron, which the murderer had used to wipe off the young girl's blood from his knife. The portion of apron bore traces of lime, which is used to make mortar. Jan Hruza was a bricklayer.

From the beginning, the investigation was dogged by incompetence. People walking on the crime scene in the woods had obliterated any evidence that could have existed. The post mortem carried out on Anezka's body by two physicians from Polná was incomplete and deeply flawed. For instance, they omitted to examine Anezka's clothes for traces of semen and consequently excluded the possibility that her murder was a sex crime. Nothing stood now on the way of the assumption that she had been the victim of a ritual murder.

Some investigators were of the view that Anezka had been killed elsewhere and taken later to the woods. They searched exhaustively the Hruza home but found nothing suspicious. It must be recalled, however, that Anezka was murdered on the Wednesday before Easter. It was then usual in Bohemia to clean and repaint houses before Easter. If any evidence relating to the murder existed in the Hruza home it was destroyed as the house was cleaned and repainted.



Leopold Hilsner



The Hilsner Process

In September 1899, Leopold Hilsner was brought to trial for the murder of Anezka Hruzova at Kutná Hora. At that time, anti-Semitism was a political weapon commonly used by nationalists and radicals in their battle against the forces of social democracy and the concept of Jewish ritual murder fit neatly into their political campaigns. Several Jews had been brought before the courts in the years immediately preceding the Anezka murder case. Public opinion, goaded by newspapers, politicians and parliamentarians in Vienna, then capital of the Empire, was strongly against Hilsner. The Czech nationalist and radical parliamentarian Dr Karel Baxa, the attorney for the Hruza family, played a key role in Hilsner's trial as a conductor for the hostility against the defendant.

The statements of the witnesses for the prosecution were vague and contradictory. Were we to believe them, we would have to conclude that Hilsner must have been something of a wizard, since he was seen on at least four

different spots at the same time. Several witnesses had seen an unknown young man whom they described as 'nasty-looking' in the area. A priest saw this man on the day before the murder. The wife of the Mayor of Mala Veznice saw him at approximately the time of the murder carrying a long wooden stick similar to the stick later found close to Anezka's body. Neither of these witnesses identified Hilsner as that man. But one of the main witnesses, one Petr Pesak,

persuaded the jury that he had recognised Hilsner with the naked eye at a distance of nearly 800 yards. Although it was later demonstrated that this was impossible, the jury believed him.

Long before the trial was over, however, public opinion had declared Hilsner guilty. Collective hysteria about ritual murder went on and on. Every murder committed during that period was thought to be ritual murder. It was held that every good Czech patriot must accept the existence of ritual murder. Dr Zdenko Aurednicek, the lawyer for the defence, pointed out that Passover did not coincide with Easter in 1899 but had ended before it. It was therefore nonsense to claim that Hilsner and the Jews had killed Anezka in order to obtain the blood of a Christian virgin to mix with their unleavened bread for Passover. The three-judge court, however, rejected Dr Aurednicek's argument, claiming that the Jews had obviously chosen Anezka as a victim many days before but had no opportunity to murder her before the end of Passover. Hilsner was found guilty of Anezka's murder and sentenced to death.



Tomas Garrigue Masaryk

Yet there were people who believed in his innocence. Among them was Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, a parliamentarian and university professor who would become the first president of Czechoslovakia after the end of the First World War and the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire. Masaryk proposed the theory that Anezka had not been killed at the place where her body was found and that she was most likely the victim of a family quarrel. Hilsner's supporters appealed successfully against the decision of the Kutná Hora court and obtained a retrial for him. The new trial was held in Písek during October and November 1900. But Hilsner's enemies were ready. Not only was Hilsner not acquitted; he was accused of murdering another young woman, Marie Klimova, and sentenced again to death, this time for both crimes.

Marie Klimova was a young woman from a village near Polná. On 17 July 1898, she started out for a fair in a nearby village and never returned. On 27 October, a skeleton was found covered with branches in the woods north of Polná. The remains were identified through some articles of clothing found next to them. Portions of Marie's two skirts and black bodice were later discovered a few yards away.

The remains showed no lesions or other cause of death. Since Marie had been a strong and healthy woman, it was assumed that she had been murdered. Decomposition was, however, so advanced that not even the fact of her murder could be established with any certainty. There were at least two suspects, Marie's brother-in-law and her lover, but the case was filed away as unsolved.

Both of Hilsner's trials were closely followed not only in Austria-Hungary, but also throughout Europe and the world. German, American, Italian and French newspapers, as well as British publications such as *The Times* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, reported regularly on Hilsner's misadventures, which had become popularly known as the '*Hilsneriade*'. Anti-Semitic newspapers such as the *Deutsches Volksblatt* of Vienna and *L'Antijuif* of Paris sent special reporters to the scene.

All appeals for the reopening of Hilsner's case were unsuccessful, as were petitions for clemency. In 1901, however, Emperor Franz Josef commuted his death sentence to life imprisonment. Hilsner remained in prison until March 1918, when he was pardoned by the last Austrian Emperor, Karl I. The following year he married Therese Rosenfeld, a teacher in a Jewish school. Later he changed his surname to Heller and tried to eke a living as a door-to-door pedlar, though more often than not he did little more than wander between Vienna and Prague. Hilsner did not live happily ever after or even enjoy his freedom for long. He died of cancer on 8 January 1928, at 52 years of age, and was buried in the Jewish section of Vienna's Central Cemetery. In 1961, Anezka's brother Jan died, aged 93. There have been persistent rumours that in his deathbed he confessed to killing his sister to save himself the cost of her dowry.

What would have happened to Hilsner if he had not become the hapless protagonist of his two trials? He might have spent his life as a drifter, or perhaps as a door-to-door pedlar. He might even have been gaoled for minor offences. Shortly before Anezka's murder, he had already spent one day in prison because of a threatening letter he had sent to a former girlfriend. It is indeed doubtful that Leopold Hilsner's existence would have been very valuable or useful to society. Yet nobody had a right to imprison him for almost 19 years for crimes that he had not committed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family for accompanying me to Polná many times. I also wish to thank Eduardo Zinna for his assistance.

Sources

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ROBERT HOUSE

The Kozminski File

As a result of conducting some research through the Polish State Archives in Poznan, I have discovered the birth certificate of Jack the Ripper suspect Aaron Kozminski as well as the birth certificates of his siblings. In this article, I will briefly describe how the discovery came about and discuss the implications of the information contained in the birth certificates.

Aaron Kozminski's birth certificate would probably have been found long ago, except for the fact that archives in Poland are not centralized but housed in numerous regional archives. These places will do research for a fee, but unless you know the town from where a person was, finding such a document is like looking for a needle in a haystack and can be pretty expensive. On the 'Reconsidering Aaron Kosminski' thread on the *Casebook: Jack the Ripper* website there was a spirited discussion and a good deal of research into the genealogy of various Kozminskis and their relatives, such as the Lubnowski family. Research turned up Golda Abrahams's death certificate, among other things. But the real breakthrough was Chris Phillips's discovery of a naturalization application memorial for Israel Lubnowski-Cohen, who was probably a brother of Morris Lubnowski. Most of these memorials did not list a place of birth. As Chris Phillips noted, 'The memorials were written on printed forms, and by 1896 the form had become more detailed, including the phrase "he was born at".' Thus, Israel Lubnowski-Cohen's application, dated 1901, listed his place of birth: Klodiva (Klodawa) in the Province of Kalish (Kalicz), Poland. As Aaron's sister Matilda was the wife of Morris Lubnowski, I assumed that it was likely that the Kozminski family came from the same region as the Lubnowski family. I believed that it was worth finding out if it could be proved that the Kozminskis came from Kalish (Kalicz), so I wrote up a research request, had it translated into Polish, and sent it to the State Archives in Poznan.

For my correspondence with the State Archives in Poznan I used a Polish translator. When I received the first response from them telling me what they had found, I quickly scanned the page and read a list which contained six documents. One of these was 'dokument urodzenia - Aron Mordke Kozminski z 1865 r.' This translates to 'Birth certificate - Aron Mordke Kozminski, dated 1865.' Needless to say, I was pretty excited. The list in its entirety is as follows (translated from Polish):

1. Birth certificate - Pessa Elka Kozminska, dated 1845
2. Birth certificate - Hinde Kozminska, dated 1848
3. Birth certificate - Icek Szymche Kozminski, dated 1851
4. Birth certificate - Blimbe Laje Kozminska, dated 1857
5. Birth certificate - Aron Mordke Kozminski, dated 1865
6. Birth certificate - Mosiek Lubnowski, dated 1857

I ordered these documents, paid a US\$110 research fee and, after several months, received photocopies of the original documents.

The translation of the birth certificate of Aron Kozminski is as follows (transcriptions of his siblings' birth certificates and his parents' marriage certificate follow this article):

#21. Town Klodawa. It happened in the town of Klodawa on 17th September, 1865, [Starozakonny] Abram Jozef Kozminski, age 44, tailor, in the presence of witnesses Lajzer Pieszewski, hawker, age 70 and [Zojki] Skowronski, labourer, age 40, both living in Klodawa, showed us a child, male, from his wife Golda of Lubinowskich, age 44, born here in town Klodawa on 11th current month and year at 10 p.m. who was named (at circumcision) Aron Mordke. This act was read to the father and witnesses and signed by them (signatures)

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We welcome well-researched articles on any subject related to Jack the Ripper, Victoriana or the East End.

Please send your submissions email to contact@ripperologist.info

21. Miasto Kłodawa. Dnia 11go września, tydzień ośmiu dni
 i pięć tego pięć roku, stanął się Starosta
 honorowy Abram Józef Kozminski lat czterdzi-
 ci i cztery małżonka Krawiec w obecności sioła
 Dkwa Łajera Breszwickiego Kramana lat 45
 i pięć Józefa Krawcowskiego wyrobnika lat
 czterdziu i siedem w Kłodawie pamiętnikarzy
 okazał nam Dniem, pięć miesięcy i siedem jego Got-
 dyn Lubnowski lat czterdziu i cztery liczący
 urodzone tu dnia 11go września dnia jedenaste-
 go miesiąca miesiąca i roku o godzinie dwi-
 siątej wieczorem, któremu przy obecności
 religijnych nadano imię Aron Mordke.
 Akt ten stawiającemu Dniem i sioła-
 dcom przeczytany i przez nich podpisany
 my został. - *Lubnowski* *1865* *170* *28* *1* *1865* *170* *28* *1*
Wolny *1865* *170* *28* *1* *1865* *170* *28* *1*
 22. Miasto Kłodawa. Dnia 11go września, tydzień

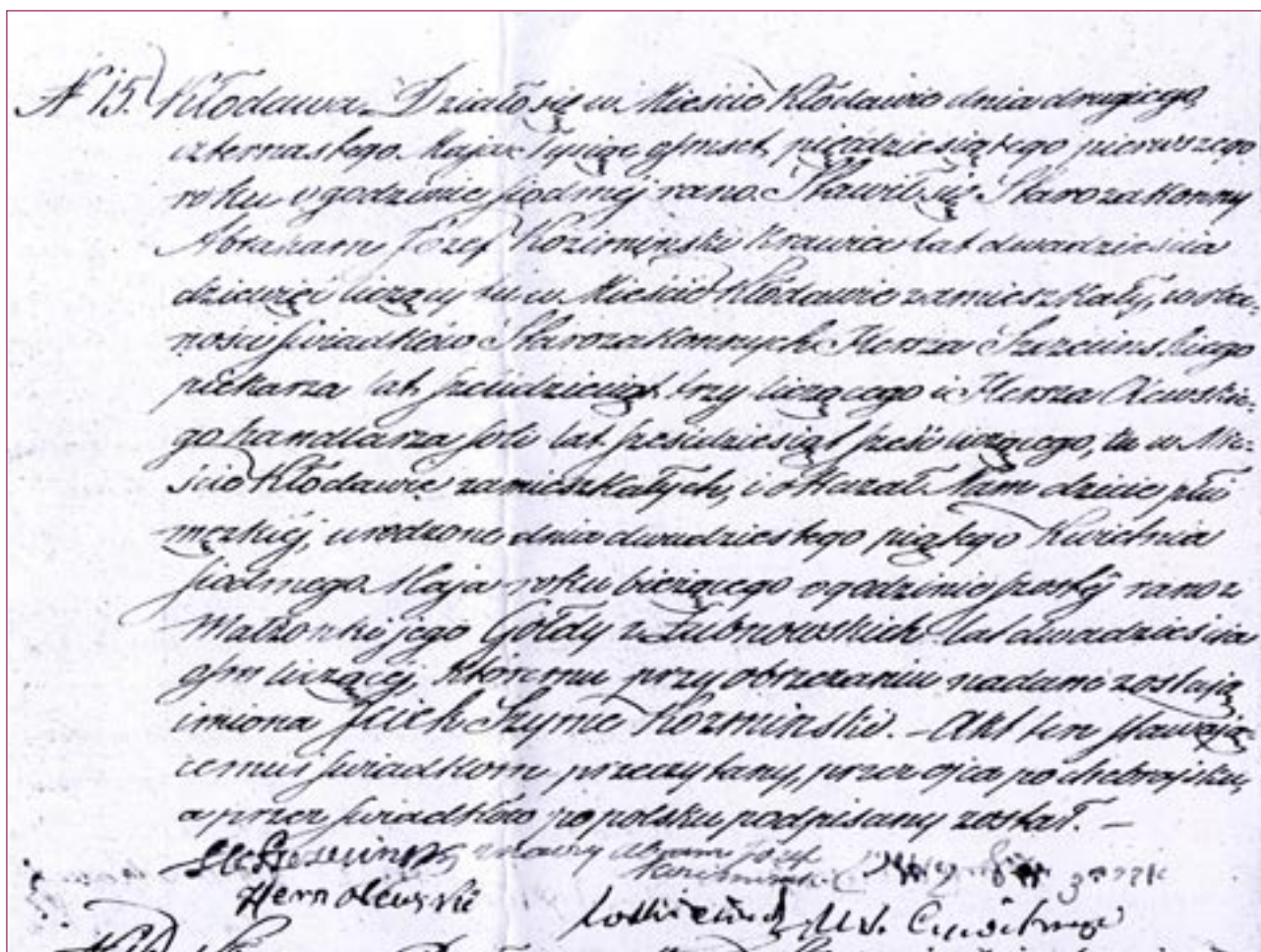
Birth certificate of Aron (Aaron) Kozminski. (Courtesy of Robert House and the Polish State Archives, Poznan, Poland.)

First, let me say that there is no doubt in my mind that this is the birth certificate of Aaron Kozminski, as Aron's date of birth, 11 September 1865, corresponds exactly to Aaron Kozminski's known age. It is interesting to note that his middle name, 'Mordke,' means 'warrior' in Yiddish. Aron's mother's name was Golda, as expected, but her maiden name proved to be quite a surprise to me. It was Lubnowska. Also included among the documents I received was one that was not on the list: the marriage certificate of Abram Kozminski and Golda Lubnowska.

Pessa, Hinde, Icek, Blimbe and Aron were clearly siblings, as they all had the same parents: Abram Josef Kozminski and Golda (or Goldy) Lubnowska. Blimbe was most likely Aaron's sister Betsy, who was married to Woolf Abrahams, as the presumed birth dates of Betsy and Blimbe were pretty much identical, based on Betsy's age in the 1891 census. Betsy was her Anglicized name. I did not receive a birth certificate for Matilda Kozminka, who was presumably born around 1856. See accompanying family tree.

It is interesting to note that the dates on these documents are rather inconsistent. It appears that it was common for people to estimate their own ages - which they often did inaccurately. For example, Golda's age on her 1844 marriage certificate is 23, which would mean she was born circa 1821, but a year later, on the birth certificate of her daughter Pessa (1845), her age is 21, which would mean she was born circa 1824. On the 1901 census for the Lubnowski family, Golda's age is listed as 82, which would mean she was born circa 1819. By the time of her death in 1912, her age is estimated as 97, which would mean she was born in 1815. We can only guess her exact age. I estimate, however, that she was born around 1823. The same types of variances in age are seen later on the 1891 and 1901 census records for the Abrahams family. In 1891, Betsy's age is 34 (born c. 1857) and in 1901 her age is 40 (born c. 1861). I thus conclude that people often had only a general idea of how old they were.

The marriage certificate for Abram and Golda gives us a good deal of information: Abram's parents were Icek and



Birth certificate of Icek (Isaac) Kozminski. This may be the same Isaac Kozminski who lived at 76 Goulston Street in 1891.
(Courtesy of Robert House and the Polish State Archives, Poznan, Poland.)

Malgorzata (Kozminski), a married couple living in Grzegorzew. Golda was 'born from a married couple [Walek] and [Rudka] Lubnowskich of the occupation of butcher, living in the town of Klodawa.' The birth certificates also tell us that Abram's profession was that of a tailor. A witness at the certification of Pessa's birth was Szymon Lubnowski, tailor, aged 33, probably Golda's brother.

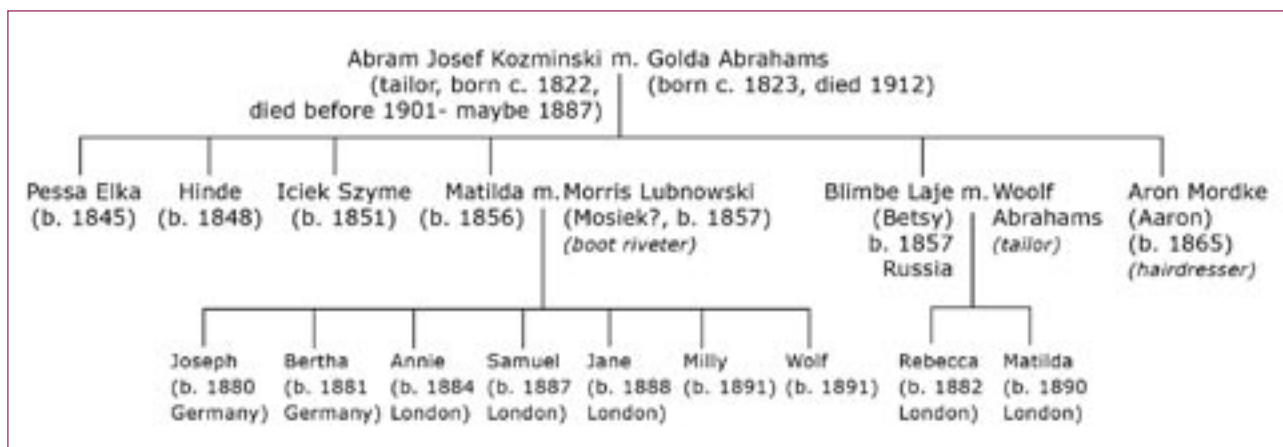
On the birth certificate of Mosiek Lubnowski (probably Morris Lubnowski), the name appears to be spelled Mosiek Abram Lubelski, although the handwriting is hard to read. On the typescript of the document sent by the Archives office, it is written Mosiek Lubnowski. His father is Jozek Lubnowski, shoemaker, and his mother is Laj, age 25. It is unknown to me why Mosiek's surname is spelled Lubelski on the handwritten document, although it is common to see variant spellings of surnames on these documents. For example, the surname Kozminski appears variously as Koziminski, Koziminskiewicz and Kozminska. It is worth noting that Polish adjectives have different forms for the genders. Surnames ending in ski are regarded as adjectives, so they, too, reflect gender with different endings. Thus Kozminski is the nominative form for a male; Kozminska is the same form for a female. As for the suffix 'ewicz,' it means 'son of.'

As Chris Phillips notes: 'The parents (of Mosiek) do look as though they match the parents given in Israel Lubnowski's naturalization records - Jozek and Laj for Joseph and Leah. So maybe Mosiek is Morris... the supposition would be that Szymon (born c.1812), Jozek (born c.1815) and Golda (born c.1823) would be siblings.' Thus it seems a distinct possibility that Morris Lubnowski and Blimbe (Betsy) were first cousins, but this is not proved.

Preliminary Thoughts and Interpretation

Golda's death certificate lists her husband as Abraham Joseph Abrahams, a master tailor. This is almost certainly Abram Josef Kozminski. As Chris Phillips pointed out, it would have been an extraordinary coincidence for Golda to have married two men both of whom were tailors named Abram Josef. It would therefore appear that Golda changed her deceased husband's surname on the record to the name of her daughter's husband (ie, Woolf Abrahams). Why this was done is not clear, but it suggests that she wished to distance herself from the name of her son, knowing that he was a suspect in the Jack the Ripper murders.

Abram Josef Kozminski's date of death is uncertain, but it was certainly before 1901, when Golda is listed in the census as a widow. There is an Abram Kozminski who died in Kolo in 1887, just a year before the Whitechapel murders. I have ordered this document but I have not yet received it. Kolo is located about 12 miles west of Klodawa, and about



Kozminski family tree. (Courtesy of Robert House.)

8 miles north of a town called Kozmin, with which the name Kozminski may have been connected. In Polish, 'ski' is an adjectival suffix meaning 'of, from, connected with, pertaining to.' Attaching the ending 'ski' to the root 'Kozmin', as in Kozminski, is a way of saying 'somehow associated with Kozmin'. Kolo is also located only about 5 miles west of Grzegorzew, from where Abram came (see map). I firmly believe this 1887 death certificate from Kolo will turn out to be that of Aaron's father.

It has occurred to me that the death of Aaron's father, just one year before the Whitechapel murder, may have been a sort of trigger. In his book, *Serial Killers: The Method and Madness of Monsters*, Peter Vronsky describes the trigger as 'a series or combination of pressures in daily life that law enforcement officers call "stressors", which at some point drive the predisposed individual to crack and act on his fantasy.'¹ The FBI's study on serial killers reported that in the case of eight per cent of the killers surveyed the stressor was the death of a significant person in the killer's life. The death of Aaron's father in 1887 may well have been such a stressor. I have also considered the rise in anti-Semitism in London at this time as an additional pressure that may have led to Aaron's becoming a serial killer.

In terms of the birth certificate of Aaron Kozminski's brother, Icek, the Polish Archives spelled his name Icek Szymche on the typed transcript of the document they mailed to me, but in the actual handwritten birth certificate it appears that his name is spelled Iciek Szyme Kozminski, although again the handwriting is difficult to read. The discovery that Aaron had a brother named Icek (Isaac) is intriguing to say the least. We know there was an Isaac Kozminski who lived at 76 Goulston Street, but it is not known if this is the same person as Aaron's brother Icek. The 1891 census lists Isaac (age 43), Elizabeth (wife), Michael (son) and Betsy (daughter) at the Goulston Street address. Presumably one could find the Polish marriage record of Icek and Elizabeth, or a birth certificate for their son Michael, which would determine if Icek (born 1851) is the same as Isaac (born c.1848), who was living at 76 Goulston Street. Again, their dates of birth may have been only estimated, as we saw with both Golda and Betsy.

It has always been assumed that Aaron Kozminski was living with one of his sisters during 1888, although there has never been any direct proof that this was the case. We know that by 1890-91 Aaron was presumably living at either Sion Square or Greenfield Street, or at both of these addresses at different times. It seems likely that there was a shared responsibility for taking care of him, so to speak. However, his residence from 1881 to 1889 has never been known. If Isaac Kozminski of 76 Goulston Street was Aaron's brother, as now seems probable, there is a distinct possibility that Aaron may have stayed at this address during 1888.

Let us briefly examine the thesis that Aaron Kozminski was staying at 76 Goulston Street during the murder series. First, this would fit better with Anderson's statement that the killer lived 'in the immediate vicinity of the scenes of the murders'² and the Macnaghten memorandum that states that Kozminski 'lived in the very heart of the district where the murders were committed'.³ Furthermore, because the Goulston Street address falls within the area the police searched house-to-house, Aaron Kozminski may have appeared on a short list of suspected men, which would better explain Anderson's statement in his autobiography, *The Lighter Side of My Official Life*:

During my absence abroad the Police had made a house-to-house search for him, investigating the case of every man in the district whose circumstances were such that he could go and come and get rid of his blood-stains in secret. And the conclusion we came to was that he and his people were certain low-class Polish Jews; for it is a remarkable fact that people of that class in the East End will not give up one of their number to Gentile justice.

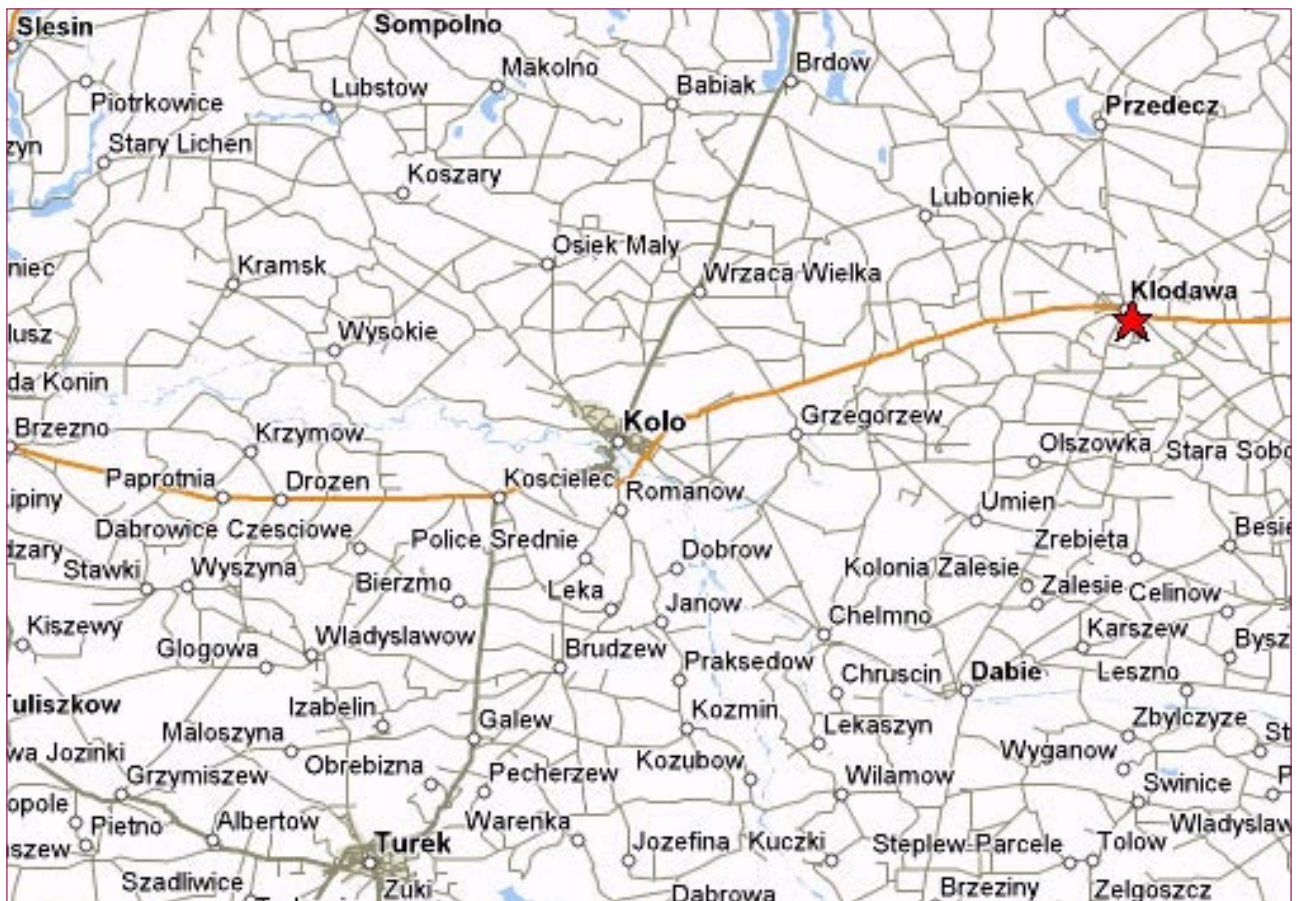
*And the result proved that our diagnosis was right on every point.*⁴

1 Vronsky, Peter, *Serial Killers: The Method and Madness of Monsters*. Pg. 289, Berkley Publishing Group, 2004.

2 Anderson, Sir Robert: *The Lighter Side of My Official Life*, page 137, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1910.

3 Macnaghten, Sir Melville: *The Macnaghten Memorandum*.

4 Anderson, Sir Robert: loc. cit., pages 137-138.



Map of Poland showing locations associated with the Kozminski family. Kolo is located about 12 miles west of Kłodawa, and about 8 miles north of a town called Kozmin, which may have been connected to the name Kozminski. (Courtesy of Robert House.)

As it is clear that Anderson believed that Kozminski was the Ripper, his statement would now make more sense. In effect, he appears to be suggesting that Kozminski was interviewed during the house-to-house search.

The Goulston Street residence would presumably fit a geographic profile of the killer even better than the Sion Street address. The murder of Tabram is the closest of all the crime scenes, which again fits the profiling theory that the first murder will be closest to the killer's residence.

Finally, there is the obvious connection with the piece of apron and the graffito found in Goulston Street, essentially the only real clues definitely tied to the case. The killer's presumed escape route after the Eddowes's murder in the early morning hours of 30 September 1888 would have been along the dark back streets, probably down Stoney Lane and Goulston Street via either Wentworth Street or New Goulston Street. This would have allowed Kozminski, if he was indeed the killer, to slip into his residence after quickly wiping his hands clean on the apron.

These are my preliminary thoughts on these new discoveries. I am still doing further research into this subject and will publish any new information that I find in due course.

As a final note, I would like to correct and update my article, *Aaron Kosminski Reconsidered*, which appeared in *Ripperologist* No. 58 (March 2005). I wrote that Morris and Matilda Lubnowski's son Joseph was born in Poland. This apparently was a significant error. He was actually born in Germany circa 1880, which means that the Lubnowskis had left Russia before the April 1881 pogroms. Their date of entry into England still appears to be 1881, but they were in Germany for longer than I had previously thought. It is still not clear when Aaron left Russia and whether he was in Germany for any length of time. He may have come later or he may have been with the Lubnowskis in Germany by 1880 or earlier. In conclusion, it is still unknown whether Aaron was in Russia during the pogroms and what, if anything, he witnessed or experienced at that time. I hope further research will uncover more information on this and other issues.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their help: Chris Phillips, whose excellent research was indispensable in finding the birth certificates of Aaron Kozminski and family, and who helped in interpreting them; and John and Laura Malcolm, for translating and interpreting the actual documents and for drinking beers and talking about the case with Elizabeth and me at the Burren in Davis Square, Somerville. Finally, my thanks to Elizabeth for listening, discussing, and putting up with my obsessive carrying on about this topic over the last few months.

Addendum

Translation of Birth Certificates of Aron Kozminski's Siblings

NOTE: Some of the documents below show dates for both the Julian Calendar (which was used in Russia) and the Gregorian Calendar. This accounts for the 12- day discrepancy in dates as, for example, on the birth certificate of Hinde Kozminska, where her date of birth is listed as 'on 13th/25th current month.' After the January Uprising in 1863, Poland's constitution was abolished and the political entity known as Congress Poland was officially absorbed by Russia. After this time, only the Julian Calendar dates were used.

#31. Grzegorzew. It happened in the town of Klodawa on 24th December 1845 at 11 a.m. [Starozakonny] Abram Jozef Koziminski - tailor, age 24, living in the town of Grzegorzew, here in Klodawa staying temporarily, in the presence of witnesses [Hersz] Szczecinski, bookbinder, age 50 and Szymon Lubnowski, tailor, age 33, living here in Klodawa, showed us a child, female, born here in Klodawa on 20th current month and year at 8 p.m. from his wife Golda, age 21. The child was named Pessa Elka. This act was read and signed by (signatures)

#18. Klodawa. It happened in the town of Klodawa on 16th/28th November 1848 at 11 a.m., [Starozakonny] Abram Jozef Kozminski, tailor, age 27, living here, in the presence of witnesses [Starozakonnych] [Hersz] Szczecinski, bookbinder, age 66, and [Jom] Londynski, labourer, age 70, both living in Klodawa, and showed us a child, female, born here in Klodawa on 13th/25th current month and year at 2 a.m. from his wife Golda of Lubnowskich Kozminska, age 25, who was named Hinde. This act was read and signed by us and witnesses. (Father) however can't write. (signatures)

#15. Klodawa. It happened in the town of Klodawa on 2nd, 14th May 1851 at 7 a.m. [Starozakonny] Abraham Jozef Koziminski, tailor, age 29, living in the town of Klodawa, in the presence of witnesses [Starozakonnych] [Hersz] Szczecinski, baker, age 63, [Hersz] Olewski, (tradesman), age 66, living here in the town of Klodawa, and showed us a child, male, born on 25th April, 7th May, current year at 6 a.m. from his wife Golda of Lubnowski, age 28, who in circumcision was named [Iciek] Szyme Kozminski. This act was read, signed in Hebrew by father and in Polish by witnesses. (signatures)

#14. It happened in the town of Klodawa on 26th July/7th August 1857 at 6 p.m. [Starozakonny] Abram Jozef [??] Kozminski, tailor, age 36, living in the town of Klodawa, in the presence of [Starozakonnych] Majer Studentkowski, (teacher), age 54 and Lajzer Rzeszowski, publican, age 62, both living in the town of Klodawa, and showed us a child, female, born here in Klodawa yesterday at 5 a.m., from his wife Golda of Lubnowskich, age 35, who was named Blimbe Laje Kozminska. This act was read and signed by everyone. (signatures)

#1. It happened in the town of Klodawa on 2nd/14th January 1857 at 9 a.m. [Starozakonny] Jozek Lubnowski, shoemaker, age 42, living in the town of Klodawa, in the presence of witnesses [Starozakonnych] Majer Studentkowski (teacher), age 54 and Lajzer Rzeszowski, publican, age 62, both living in the town of Klodawa and showed us a child, male, born here in Klodawa on 6th current month and year at 8 a.m. from his wife Laj, age 25, who at circumcision was named Mosiek Abram Lubelski. This act was read and signed by witnesses. (signatures)

Translation of Marriage Certificate of Aron Kozminski's Parents

#18. Klodawa. It happened in the town of Klodawa on 8th December 1844 at 3 p.m. [Starozakonny] Szmul Zelig Korek local Rabbi together with [Starozakonny] Abram Jozef Koziminskiewicz, age 22, born from [Idek] and Malgorzata, married couple living in Grzegorzew and Golda Lubnowska, single woman, age 23, born from a married couple [Walek] and [Rudka] Lubnowskich of the occupation of butcher, living in the town of Klodawa, certified that in front of him today, Abram Jozef Koziminskiewicz and Golda Lubnowska got married in the presence of witnesses Hersz Szczecinski, bookbinder, age 58, [Walek] Kniawski, tradesman, age 50, both living in the town of Klodawa. In the town of Buznica there were three announcements made prior to the marriage, on 23rd and 30th November and 7th December current year. In Klodawa oral permission was given by the present fathers for the marriage and there were no objections for the (young couple) to be married. The newly married certified that there wasn't any agreement made prior to the wedding. This act was read and signed by (signatures)

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Ruairdh Mac Dhòmhnaill

The Life and Times of Roderick Macdonald, Coroner (1840-1894)

ROBERT LINFORD, JOHN SAVAGE AND DAVID O'FLAHERTY

A 'Fantastical' Scheme

Flirting with the western Scottish coast, almost kissing it, floats the misty island of Skye, home to the Cuillin mountain range, Talisker single malt whisky (reputed to be one of Robert Louis Stevenson's favourites), a significant population of Scottish Gaelic speakers, and Flora Macdonald. Miss Macdonald occupies a special place in Scotland's history.

Her story, celebrated in *The Skye Boat Song*, begins when the Battle of Culloden ended the Jacobite Rebellion in 1746, forcing the Stuart (or Jacobite) pretender to the British throne, Bonnie Prince Charlie, into hiding in the Hebrides. He hopped from island to island desperately trying to avoid English militias, but ultimately found himself trapped on South Uist with nowhere to run. It happened that at the same time there was also present on South Uist a resident of the neighbouring island of Skye, twenty-four-year-old Flora, who was then visiting her relatives there. Stuart sympathizers approached her to help the Prince escape to Skye, where he could secure passage to France and ultimate safety. Their plan was simple:

- (1) Avoid redcoats.
- (2) Disguise the Prince as Flora's Irish maidservant, 'Betty Burke'.
- (3) Hire a boat.
- (4) Flora should row Charles Stuart over the sea to Skye.
- (5) Avoid redcoats.
- (6) At Skye, shelter the Prince and help secure his safe passage to France.
- (7) Avoid redcoats.



Flora MacDonald

'Fantastical,' was Flora's sceptical reaction to their scheme. It would never work. She refused to help. Besides, she was no Jacobite sympathizer - her fiancé and stepfather were both affiliated with the redcoat militias. However, when the Jacobites confided to her that her own stepfather had devised the plan in secret sympathy, she paused. A meeting was arranged between her and Stuart. Perhaps she liked the looks of the young Prince, or it might have been that once she met him, Flora Macdonald simply felt kindly toward a Scot stranded in his own land. Whichever the case, she agreed to assist him.

The idealistic escape plan proved more problematic in practice than in theory. They managed to dress the Prince as 'Betty Burke,' hire a boat and avoid the redcoats, but a storm broke out during the crossing from South Uist to Skye. '*Speed bonnie boat*' urges *The Skye Boat Song*, and with the help of only a single relative, Flora defeated the rough seas and succeeded in rowing the Bonnie Prince safely to their destination. Once they arrived at Skye, they were confronted with a significant English presence scouring the island for Stuart. After some narrow escapes (at one point Flora bluffed her way past a redcoat officer), the Prince was smuggled to Portree and to eventual safety in France. Ignoring the £30,000 bounty on Charles Stuart's head, Flora Macdonald had helped

him to freedom, a Dunkirk in reverse.

At their parting, Stuart thanked Flora for all she had done on his behalf. Perhaps one day, he hoped, they would be fortunate enough to meet again in St James Palace when he had come into his own.

They never did. After Culloden, the Prince was unable to garner enough support for another rebellion. As it turned out, Flora Macdonald and her hired rowboat had provided the Jacobites with their last success. The English retained Scotland. They also retained Flora Macdonald for a time as a traitor, holding her briefly in the Tower of London until she was pardoned under a general amnesty.

The Bonnie Prince, the English never retained. His bonnie boat had sped.

Restored to freedom, Flora Macdonald left her home for North Carolina, where her husband fought for the British during the American Revolution as a loyalist. After the British lost that war, and Flora and her husband most of their property, she lived in Nova Scotia for a time before returning to Skye. There she lived into old age before dying in 1790, the darling of Scottish nationalism. Her burial shroud was a treasured bed sheet that Bonnie Prince Charlie had used during their adventure.

Scatter the Loyal Men

Despite the passing of months, then years, then decades, and then even the turning of the century, Scotland - particularly the Gaelic speakers of the Hebrides - waited for their daring Prince to return. Of course, he was long dead, but they needed something to hope for - since the storm Flora Macdonald and Charles Stuart had braved in 1746 continued to rage over their entire country. That storm lasted lifetimes, during which the people of Skye gathered at the ceilidh, their small intimate gatherings, swapping stories and singing haunting ballads of fantastical victories that increasingly survived only within their own memories, passed down from generation to generation. Perhaps they continue to pass them down, as they wait for their Prince still.

They had particular reason to celebrate the story of Bonnie Prince Charlie's escape. After the bright, shining moment that was Flora Macdonald in 1746, things went downhill for the Jacobite clans. Just as Charles Stuart had been stranded on South Uist, Scots found themselves isolated in their own land, not by militias, but by English policies determined to stamp out Scottish nationalism. An attempt was made to strip them of their very identity, and two months after Culloden, the London Parliament passed The Disarming Act. Besides outlawing the possession of weapons, section 17 of the Act struck at Scottish culture, prohibiting the wearing of Highland dress, 'the Plaid, Philebeg, or little Kilt, Trowse, Shoulder Belts, or any part whatsoever of what peculiarly belongs to the Highland Garb.' A first offence brought incarceration of six months. A second brought seven-year banishment overseas.¹

Some Scots were deprived of their livelihoods. Especially affected were the smallholders, the Gaelic tenant farmers known as crofters. Clan chiefs, who administered the land that crofters had farmed for generations, were forced to raise rents to pay off debts to the Crown. Soon the crofters fell into arrears. The clan chiefs became landlords and the crofters little more than their serfs. When landlords realized they could make more money using their land for sheep grazing, they evicted crofters in massive numbers from the smallholdings they had worked for centuries.

Some removed to coastal areas, where they were forced to become fishermen and harvesters of kelp - occupations that involved work in which farmers had no expertise. Others were pushed into the cities. Still more simply left, willingly or unwillingly, to start new lives in Australia or America.

After a time, landlords turned out even the lucrative sheep farmers when they discovered that private hunting preserves were yet more profitable. They converted vast tracts of farmland into deer forests. Areas that crofters had tilled and enriched for generations became vast wildernesses where the elite hunted deer for sport while the majority of Scots found themselves living in cramped city quarters in harsh economic conditions, anxiously seeking work for which they had no experience. The land that impoverished Scots could have made a living from had been transformed into overgrown amusements for the wealthy. Worse yet, deer forests were not enclosed spaces, which meant that deer often wandered onto what was left of the crofters' lands, devouring desperately needed crops.

J M Macdiarmid, a Home Rule advocate, cited figures that showed that by 1912 deer roamed freely across 4,000,000 Scottish acres. 'This rodent cancer,' MacDiarmid complained, was 'bleeding Scotland white.'² Macdiarmid would not have found Bambi cute or cuddly at all.

Macdiarmid was wrong, however. Any competent divisional surgeon examining Scotland in a mortuary would tell you that deer were only contributory factors to Scotland's demise. If we examine the order of a disease - cause and effect - the true cancer was the policy that attempted to deprive Scots of their national identity and livelihoods.

Some crofters stubbornly held to their traditions. After all, if Flora Macdonald and the Bonnie Prince had braved the storm, so could they.

The Crofter's Son

In the middle of all the post-rebellion shuffling and devastation that continued into the mid-nineteenth century, one of the crofters still clinging to his tenancy was Angus Macdonald, living in a lone dwelling at Fairy Bridge, near Dunvegan, Skye.³ He herded cattle or perhaps farmed what land he had while earning additional income as a carpenter or cabinetmaker. Living with him was his wife, Elizabeth of clan Macneil, a merchant's daughter from Stein. The Macdonalds were probably in rent arrears along with the rest of the remaining crofters, wondering when their landlord would evict them from their home. Such worries, if they had them, didn't stop them from pursuing the future. Their son, Roderick, was born at Fairy Bridge in 1840,⁴ possibly named for his mother's brother, Roderick Macneil. Roderick is a popular name among the Scottish and the Irish. Angus and Elizabeth had at least one other child, a son named Donald, for whom we have no information, except that he lived at 173 Great Hampton Row, Birmingham, at the time of his brother's death in 1894.⁵

Other than the bare facts of the 1841 census, we know nothing of the Macdonalds and their croft, and very little of Roderick Macdonald in Skye. No trace of their farm remains. From Macdonald's 1894 will we know there was an extended family with numerous cousins: Donald MacFarquhar, Mary MacFarquhar and the three sons of Roderick Macneil - we know the name of only one, Hugh Macneil. Roderick also had a friend, Peter Maclean of Dunvegan Isle, a merchant like Roderick's Macneil grandfather.

Given Roderick Macdonald's later work in the Commons on behalf of crofters, it's likely that their conditions made a strong impression on him as he was growing up. He would have attended the ceilidh and learned the Gaelic tongue. He would have heard the old stories and songs of crofting life, Scottish history and Bonnie Prince Charlie's sojourn in Skye. Perhaps the child Roderick puzzled over his lineage to see whether he was related to Flora Macdonald - though there is in fact no direct link.⁶ He would have overheard crofters' grievances against the Government, perhaps from his own father.



Roderick MacDonald.

(PHO/4/1/10 courtesy of the House of Lords Records Office, The Parliamentary Archives.)

1 T B Johnston, FRGS, Colonel James A Robertson, *Historical Geography of the Clans of Scotland: The Disarming Act, 1746*. www.electricscotland.com/webclans/geog/chapter10.htm accessed 28 September 2005.

2 J M Macdiarmid, *The Deer Forests and How They Are Bleeding Scotland White*. Glasgow: Scottish Home Rule Association, 2nd ed., 1926, 5.

3 E-mail correspondence, Maggie Macdonald, Archivist, Clan Donald Library in Armadale, Isle of Skye to David O'Flaherty, 22 May 2005. The 1841 census lists the Macdonalds as the only residents of Fairy Bridge. Rather than a village, Fairy Bridge seems to refer to a landmark, an actual bridge, natural or fabricated, that was near the Macdonald croft.

4 Michael Stenton, Stephen Lees. *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament 1886-1913* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1978), 230-31.

5 Will of Roderick Macdonald. QE/D/3/4, Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children, Royal London Hospital Archives and Museum.

6 Maggie Macdonald, Clan Donald Library.

He could only have sympathized. The life of a crofter wasn't for Roderick, yet he wanted to do something for his native island. He decided to become an educator and he left Skye for Glasgow. He attended the Glasgow Normal School, which trained teachers, returned to Skye and taught at a free charity school in the village of Lonmore, where his pupils would have been the poor and working youth.

Teaching doesn't appear to have satisfied him. Once more, Macdonald left Skye, this time for medical school. In 1867, he received his LRCS (Licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons) and LRCP (Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians) from the University of Edinburgh. He began practicing in London in 1878. In 1883, He received his MD (Durham) and FRCS (Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons), Edinburgh. He served as the medical officer for an unnamed parish in Scotland (possibly in Skye) and then in Poplar Union.^{7,8} He thus transferred the same sort of concern for the poor of Scotland to the poor of London. Police work followed, with Macdonald serving as surgeon for K division, Metropolitan Police.

The Crofters' Advocate

Although he had removed to London, Macdonald kept close to his Celtic heritage. He was a member of the Gaelic Society of London, an organization whose meetings were conducted mostly in Gaelic and whose objectives were to preserve Highland culture, its 'language, music, poetry, and literature.'⁹ The Highlands, however, would not be content to remain Dr Macdonald's hobby.

Skye maintained its influence on the transplanted Macdonald. In 1882, crofters on an estate at Braes refused to pay any rent to their landlord until he returned to them grazing land where he had placed more lucrative sheep. The landlord's simple response was to evict the crofters. This time, the crofters, fed up, would have none of such treatment. When the Sheriff sent a man out to serve eviction papers, crofters intercepted him and made him burn the documents. Overwhelmed, the Sheriff asked for assistance from Glasgow, which sent fifty constables to Skye to control the angry crofters. The Sheriff and constables marched on Braes, where a hundred men, women, and children armed with sticks and stones first confronted them and then charged them. The police managed to arrest a few, but the uprising presented grave implications. Jonathan MacDonald, curator of the Skye Museum of Island Life, writes, 'it was clearly established that law and order could not be enforced without military assistance... There were clearly two alternatives; Parliamentary Inquiry and legislation, or a state of emergency.'¹⁰ One way or another, the crofters had tired of confining their activities to the *ceilidh*. Another incident in Glendale succeeded in capturing English attention for 'The Crofter Question,' which became a topic of national debate.

In the middle of the debate was Dr Roderick Macdonald. In the wake of yet further crofter unrest, Macdonald participated in a successful attempt to lobby the Government to appoint a Royal Commission of Inquiry to investigate the crofter question. Macdonald's London-based pro-crofter group called for Highland land reform, reasoning that depopulation of the Highlands was intolerable. Emigration to America and Australia was not a viable solution for the crofters' troubles but reform was. As Thomas Wakley had secured medical and coronial reform by becoming a coroner, the crofters' advocates could secure policy change by entering the system of government. The pro-crofter movement had made their choice between legislation and uprising: they would fight the new Culloden in demonstrations across Britain, and eventually in Parliament itself.

During a meeting at Exeter Hall on the evening of 7 March 1883, Macdonald's pro-crofter group formed the London-based Highland Law Reform Association.¹¹ The autumn of 1884 found Macdonald marching in the front ranks of a joint demonstration of the Edinburgh, Glasgow and London branches of the Reform Association held at the reformists' stronghold, Dingwall in Ross-shire. Speakers there denounced landlords for abusing their power, expressed their determination to repopulate the Highlands, and resolved 'to secure the return to Parliament of such men only as are known to be in full and thorough sympathy with the people on the great social question of land reform.'¹²

One of those men in 'full and thorough sympathy' was Roderick Macdonald, who, earlier in the year, had already mounted an unsuccessful campaign to represent Ross-shire in the House of Commons. Also serving as the treasurer for the Crofters' Aid and Defence Fund,¹³ he mounted another run for Parliament in 1885, armed with the Association's support.¹⁴ This time, Macdonald, along with other members of The Crofters' Party, won seats in the House of Commons, with Macdonald representing Ross and Cromarty. Nearly a century and a half after the Jacobite Rebellion, the crofter's son gained entry to the very halls that had outlawed the Highland customs of his people.

7 Hansard, 22 July 1887, Col. 1817.

8 Stenton and Lees.

9 'Gaelic Society of London,' *The Times*, 9 June 1877.

10 Jonathan MacDonald, 'A Short History of Crofting in Skye,' pages.eidosnet.co.uk/~skye/crofting.html accessed 3 October 2005.

11 'The Highland Crofter Question,' *The Times*, 8 March 1883.

12 'Highland Law Reform,' *The Times*, 4 September 1884.

13 'Canadian Aid for the Crofters,' *The Times*, 10 December 1885.

14 'The Crofters' Conference,' *The Times* 3 September 1885.

The Crofters' Party wasted no time. They resurrected a crofter's bill of 1885 and got it passed in 1886. The Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act offered the crofters some measure of protection from the landlords. It established a Crofters' Commission composed of three members of whom one had to be able to speak Gaelic and one had to be a member of the Scottish bar. The Act recognized the crofters' right to permanent use of their holdings, the customary Highland practice, which offered them some protection from arbitrary evictions and 'rack-renting', the increasing of rent on expiration of leases. The Commission also had the power to review arrears, and in some cases, to dismiss them altogether.

The crofters now at least had some security of tenure, although the Act did not address the issue of deer forests. On 31 August 1886, Macdonald made a lengthy speech in the House and addressed the topic of the hunting preserves:

*Nobody denies that there may have been an influx of wealth into the Highlands since the conversion of large tracts of land into deer forests; but I would point out that this wealth is not spent in the Highlands, nor is it spent in connection with deer forests themselves, except in the payment of the gillies. The owners of the deer forests take their own servants and provisions with them from London; they buy nothing in the locality, and all they spend is what they give to their gillies, who are a portion of the population of whom the people have certainly not too much reason to feel proud.*¹⁵

Macdonald also advocated a section of the Act that authorized the Fishery Board of Scotland to advance loans provided by the Treasury for the purpose of building and repairing boats, nets, etc. He countered an opposition that feared the loans would not be repaid:

*I have failed to hear any promise whatever on the part of the right hon. Gentleman [Mr A J Balfour, Secretary for Scotland] of assisting the crofters in stocking their crofts. I have no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman would willingly do something in that direction; but there are other reasons which may influence his Colleagues in declining to support him. It has been suggested on the other side of the House that it would not be a bad thing to make loans to the Island fishermen. We have been told, in reference to similar advances which have been made in Ireland, that the Irish small tenants have paid off every halfpenny of the loans granted to them. Although we know very well that the landlords have not repaid their loans, the small tenantry of Ireland have. Then, what is there to prevent the Government from granting loans to the people of the Highlands and Islands for the purpose of obtaining boats and nets and other implements, to enable them to carry on the fishing industry? Surely that would be a far better way of spending the public money than throwing it into the sands of Egypt or the swamps of Burmah.*¹⁶

Until his retirement from the House in 1892, Macdonald remained an advocate of his father's people. When it was proposed to turn an extensive sheep farm in Garbat, Ben Wyvis, into a deer forest, he reminded the Commons that people from the congested Highland districts might better occupy the land.¹⁷ When officers of the Crown and sheriffs tried to collect arrears before the Crofters' Commission had had time to deal with the cases, Macdonald complained in the House of Commons.¹⁸

The surgeon addressed the cause-and-effect of Macdiarmid's later cancer diagnosis. Let's leave Macdonald's crofter advocacy with his warning that the crofter problem was only an element of a much greater difficulty: the general English policy toward the Celts:

*Still, talk as you like about putting down the crofters, every man of common sense in this House must know that the crofter agitation will never be allayed until these people get justice. The Government must bear in mind that they have a Celtic population to deal with. The Celts of Ireland, Wales, and Cornwall will never tamely submit to be deprived of their rights by the landlords. No doubt, the land of the Saxon has been taken away without a word of remonstrance on his part; but it is very different with the Celt. His idea of the tenure of land is the reverse of that of the Saxon, and when the Celt has got his way you may depend upon it that the Saxon also will begin to see that he has been robbed, and will stand it no longer.*¹⁹

East End Medical Practitioner and Medical Officer

While most of Macdonald's attention was focused on crofters, Hansard also offers us a glimpse of Macdonald the East End medical practitioner and medical officer. On the subject of how public vaccinations were implemented, he said:

I am opposed to public vaccination, and I will explain why. A public vaccinator is appointed for a district wherein he may not be a resident. Children are brought to him to vaccinate. He may see one child which is apparently healthy and take matter from it with which to vaccinate others. He knows nothing about the child; he may never have seen it before it was brought to him to vaccinate; he knows nothing about the constitutional history of its family. Possibly, a

15 Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, 1830-1891, Vol. 1-356 (London: T.C. Hansard). 31 August 1886, Col. 957. 'Gillies' were professional hunting guides.

16 Hansard, 31 August 1886, Col. 958.

17 Hansard, 10 February 1887, Col. 1084.

18 Hansard, 15 February 1887, Col. 1588-92.

19 Hansard, 31 August 1886, Col. 959.

month afterwards, when he sees the child again he will find it suffering from syphilis. The system of public vaccination is wrong, because every man is bound, or ought to be bound when he takes vaccine lymph from a child, to know the history of the child... I think it would be wise of the Government to grant a commission of Inquiry into the system of public vaccination. I have seen evils arise from the system. I have seen deaths follow vaccination, but they have not been really due to vaccination. If after vaccination a child has a skin disease and dies, the mother and father consider it has died from syphilis produced by vaccination when it has died through the sins of its parents... All this talk about death from vaccination is, to my mind, perfect nonsense.²⁰

In other words, the doctor should know his patient. Macdonald went on to criticize Leicester for opposing vaccination laws and failing to provide smallpox vaccinations.

On the issue of factory inspections, Macdonald spoke about the surgeon's role in helping facilitate safe working conditions, specifically talking about his own difficulties as a medical officer responding to accidents.

*When an accident occurs the medical man, who looks after the district, goes and sees the machinery, examines the man and the nature of his wounds, takes the man's evidence, and satisfies himself that the machinery is as it was when the man was wounded. Then he sends in his Report to the Inspector of Factories, so that if the machinery was changed in any way the Inspector could not fail to be aware of it. That is the system, and so far as I know there is nowhere any departure from it. I must say that, in my experience, accidents are not always reported. I have sometimes found them out by the newspapers after the inquest was held, and I have gone to the works and said - 'Did not you have such and such an accident the other day?' The reply has been - 'Yes, there was; but we forgot to let you know about it.' I have sometimes heard of accidents months afterwards, and they were never reported by the people at the works...*²¹

Those are the words of an aspiring coroner. Here we have a man who was politically experienced, medically qualified, with an eye for improving the public health, and a sound knowledge of the labouring classes and their working conditions - not only in Scotland, but also in the East End. At the time he made the remarks quoted above - July 1887 - he had already unsuccessfully campaigned for the office of East Middlesex coroner, losing a December 1886 election to Wynne Edwin Baxter.

Aspiring Coroner

The tenacious Macdonald had suffered political defeat before, in Ross-shire, only to mount his successful second campaign for a seat in the Commons, representing Ross and Cromarty. Normally, failed candidates would have to wait for sitting coroners to die before having their opportunity to try again. After losing the 1830 East Middlesex election, Thomas Wakley had waited nine years for a vacancy to open up in West Middlesex before gaining his office.

Macdonald, however, would not have to endure such a long wait. Even before the December 1886 contest for East Middlesex had commenced, the Middlesex magistrates had already proposed a division for that district. We write proposed, because by the time of the December election, the division still had not occurred, and would not occur until the spring of 1888. This was somewhat unusual because divisions typically happened after the death of sitting coroners, but before subsequent elections took place. The timing of the alteration had repercussions. Salaries were based on the size of districts - mileage covered and the number of inquests held. The candidates Wynne Baxter had defeated could console themselves that very soon, there would be a new vacancy, a new district, and a new opportunity to gain an office. Because the division came after the election, the idea that the new office would be cut from Baxter's rib - and pocketbook - might have further warmed the hearts of his opponents. The 1886 election had been particularly... rowdy.

We would do well to examine, as best we can, not only those 1886 and 1888 elections, but also the circumstances under which the coroner's district of North East Middlesex came into being. Before we can know Macdonald the coroner and truly understand the Mary Kelly inquest we need to visit Wynne Edwin Baxter and the eternal nemesis of all Middlesex county coroners, the Magistrates' Bench.

November 1886: A Divisive Division

Sir John Humphreys, coroner for East Middlesex, was dead. As was usually the case when sitting coroners died, the Middlesex magistrates seized the opportunity to reassess individual districts, as they were entitled to do pending Royal approval, under Section 2 of The Coroners' Act of 1844. Section 3 required the Justices to confer with coroners about redistricting. Readers with an appreciation for law will notice the language mentions nothing about listening to coroners, much less agreeing with them.

And be it enacted, That the Clerk of the Peace shall give Notice of any such Resolution to every Coroner for such County, and of the Time when the Petition will be taken by the said Justices into consideration, and the Justices shall confer with every such Coroner, who shall attend the Meeting of the Justices for that purpose, touching such Petition, having due Regard to the Size and Nature of each proposed district, the Number of the Inhabitants, the Nature of

²⁰ Hansard, 22 July 1887, Col. 1817-18.

²¹ Hansard, 15 July 1887, Col. 1053-4.

their Employments, and such other Circumstances as shall appear to the Justices fit to be considered in carrying into execution the Provisions of this Act; and such Petition, with a Description of the several proposed Districts, and of the Boundaries thereof, with the Reasons upon which the Petition is founded, shall be certified to Her Majesty under the Hands and Seals of Two or more of the Justices present when such Petition shall be agreed to and the Clerk of the Peace for such County shall forthwith give or send a true Copy of such Petition, certified under his Hand, to every Coroner for such County.²²

We have already seen how the magistrates had spent most of the nineteenth century keen to curb coronial activity through financial persuasion. With the reassessment of districts came reassessment of salaries. Now that coroner Humphreys was dead, East Middlesex came under inspection at the Sessions on 25 November 1886. Its population had surged over the years; its coroner made too much money - a dangerous thing if one wanted to exert control over him, as the following account of the Middlesex Sessions in *The Times* shows:

The CHAIRMAN called attention to the vacancy that had occurred by the death of Sir John Humphreys in the coronership of the Eastern District of the county. He said he thought that that was a proper opportunity for dividing the district, which had grown vastly in population since it was constituted in 1862. It had now three-quarters of a million inhabitants, and the work was too much for one man. In consequence of the increase of work they had also increased the salary, until it had reached a much larger sum than it was ever intended to pay a coroner. He moved that they should take the initial step towards a change by forwarding a petition on the subject to the Queen.

ALDERMAN SIR W. LAWRENCE asked whether their action would have any effect on the election of the new coroner.

The CHAIRMAN said that with that they had nothing to do, but the new coroner appointed would have to consult with the Bench on the question of salary. He would not be elected at the present salary as a matter of course.

SIR W LAWRENCE said he thought that statement should be made as publicly known as possible. It might prevent many persons coming forward and contending for the office.

The CHAIRMAN agreed that this was desirable, and moved the following resolutions: 'That a petition be presented to Her Majesty praying that the Eastern District of the county, as constituted by Order in Council made on the 7th day of June, 1862, for the purpose of 'an Act to amend the law respecting the office of county coroners' be altered or divided; and that it be referred to the Committee for Accounts and General Purposes to consider and report to the Court as to the manner in which the alteration or division should, in the opinion of the committee, be effected, with power to confer with the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and also to report upon the salaries which they recommend should be paid to the coroners to be appointed in respect of the altered or new districts; and that the clerk of the peace do advertise the resolution to present a petition to alter the coroner's Eastern District of the county in The Times, Standard, Daily Telegraph, and Daily News three times; and also give notice of the resolution to the candidates whose names become known to him.'

*Those resolutions were seconded by SIR W WYATT and unanimously adopted.*²³

The resolution for the alteration was published the next day in *The Times*.²⁴

Immediately we see that, although there was a proposal that the Committee for Accounts and General Purposes review salary, notify candidates, and consult coroners, nothing about jurisdiction was decided before the December election. There was a very good reason why alteration should have been made before the election. With salaries based on the number of inquests, any redistricting - by affecting the coroner's activity - would have an impact on his income. As we are about to see, this was going to present a legal problem, although the magistrates don't seem to have realized or cared. Salaries were based on five-year averages to be fixed on the election of a new coroner and only revised after the five years were up - not at the magistrates' pleasure. Parliament's reasoning behind the period had been simple: protect the coroner from the magistrate seeking to disallow inquests by restricting their fees and protect the magistrate from the salaried coroner who had become lazy.

Now, perhaps there was no time to alter the district before the December 1886 election. Humphreys had died, and the freeholders had to elect his successor. Furthermore, the Queen had to approve the petition of alteration. Humphreys would have had a deputy who might have held inquests while the question of alteration was decided. However, the deputy's tenure would have expired with the death of the sitting coroner.

What the magistrates really needed was an acting coroner, a temporary coroner, to fill the gap between vacancy and appointment. A similar situation would occur in 1892 with the death of West Middlesex coroner Thomas Diplock. Diplock had been ill with cancer; his deputy, A Braxton Hicks, held inquests in his place. But with Diplock's death, Braxton Hicks' office expired. West Middlesex was also divided into two new districts, but in that case, the senior coroner, George Danford Thomas, temporarily held inquests in West Middlesex until Diplock's two successors were appointed.

²² R Henslowe Wellington, *The King's Coroner: Being a Complete Collection of the Statutes Relating to the Office Together with a Short History of the Same*. London: William Clowes & Sons, Ltd, 1905, 154-5.

²³ 'Middlesex Sessions, 25 November 1886,' *The Times*, 26 November 1886.

²⁴ Advertisement, *The Times*, 27 November 1886.

The Coroners' Act of 1844, Section 20, provided for Coroners' Acting out of their districts during another coroner's incapacity or death. We offer the example to show that there were viable alternatives to holding the election before redistricting.

In any case, the magistrates sought no alternative. The 1886 election was held with the petition for alteration not only still in progress, but also still at an early stage in its development. The magistrates were sloppy, and as a result, the coroner's district was up in the air. Magistrates had not yet conferred with coroners on the shape of alteration. Furthermore, magistrates hadn't determined salary, intending to raise the matter with the new coroner. Because salaries for county coroners were based on the average of inquests and mileage of the previous five years, usually new coroners would have a good idea of what they would earn from the previous coroner's example. In the case of East Middlesex in 1886, salary was an open question because no one knew what the division was going to look like.

The magistrates had opened a potential area for future conflict and uncertainty. Candidates had to compete for office in a district whose boundaries were undetermined, and the compensation for the chosen coroner was unclear.

December 1886: The East Middlesex Election

As we have observed with Wakley and Diplock, coronial elections were often hotly contested events, and the 1886 contest for East Middlesex coroner was no exception. Although the magistrates had advertised that they would petition for an alteration in the district, inquest-rich East Middlesex was still a prize worth fighting for. On 10 December 1886, candidates assembled for the election at the Bethnal Green Vestry Hall.

The candidates initially numbered eleven, but only five secured nominations: Thomas Beard, CC, senior solicitor of the Mansion-house Justice Rooms; Wynne E Baxter, deputy coroner for the City of London and coroner for Sussex; George Hay Young, solicitor; Dr Porter, an East End practitioner; and Dr Roderick Macdonald, MP, 'who has been for many years in practice in the East-end.' A sixth candidate, George Collier, withdrew in favour of Baxter (Collier became Baxter's deputy and later held the Tabram inquest).

Another key presence was a 'mob of roughs' that invaded the Vestry Hall, causing great disorder during the election.

Imagine the scene. Typically, the Sheriff began proceedings with a promise of fairness and a plea for calm among the freeholders. Then there would have been nominations, followed by speeches by the candidates themselves. We can expect that candidates debated the medical and legal qualifications of coroners, with Beard, Hay Young, and Baxter stressing the need for a legally qualified coroner, Macdonald and Porter emphasizing the reasons why coroners should have a medical background. Baxter would have cited his coronial experience in Sussex and the City of London. Porter and Macdonald would have cited their medical practices in the East End, with Macdonald surely talking about his work as a medical officer. Through it all, the mob 'hissed and hooted indiscriminately'. Candidates must have had to shout to make themselves heard, if they were heard at all. Fistfights broke out in the hall.

A show of hands determined the outcome of the election. Hay Young trumped both Baxter and Macdonald, winning the count. Baxter came in second, with the other candidates, including Macdonald, receiving 'little support.' Now elected coroner of East Middlesex, George Hay Young thanked the freeholders and the Sheriff, and 'promised to fulfil the duties of the office to the best of his abilities.'

His gratitude was premature. The disorder in the hall was, coincidentally and, fortunately for everyone but the winner, too great to determine Hay Young's margin of victory with any accuracy.²⁵ The rowdy mob had clouded the result with noise and violence. The other candidates demanded a poll, which was granted.

At the end of the year, participants in the election violence appeared in the Worship Street police court. The hearing provides us with some detail of the nature of 'the mob' - some of whom were termed 'Baxter's Lambs.' Coronial politics were not pretty. We've seen how William Hardwicke had threatened Thomas Diplock's election by appealing not only to the Queen's Bench, but also to the Middlesex magistrates and had succeeded in stopping payment of Diplock's salary. Wynne Baxter also had a strategy, and probably multiple strategies; his use of his rowdy 'Lambs' was particularly effective. The *East London Advertiser* of 1 January 1887 described the scene in court:

On Wednesday, at Worship-street Police-court, before Mr Hannay, Ephraim Brookes, described as an accountant, of 729, Commercial-road East, was summoned for having, on the 10th December, committed an unprovoked assault on Mr William Upton, whip-maker, Mile End-road, at the Bethnal Green Vestry Hall. Mr Ernest Beard, barrister, appeared for the complainant, defendant conducting his own case. Mr Beard said that on the day named the parties attended the Vestry Hall at Bethnal Green, for the purpose of taking part in the nomination of candidates for the coronership. It was admitted by the defendant that he was there in the interest of Mr Wynne Baxter, and complainant seconded the nomination of Mr Thomas Beard, CC. Mr Upton said there was a disturbance on the stairs of the hall as he was entering, owing to some fighting men having been employed to get up a disturbance, and their trying to force their way in. The defendant stood on the stairs shouting 'Tickets, tickets.' Witness had shewn his ticket of admission to the person inspecting the same, and had been allowed to pass, when he was suddenly seized by the throat by a person who was two steps above him, and whom he afterwards found to be the defendant. He struggled to get loose from

²⁵ 'Election of a Coroner,' *The Times*, 11 December 1886.

him, as he was being strangled, when Mr A Furness, who was above him, and had seen the attack, pulled defendant off, but not before witness was nearly exhausted. When he had somewhat recovered he asked the official whether Mr Brookes was authorised to stop him, and was told that he was not. During the proceedings of the nomination he drew the attention of the sheriff to the assault, and when they got outside, Brookes said it was a mistake; he was sorry, and the best way to settle it was for complainant to strike him on the nose. Complainant felt the effects of the assault for several days, and was ignorant of any reason for the attack. In cross-examination by defendant, complainant said he had known Brookes since 1868, and they had worked on different sides in political matters, but had never had any personal quarrel. Mr Ernest Beard said that was an attempt to show motive. Complainant was corroborated by Mr Alfred Furness and Mr H Furness, of Mile End, as to the assault, and by Mr W J Upton, his son, as to the apology offered by defendant afterwards. In cross-examination Henry Furness said he had been employed as a canvasser for Mr Thomas Beard, and defendant was engaged by Mr Baxter. Defendant asked: 'Did you hear of the men trying to force their way into the hall without tickets?' The witness said he had, and the men were called 'Baxter's lambs.' Mr E Beard: And you also heard of the fighting men? - Witness: Yes, I did. The defence was a complete denial of the assault. Defendant said he had never touched Mr Upton; when accused of it at the time he denied it, but said if Mr Upton thought he had he would apologise to him. The proceedings at the nomination were very disorderly, and there was a rough crowd, many trying to force their way into the hall. If Mr Upton was touched it was not by him, and it was excusable in the excitement which was prevalent. He called two witnesses - the hall-keeper and Mr Baxter, of Bethnal Green - to prove that they had not seen him touch the complainant. They said from the position they were in they thought defendant did not touch complainant, but in cross-examination they said an assault of the kind might have been committed, whilst their attention was directed elsewhere. Mr Hannay said the case was a peculiar one, as there was no apparent motive for the assault, as the parties had been on friendly terms for many years; and it was equally true that complainant had no motive for bringing a false charge. He was of opinion that an assault had been committed, and that a substantial fine should be imposed. He should fine defendant 40s, and he must pay the costs, 23s. - Defendant said he should appeal.²⁶

Apparently, Baxter's attention was directed elsewhere - at cutting the political legs from underneath the new, tentatively titled East Middlesex coroner. He brilliantly succeeded at the poll held on 13 December, receiving 1,401 votes to Hay Young's 696. Think about the fact that Hay Young won the show of hands and compare that to the 13 December poll, in which the race wasn't even close. It was a tremendous reversal - a testament to the effectiveness of what must have been a considerable political machine working on Baxter's behalf. Indeed, besides his 'Lambs,' Baxter's election committee was composed of a thousand names that included Members of Parliament for Brackworth, Tottenham and Bethnal Green and the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works.²⁷ Roderick Macdonald, presumably with effective political backing of his own, also improved his standing by coming in a respectable second with 1,069 votes.²⁸

Candidate Thomas Beard, whose supporter, William Upton, had been assaulted, was outraged by the proceedings and threatened to take the matter before both the Public Prosecutor and the Attorney General in order to ask for an inquiry into the election's legality.²⁹ If Beard proceeded, his complaints came to naught. Wynne Baxter remained triumphant as coroner of East Middlesex - at least temporarily - that is, until redistricting made his triumph less total.

Baxter's Rib

The election over, the magistrates pondered Baxter's salary and the alteration of the East Middlesex coroner's district. Superficially, the news on the financial front appeared good for Baxter as he and other Middlesex coroners gathered before the Bench on 24 February 1887 to discuss the proposed redistricting.

*SIR H W GORDON moved, pursuant to notice: 'That, having regard to the average number of inquests held in the Eastern District of the county during the preceding five years, and also to the special circumstances of the case, this Court is of opinion that the amount of the annual salary to be paid to the coroner of the Eastern District of the county, as at present constituted, should be £2,208, and that Mr Wynne E Baxter, the coroner for that district, be informed by the Clerk of the Peace that the Court is ready and willing to agree with him that his salary as such coroner be fixed at that amount, subject to the provisions of the Acts 7 and 8 Vic., cap. 92, and 23 and 24 Vic., cap. 116.'*³⁰

In other words, Gordon told Baxter he would receive payment as if he were holding inquests for the entire district. A fair and equitable decision, considering that was exactly what Baxter was doing in 1887, prior to division. However, let's examine their citation of 23 and 24 Victoria, cap. 116 - the 1860 Act. Section 4 is critical because it addressed the five-year life of salaries. We believe it is useful to cite it in full:

On and after the First Day of January One thousand eight hundred and sixty-one, there shall be paid to every

²⁶ 'The Recent Election of Coroner. Charge of Assault,' *East London Advertiser*, 1 January 1887.

²⁷ Advertisement, *The Times*, 3 December 1886.

²⁸ 'The Election of Coroner,' *The Times*, 14 December 1886.

²⁹ 'The Recent Election of a Coroner in Middlesex,' *The Times*, 17 December 1886.

³⁰ 'Middlesex Sessions,' *The Times*, 25 February 1887.

County Coroner, in lieu of the Fees, Mileage and Allowances which if this Act had not been passed he would have been entitled to receive, such an annual Salary as shall be agreed upon between him and the Justices in General or Quarter Sessions assembled for the County for which, or for some Portion of which, such Coroner shall act, such Salary in the case of any Person holding the Office of County Coroner at the Time of the passing of this Act not being less than the average Amount of the Fees, Mileage, and Allowances actually received by such Coroner and his Predecessors, if any, for the Five Years immediately preceding the Thirty-first Day of December One thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine; and such Salary shall be paid quarterly to such Coroner by the Treasurer of the County out of the County Rate; and whenever from Death, Removal, or any other Cause whatever any County Coroner shall not be entitled to a Salary for the whole of a Quarter, a proportionate Part of the Salary shall be paid to him, or, in case of his Death, to his Personal Representatives: Provided always, that in case any such Justices and say such County Coroner as aforesaid shall be unable to agree as to the Amount of the Salary to be paid to such Coroner, it shall be lawful for Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, and he is required, upon the Application of such Coroner, to fix and determine the Amount of such Salary, having regard to such Average as aforesaid, also the Average Number of Inquests held by any such Coroner in the preceding Five years as aforesaid, and also to the special Circumstances of each Case, and the general Scale of Salaries of County Coroners; provided also, that after the Lapse of every successive Period of Five years it shall be lawful for any such Justices and such Coroner as aforesaid to revise, and thereby increase or diminish, any such Salary, having regard to the average Number of Inquests held by any such coroner in the Five Years immediately preceding, and subject in case of their Disagreement to such appeal to the Home Secretary as before mentioned: Provided always, that nothing herein contained shall in any Manner take away, alter, or deprive any such Coroner of the Right to be repaid out of the County Rate the Expenses and Disbursements which may have been paid or made by him on the holding of any Inquest as provided by the Act First Victoria, Chapter Sixty-eight.³¹

So, salaries, based on the preceding five years, had a shelf life of five years (or longer, to the consternation of some coroners such as Thomas Diplock). However, the 1860 Act also allowed for exceptions where salaries could be pro-rated: 'Whenever from Death, Removal, or any other Cause whatever any County Coroner shall not be entitled to a Salary for the whole of a Quarter, a proportionate Part of the Salary shall be paid to him, or, in case of his Death, to his Personal Representatives.' Note that despite the language 'any other cause whatever,' the exception seems to apply to a coroner's failure to fulfil his duties for a time. We must reiterate an earlier point behind the logic of Section 4. The reason for the period of five years was that before 1860, magistrates had the power of oversight over individual inquests. Then the system of remuneration had been fee paid per inquest held - a system which, as we saw in Part I of our series, made for disastrous consequences for the public health. Magistrates had short-sightedly disallowed inquests (and coroners' fees) they believed were unnecessary. As a result, suspicious deaths not apparent went undetected, for example, poisonings and cases of infant death. Salaries afforded coroners some independence from magistrates, but another intention of the 1860 clause was to protect the local authority from fears that salaried coroners would prove lazy in carrying out their duties. The legislation called for five years for the coroner to exercise his office without interference, followed by a period of review by magistrates.

What Baxter must have understood that day at the Sessions was that the magistrates promised to pay that salary *for five years regardless of whether his district was divided*. Lost in translation was the magistrates' invocation of the Coroners' Act of 1844, 7 and 8 Victoria, cap. 92. This was the legislative apparatus giving magistrates the power to petition the Crown for redistricting.³² In effect, what the magistrates said to Wynne Baxter was, 'We're going to pay you for holding inquests for the entire district until redistricting occurs. Then your salary will be revised.' That seems reasonable, but the magistrates had apparently forgotten the implications of the five-year period of review set out in the Act of 1860, believing that the power to redistrict under the Coroners' Act of 1844 allowed them to revise salaries any time they wanted, whenever they wanted. Happy with their short-sighted interpretation of law, the magistrates voted unanimously the motion to pay the £2,208 figure annually.

Now, Baxter was a solicitor. Unlike the magistrates, he understood perfectly well the language of Section 4. He had read it thoroughly. So had George Danford Thomas, Central Middlesex coroner, who was also present at the Sessions in order to give his opinion on the alteration. If the magistrates divided East Middlesex, Danford Thomas asked, what then of Wynne Baxter's salary? Would the magistrates also divide that?



Wynne Baxter ©Adam Wood

31 Wellington, 180-1.

Baxter and Danford Thomas opposed alteration of districts during the tenure of living coroners - any coroner would - because alteration of district meant alteration of salary, according to the magistrates' interpretation of law. The two coroners tried to impress upon the magistrates the finer implications of Section 4:

Mr BAXTER, in answer to a question of the Bench, said he objected to the proposed division of the district.

*The COURT then proceeded to consider a special report from the Committee for Accounts and for General Purposes, upon the reference made for the committee at the county day of the November Session to consider and report to the Court as to the manner in which the division or alteration of the district should, in the opinion of the committee, be effected; also to consider the petition which it had already been resolved should be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Eastern (coroner's) District of the county be divided or altered. The several coroners who were in attendance in consequence of notices sent to them were then invited to confer with the Court on the subject. Dr Danford Thomas said if the proposed alteration were carried out the question of compensation would arise. It was for the Bench to consider whether it would be better for the ratepayers to leave matters as they were or whether they should compel the present holder of the office to secure the compensation which counsel had declared could be claimed by the coroner whose district was divided. This question, he thought, should be fully considered. Mr Baxter took the same view of the position, but asked that the Clerk of the Peace should read the whole section of the Act under which they were proceeding. The Clerk of the Peace having read the section of the Act added that he had no doubt himself that the Act was clearly confined to coroners who held offices at the time it was passed. Mr Baxter said if that were so the magistrates might split up any district into 20 parts and so virtually deprive the coroner of the office to which the freeholders had elected him. He quoted a case that occurred two or three years ago, in which a coroner who, for alleged misconduct, was deprived of a portion of his district obtained from the Privy Council three-fourths of his salary as an annuity for life. After some further discussion, Mr Campbell moved as an amendment that the matter be adjourned until further legal advice had been obtained. This amendment was seconded, but lost. The motion of Sir H W Gordon that the petition as already drawn up be presented to the Queen was then carried unanimously.*³³

Particularly relevant for Baxter was this part of Section 4: 'After the Lapse of every successive Period of Five years it shall be lawful for any such Justices and such Coroner as aforesaid to revise, and thereby increase or diminish, any such Salary'. Therefore, it was unlawful for magistrates to revise the salary before the five years were up - in Baxter's case, before 1892.

Predictably, there was resistance to that idea. Look at the Clerk of the Peace's argument that the Act applied only to coroners working at the time that Parliament passed it. There was a question: when did the five years the 1860 Act called for run? Did the period run from 1860, or from the date of the election of successive coroners?

The crucial Section 4 went into effect 'on and *after* the First Day of January 1861' (our emphasis). Thus, previous statutes for the old fee system died on 31 December 1860 when the new Act came into effect on 1 January 1861, and it remained in effect even after passage of the Coroners' Act of 1887 that September, which made no alteration to the salary system. (33) Of course, the 1860 Act certainly applied to successive coroners. For the clerk to argue that the five years had lapsed twenty years earlier made little sense. Sir H W Gordon had just cited it as the basis for his motion to fix Baxter's salary. It was the relevant legislation on the books. Back in 1860, lawmakers had inserted it expressly to protect coroners and magistrates from one another, not only at that time, but for the future as well.

In this particular case, the term was inconvenient for the magistrates. Baxter and Danford Thomas must have rolled their eyes. Clearly, the magistrates were going to be difficult. What could Baxter do about it?

He could appeal. Discussion of 'whether [the Magistrates' Bench] should compel the present holder of the office to secure the compensation which counsel had declared could be claimed by the coroner whose district was divided' referred to Section 4's providing the coroner with an appeal to the Home Secretary, who could overrule the magistrates on the question of salary. There was also another section of the Coroners' Act of 1844, 7 and 8 Victoria, cap. 92, which appears to have remained in effect. This was Section 6, 'Provision for Coroners already acting in Districts.' It gave Baxter a second avenue of appeal to the Queen.³⁵

Therefore, if Baxter failed to impress the magistrates, he had two chances to go over their heads.

The legislation was on Baxter's side. It was illegal to revise his salary before 1892. He had two opportunities of appeal. Despite the warnings of Baxter and Danford Thomas, the magistrates, as a body, refused to listen, the motion for consideration of their views 'seconded and lost.' They essentially told him, 'Go ahead and appeal.' Besides, the

³² Wellington, 155-6.

³³ 'Middlesex Sessions,' *The Times*, 25 February 1887.

³⁴ Wellington, 254. 1887 Act, Third Schedule: Of 23 & 24 Vict. c. 116, the Act of 1860, sections one to three, section five, section six, section seven down to 'hereby repealed and,' and section nine were repealed. Section 4 remained intact. The 1887 Act only addressed the expenses of county coroners in sections 25, 26, and 27 (Wellington, 235-6). Fees per inquest for borough coroners were provided for, but they did not apply to salaried county coroners like Baxter, Macdonald, and Diplock.

³⁵ Wellington, 156-57.

magistrates had already drawn up their petition.

This episode provides a perfect illustration of the magistrates' contempt for coroners. They had 'conferred' with them, if only to dismiss their concerns and now they simply proceeded with their plans as if Baxter and Danford Thomas had never come to the Sessions. The 'conference' was merely the fulfillment of a legal obligation.

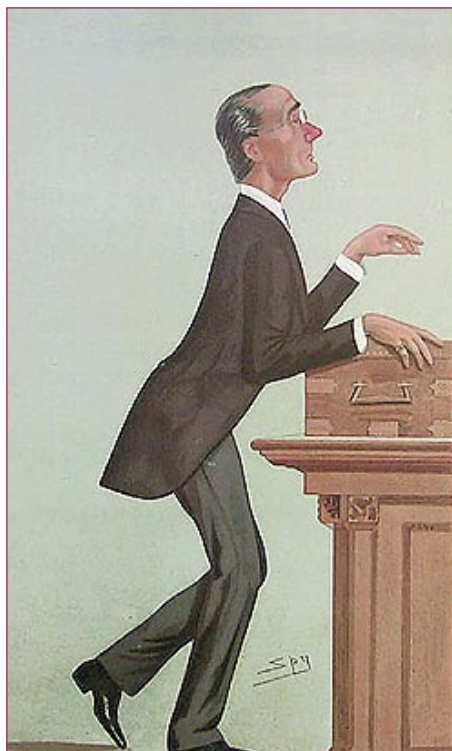
Still, the division did not occur right away. In fact, a long time passed before anything happened. The magistrates presented their petition to the Queen on 3 March 1887.³⁶ However, the Privy Council delayed their decision. They can't have spent all that time pondering the implications of the 1860 Act. Why they waited would be a good topic for future research - presumably, the Council anticipated new legislation: the Coroners' Act of September 1887 and the Local Government Act of June 1888. By this time, everyone must have been aware of the advent of the County Councils, which would replace the magistrates as the financial authority for county coroners such as Wynne Baxter.

Indeed, the concept of the County Councils had complicated the preparation of the Coroners' Act of 1887 in the House of Lords, which is why electoral reform for coroners was left for the Local Government Act of 1888 (the County Councils were not established until 1889). As noted in Hansard of 15 May 1888:

*It might be suggested that the new County Councils should have the power of appointing Coroners; but the objection would at once arise that this could not be provided in the Bill, because no such Bodies existed at the present time.*³⁷

Whatever the reason for the Privy Council's delay, the result was that all through 1887 and into almost half of 1888, Wynne Baxter remained sole coroner in East Middlesex, and the magistrates paid him accordingly. He had a year and a half to grow accustomed to that position.

Yet delay was a double-edged sword for Baxter. He had other considerations complicated by the slow-moving Privy Council. At this time, he still remained a coroner of Sussex. Now that he was East Middlesex coroner, should he resign in Sussex? On the other hand, what if the petition for alteration succeeded, and East Middlesex was divided? He might forsake his income in Sussex only to lose half his income in the East End. These concerns weren't completely mercenary; coroners paid the expenses of inquests out of their own pockets until eventually reimbursed at the Quarter Sessions. Wynne Baxter's income, therefore, affected not only Wynne Baxter, but also his inquests and the residents of the East End.



Home Secretary Sir Henry Matthews

As Baxter waited, he made use of his two appeals. The first attempt, later mentioned in the High Court, was an apparently unsuccessful petition to the Queen to reimburse him for that part of his salary North East Middlesex bled away, as was his right under Section 6 of the Coroners' Act of 1844. Secondly, per the 1860 Act, he appealed to Home Secretary Sir Henry Matthews to overrule the magistrates and fix his salary, just as Thomas Diplock in 1876 had appealed to then Home Secretary Sir Richard Assheton Cross. Although Diplock was unsuccessful with Cross, Baxter fared better with Matthews. At first, the Home Secretary doubted whether he had the power to fix Baxter's salary during the five-year period (for the same reasons the magistrates should not have), but then in August 1887, he agreed that Baxter should receive the same salary as his predecessor, Sir John Humphreys, i.e., £2,208 annually until 1892.

With the Home Secretary on his side, Baxter felt safe enough to resign his Sussex coronership. He issued a circular to the freeholders of Sussex on 28 October:

*Shortly after my election as coroner for East Middlesex the question of a division of that district was under discussion, and I therefore delayed taking the present step. Nearly a year has now elapsed without that question having been disposed of, I am, therefore, reluctant any longer to delay carrying out my original intention of resigning into your hands the office to which, through your kindness, I was elected without opposition some years ago.*³⁸

Another seven months passed. Then in May 1888, the Privy Council approved the magistrates' petition to divide Baxter's East Middlesex

district, including his salary.

On the 3d of March last year a petition was presented to Her Majesty in Council by the Justices for the County of Middlesex stating that, owing to the great increase of the population in the Eastern District, the duties of the coroner had considerably increased, and that the present salary of £2,207 14s. 8d. a year was sufficient to remunerate two

³⁶ 'The Middlesex Coroners,' *The Times*, 9 May 1888.

³⁷ *Hansard*, 15 May 1888, Col. 287.

³⁸ 'A Vacant Coronership,' *The Times*, 29 October 1887.

coroners, and praying that the district should be divided. Other petitions on the subject were also presented by the coroners for the county. Those having been taken into consideration by the Privy Council, an Order in Council has been issued directing that the district shall, for the purposes of the Coroners' Act, be divided into two districts, to be called the 'North-Eastern district' and the 'South-Eastern district.' ³⁹

The magistrates proceeded with their alterations. Baxter was in trouble again. Although the Home Secretary had fixed Baxter's salary, he had done so on the basis that Baxter was coroner of East Middlesex. Now, the magistrates held, Baxter's district had changed. The magistrates assigned South East Middlesex to Baxter, and referred the question of his new salary to their accounts committee.⁴⁰ The ultimate result was that the magistrates reduced Baxter's salary exactly by half, to £1,104 annually, which flew in the face of the five-year period outlined in 1860.

Baxter appealed to the High Court to recover the rest of his salary.⁴¹ Initially, he brought an action against the treasurer of Middlesex and two justices of the Magistrates Bench, who had agreed to appear on behalf of all the magistrates. However, passage of the Local Government Act in 1888 presented a complication: by the time the case reached the High Court in 1890, the magistrates were no longer his relevant financial authority. The new authority was the London County Council (LCC). Therefore, Baxter amended his suit, substituting the LCC for the magistrates.

In December 1890, Mr Justice Day heard the case, *Baxter v. London County Council (By Substitution)*, in the Queen's Bench Division. Interestingly, given his rather brusque treatment of Thomas Diplock in 1876 when Diplock had appealed to him against the magistrates, former Home Secretary Sir Richard Assheton Cross assisted Baxter's barrister in the case:

Mr Jeune, QC (Mr Ashton Cross with him), for the plaintiff, argued that the office was a freehold, and before the Act 23 and 24 Vict., c. 116, his salary was paid by fees. A coroner who existed at the time of the Act could have his salary fixed by agreement. If the magistrates could not agree the matter was referred to the Secretary of State, who was to fix the salary. There could only be a revision of salary after five years. The Home Secretary thought he had no power to fix a salary during the quinquennial period. He changed his view, and in August 1887, he determined the salary of plaintiff should be £2,208. If he had such power, then it would run for five years. Nothing happened to prevent his enjoying it for five years. The Order of the Privy Council having divided the eastern district under 7 and 8 Vict., c. 92, into two, the question was whether the plaintiff was entitled to the salary as fixed by the Home Secretary or to half that salary. Then there was another point - whether an action would lie against the London County Council. The plaintiff asked for a declaration, and had a right to have his rights declared. The two magistrates were nominated to represent the justices in any proceedings which might be taken by the plaintiff. The real question was that by 23 and 24 Vict., c. 116, section 4, it was intended that the coroner's salary should be fixed for five years certain. Different views were taken by counties whether the five years ran from the date of the Act or from the date of the election of each coroner. There was no direct decision upon the subject. It was intended that a salary once fixed should not be altered for a period of five years. At the end of that period it would be readjusted in the light of fresh circumstances.

Mr Dankwerts (Mr R S Wright and Mr Loehnis with him), for the defendants, argued that at the time of the passing of the Act the coroner was paid according to work done. He was paid for taking inquests in the district to which he was assigned. By the Act 23 and 24 Vict., c. 116, he was to be paid a salary in lieu of fees for taking inquests in the district he was assigned to. The plaintiff had not been assigned to the eastern district, which was divided, and so could not be entitled to salary in respect of a district in which he had never acted. That view was taken by the Privy Council. The action could not be maintained. Justices, before the Local Government Act, could not act except when they formed a Court of Quarter Sessions. The only proceedings against justices when they formed a Court was by a prerogative writ of mandamus. The effect of the Judicature Act was not to give a declaration of right against justices if it could not control their public acts. Suppose the justices were not present at the Court of Quarter Sessions, how could a declaration of right bind them? The substitution of the County Council for the justices would not give a better foundation for the action. 'Mayor and Aldermen of Salford v. County Council of Lancashire' (25, QBD, 84). The property vested in the County Council was subject to the same rights as when vested in the justices.

Mr Jeune, QC, in reply, said the two justices consented to represent the justices as defendants.

Mr Justice Day, in giving judgment, said: This was an action by Mr Wynne Baxter originally against the treasurer and two justices of Middlesex, and now against the London County Council by way of substitution, to obtain a declaration that the plaintiff was entitled to the full salary fixed for a period of five years at the amount then fixed, and for a mandamus to enforce payment thereof. The claim for a mandamus seemed to have been dropped. The real question was whether the plaintiff was entitled to a continuance of his salary for a period ending according to the commencement of the quinquennial period. The defendants contended that he was not entitled to one or other; that since his appointment as coroner the district or county had been further subdivided, and his salary as fixed had ceased; and that any salary he was entitled to was such as would have to be fixed by the Home Secretary according to the altered circumstances of the district. The facts were simple. The plaintiff was elected in 1886. Before him was Sir John Humphreys, whose salary was fixed in 1886, before the plaintiff's election. At one time it was supposed he was entitled to the salary which Sir John had received. Then it was decided that the Home Secretary should fix

³⁹ 'The Middlesex Coroners,' *The Times*, 9 May 1888.

the salary, and in the first place he decided that Sir John's salary was applicable to the case of plaintiff. Then after a few months the Home Secretary thought that the plaintiff was entitled to have his salary fixed, and he fixed it at a sum substantially the same as Sir John's. The gist of Section 4 of 23 and 24 Vict., cap. 116, was to get rid of the old payment of coroners, and make provision that they should be paid an annual salary in lieu of fees. The question was how long did the five years last. Would the period come to an end when the coroner ceased to hold office, or did it run into the period when another coroner came into his place? He had come to the conclusion the five years terminated with the coroner's life. The plaintiff therefore was not bound by the valuation made in the case of Sir John Humphreys. In the case of fixing a salary, they had to take into account the special circumstances of the case. In the revision not so, but only what the work the coroner was doing. That suggest to his Lordship's mind this - that where there was a fresh election there the salary must be fixed. The plaintiff was not bound by the salary as a revised salary of John Humphreys. In his judgment the Home Secretary was right in the view he took in fixing the plaintiff's salary, and so the plaintiff was entitled to the salary fixed in 1887, which would run on till 1892. Had he lost it by the further subdivision of the county? His Lordship thought he had not so lost it. It had to run on for five years. The period for revision was every five years. The plaintiff held a freehold office with salary annexed for five years, and he was entitled to receive it for that period. He was coroner for Middlesex, as of his old election. Having come to that conclusion, still it was clear that plaintiff could not recover in this action. His proper remedy was by prerogative writ of mandamus. This was not a matter in which an action would lie between the parties. It was never contemplated that a private mandamus was to be granted where a prerogative writ of mandamus was the proper remedy. It was said that it was a declaration of right. It could not be contended that the action could be maintained in the Court of Chancery, or contemplated by the Judicature Acts. He could not be called upon to declare rights in which he could not give any relief. He was clearly of opinion he had no jurisdiction to bind the parties to these proceedings. He never knew of an action against justices qua justices. It was said that they had given their consent. They could not give consent like ordinary people. They could only be made responsible by prerogative writ of mandamus. The plaintiff had misconceived his action, and judgment would be for defendants with costs.⁴²

Baxter was defeated on a technicality, and despite Mr Justice Day's sympathy, he lost something like £4,000 (half his salary for the years 1888-1892 at roughly £1,000 a year), and in addition had to pay his own legal expenses and those of the London County Council.

Who Cares?

You might ask, how did all this concerning coroner Wynne Baxter affect the subject of the present article, Roderick Macdonald? Here, in the ill-advised division of the East Middlesex district, we have reason to suspect a rivalry between Wynne Baxter and the pending coroner of North East Middlesex. At issue were territory and its value, not unlike the Highland clashes so familiar to Macdonald. For the East End districts of Spitalfields, Whitechapel, St Leonards, Bethnal Green, Mile End, Ratcliffe and Norton Folgate were like gold to a coroner. *If one wanted to do important work and to carry out meaningful reforms, London's troubled East End was the place to be. Sudden death and inquests - the coroners' currency - hung from the vine like morbid grapes in the East End.*

The Middlesex magistrates are partly to blame for setting up the adversarial relationship between Baxter and Macdonald. We have watched the magistrates blunder their way through nearly a century of coronial policy. Generation after generation, magistrates consistently misunderstood the office of coroner. The alteration of the East Middlesex coronial district to create the North East Middlesex district during Baxter's tenure was their last blunder before the coming of the County Councils. Since the time of Henry Hunt and Thomas Wakley, coroners had attempted to check the power of the magistrates, and vice versa. In this, their very last battle, the magistrates triumphed over Wynne Baxter *in absentia*.

Baxter could not have been fond of the concept of the creation of a coronial district for North East Middlesex. Its creation meant an unnecessarily expensive ordeal that lasted four years. Not only had he lost half his district and half his salary, he had also given up his Sussex office and the income he had derived there.

Naturally, none of this was Macdonald's fault; he simply served the district to which the freeholders elected him. It is ironic that the beneficiary of Baxter's loss happened to be a Celt. Indeed, Macdonald, the crofters' advocate, might have sympathized with Baxter over the loss of territory and income - had that not been the story of the crofters? Macdonald's Parliamentary Prophecy of 1886 was coming true for Baxter: 'When the Celt has got his way you may depend upon it that the Saxon also will begin to see that he has been robbed, and will stand it no longer.'⁴³

The magistrates had robbed Baxter - to Macdonald's benefit. Furthermore, they weren't finished robbing him. The money issue was complicated enough, but there was another aspect of the magistrates' alteration that guaranteed future conflict between the coroners Baxter and Macdonald.

40 'Middlesex Sessions,' *The Times*, 25 May 1888.

41 'Middlesex Sessions. (Before the Chairman of the Second Court),' *The Times*, 24 August 1888.

42 'High Court of Justice. Queen's Bench Division. (Before Mr Justice Day without a Jury.) Baxter v. London County Council (By Substitution),' *The Times*, 10 December 1890.

43 *Hansard*, 31 August 1886, Col. 959.

Macdonald Forever

Throughout 1887, Macdonald waited in the wings as Baxter battled the magistrates, biding his time. Although the Scot had lost the 1886 election, his respectable turnout must have encouraged him. He had run for the Ross-shire Parliamentary seat and lost, only to run again and win. Defeat, ever the Scotsman's companion, did not deter him.

As the Privy Council considered the magistrates' petition to alter East Middlesex, Macdonald prepared for the election he must have known was coming. He improved his qualifications for the office. One of the things he did was become a member of the Middle Temple and study law, completing the studies necessary to become a barrister.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The 1830 East Middlesex election had set the stage for the question, 'Which makes for a better coroner - a legal man or a medical man?' 'Medical,' Macdonald had answered in 1886. The candidate who had won, Wynne Baxter, had said, 'No, Legal.' Now in 1888, Macdonald amended his answer to 'Both.' He had learned a lesson in 1886, and now this best-of-both-worlds strategy gave him an advantage over any opponent - doctor or lawyer.

He announced his candidacy for the new district in March 1888:

*The Authorities have decided that the District of East Middlesex shall be divided into two, as far as duties of Coroner are concerned, I beg most respectfully to intimate to you that I shall be a Candidate for the vacancy created by such a division. The very large number of votes that I received at the last contest emboldens me to hope that I shall, on this occasion, be favoured with sufficient support to ensure my election. My qualifications and training render me, I hope, specially competent to undertake and perform the duties of a Coroner. My medical qualifications are MD, FRCS, LRCP, and LRCS I have been engaged in the active practice of my profession for the last seventeen years, and during the greater portion of that period in the district of East Middlesex. In the course of my professional work, it has fallen to my lot to have an unusually large experience in Coroner's inquests, and consequently I am perfectly familiar with the nature of the work and the duties of the office. I became a member of the Middle Temple with the intention of still further qualifying myself, by a legal training, for the special work of a Coroner, and I have now completed the course of study required to qualify me as a Barrister-at-Law. The importance and necessity of both Legal and medical acquirements, for the proper performance of the duties of such an onerous appointment, must be obvious to everybody. It is essential for the holder of the office, in order to weigh with discrimination both Legal and Medical evidence; and to the public, in order that their interests may be intelligently safeguarded. If elected Coroner, I should retire from general practice as a Physician. My position as a member of Parliament will in no way interfere with my duties as a Coroner. Owing to the extensive area of the District and the large number of Electors, I fear I shall not be able to do myself the pleasure of calling personally upon all my Constituents.*⁴⁵

Macdonald also secured the support of several Liberal and Radical Members of Parliament, including Samuel Montagu, MP for the Whitechapel district of Tower Hamlets.⁴⁶ Like Baxter in 1886, this meant that Macdonald had a substantial, home-grown, political machine at his disposal. As we have discussed previously, although coronial elections were described as non-political, they actually were very partisan affairs - practice grounds where political parties tested their strength. Enormous sums of money were poured into them. We have no figures for the finances of the campaign, but it's likely that besides the ground support, local politicians provided candidates with financial support.

Macdonald's opponent was Dr G E Yarrow, but he may as well have run unopposed. The election was at Hackney Town Hall on Friday, 8 June. Yarrow found little support as he faced a crowd composed mostly of Macdonald supporters. The East London Advertiser of 16 June described the scene at the nomination of the candidates:

*There was a huge assemblage of freeholders present. As Dr Macdonald entered the hall many of those present shouted, 'Three cheers for Macdonald,' followed by cries of 'All over with Yarrow.' Among those present on the platform were Under-sheriffs Birchall and Beard, and Messrs John Lobb, MLSB, B Allwright, M Young, J S Leyland, E C Baldock, Yarrow, Baldock, Gooch, J G Grimwade, M Barham, and S J Harris. Mr Sheriff Davies was the presiding officer. Mr Darling nominated Dr Macdonald, observing that as a man of long-trying experience he ought to receive a hearty support. (Cheers.) Mr Fotheringham, who seconded, said he anticipated Mr Macdonald's successful return. (Cries of 'Macdonald for ever.') Mr Young nominated Dr Yarrow, observing that his (Dr Yarrow's) long tried experience should qualify him for the post. (Cries of 'Let him take his pension.') Dr Yarrow, as divisional surgeon of police - (cries of 'Oh!') - had a very large experience. He could not have been called on to attend 700 inquests without acquiring the experience necessary for the coroner's office. Dr Yarrow would conduct his election fairly and squarely. (Cries of 'It never happened.') He was once a supporter of Dr Macdonald - (cries of 'Turncoat') - but now he had even confidence in Dr Yarrow as being a fit candidate for the office. Mr J P Leyland, in seconding, observed that he supported Dr Yarrow as being a personal friend. The show of hands was then taken amidst great shouting and continued tumult, and was largely on the side of Dr Macdonald, there being only about a dozen hands in favour of Dr Yarrow, - Mr Sheriff Davies then declared the show of hands in favour of Dr Macdonald. A poll being demanded on behalf of Dr Yarrow, it was ordered to take place on Monday.*⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Advertisement, *The Times*, 16 May 1888.

⁴⁵ 'Dr Roderick Macdonald MP's Candidature,' *East London Observer*, 7 April 1888.

⁴⁶ Advertisement, *The Times*, 16 May 1888.

⁴⁷ 'Election of Coroner for Northeastern Middlesex. The Nomination,' *East London Advertiser*, 16 June 1888.

At the poll on Monday, 11 June, Macdonald continued to muster tremendous support:

*The polling opened punctually at 8 o'clock on Monday morning, and continued briskly until 4 in the afternoon. The right of voting is limited to freeholders, and the electorate is spread over a very wide area, including Hackney, Shoreditch, St. Luke's, and Tottenham. Mr Sheriff Davies was the presiding officer, and he was assisted by Under-Sheriffs T Beard and Rose-Innes. The great majority of the voters were members of the various Radical Clubs and of the Hearts of Oak and Foresters Benefit Societies, who were entitled to vote on account of freehold property belonging to the society or club vested in the members. Many others claimed to vote as ratepayers in parishes having freehold workhouses. Of course in the latter instances the claim was not entertained, but some of the would be voters persistently argued the point with the Under-Sheriffs. It was understood that the Corrupt Practices Act does not apply to coroner's elections and a vast number of vehicles were engaged, the great majority being engaged in bringing Dr Macdonald's voters to the poll. At the commencement of the proceedings there was a rush of voters, but as the morning proceeded business was very quiet. Hourly returns were published at Dr Macdonald's committee-room in Mare-street, from which it appeared that he was polling about eight votes for every one recorded for his opponent. Polling closed punctually at 4 o'clock, when it was announced that the formal declaration of the result would be made on Wednesday.*⁴⁸

The freeholders returned a landslide victory for Macdonald. He came away with 4,367 votes compared to Yarrow's miserable and embarrassing 713 votes. Yarrow was prepared for the result, and had already composed a statement protesting the validity of the election:

*Prior to the closing of the poll the following protest was handed in on behalf of Dr Yarrow: 'To the Sheriff of the County of Middlesex, - I hereby give you notice that I protest against the validity of the election of Dr Roderick Macdonald as coroner for the North eastern division of the said county, on the grounds - (1) That the apparent return of Dr Macdonald has been secured by open bribery and corruption of voters; (2) that large numbers of voters have voted more than once; (3) that large numbers of persons, not qualified, have committed perjury in order to secure a vote; (4) that no genuine election of the freeholders has taken place; (5) that the corrupt influences and practices by which the apparent return of Dr Roderick Macdonald has been secured are known to Dr Macdonald and his agents. Dated June 11, 1888. - Signed G E Yarrow. Witness, G J Grimwade, election agent of Dr Yarrow.'*⁴⁹

Having examined several coronial elections now, we are inclined to give some credit to Yarrow's accusations. However, corruption alone would not seem to account for Yarrow's almost total lack of support. Nothing came of his accusations in any event. The freeholders of the new district of North East Middlesex had voted Macdonald their coroner. Macdonald appointed his election agent, Alfred Hodgkinson, as his deputy.



The Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury, addressing Bill Sikes in a Punch cartoon: 'If you don't say anything, it will go against you; if you do, it will be all up with you!'

The 1888 election in North East Middlesex was the last ever held in that county. Even during campaigning, and before and after, the Commons and Lords were debating the mode of appointing coroners, as they had been doing intermittently for decades. The June election coincided with that debate and, on 22 June 1888, the Lord Chancellor (Lord Halsbury) referred to what could only have been the North East Middlesex election in the House of Lords: 'There had been an election of a Coroner within the last week which had been the subject of the greatest possible complaint.'⁵⁰

Parliament, recognizing that coroners were representatives of the people and reluctant to give the power of appointment to the Lord Chancellor, decided under the Local Government Act of 1888 to give the new County Councils, which were elected bodies, the power to appoint coroners. There were still elections of sorts, with council members voting for candidates, but they were enclosed within the Councils' proceedings, and the disorder and great expenses that had long been associated with the office were removed. An age had passed.

Meanwhile, on 1 July 1888, the last popularly elected coroner in London began his work.

48 'Election of Coroner for Northeastern Middlesex. The Polling,' *East London Advertiser*, 16 June 1888.

49 'Election of Coroner for Northeastern Middlesex. Bribery and Corruption Alleged,' *East London Advertiser*, 16 June 1888.

50 *Hansard*, 22 June 1888, col. 956-8.

'Will You Kiss Me, Mamma?'

Here we give a sample of the cases from North East Middlesex that concerned Roderick Macdonald during his career as its coroner:

October 1888: *On Saturday afternoon Dr Macdonald, Coroner for the North-Eastern Division of Middlesex, held an inquiry at the Red House Coffee Palace, High-street, Tottenham, respecting the death of HENRY ELLIOTT, aged 64, a painter, of no settled residence, who, after attempting to murder his brother-in-law, committed suicide by shooting himself with a revolver on Wednesday afternoon last. John Morris, a turf cutter, of Sarah's-cottages, James's-street, Walhamstow, deposed that he was nephew of the deceased, and also of the injured man, Thomas Morris. On Wednesday afternoon the witness and T. Morris were working at Mount Pleasant-fields, removing turf, when the deceased came into the field and called Morris to him. A moment later the witness heard the latter cry 'Murder,' and looking round saw the deceased standing with a revolver in his right hand. Elliott fired two shots at Morris, one of which inflicted a wound in the forehead and the other penetrated his wrist. The witness ran towards the men, but before he could reach them the deceased put the revolver to his own head and fired, dropping down dead on the spot. Previous to the day of his death the deceased had not been in the neighbourhood for over three months. He had been in the habit of borrowing money from Morris, but latterly it had been refused him. Francis Saggs, a sweep, who was passing at the time the shots were fired, said that his attention was attracted to the men by hearing them speak very loudly. He saw the deceased draw a revolver from his pocket and fire two shots at Morris, who staggered and fell against the rail. On the witness going towards them the deceased pointed the revolver in his direction, but did not fire; and seeing other persons coming towards him he put the revolver to his temple, fired, and fell down dead. Inspector Beilby informed the Court that every inquiry had been made as to the deceased's movements prior to the day of his death, but without success. It had, however, been found that three weeks ago he sold up his home at Merton-road, Hornsey, and disappeared from the neighbourhood. He was in straitened circumstances, having spent a small fortune which had been left him some time ago. The Coroner asked if the jury would like to have an adjournment, in order to give Morris an opportunity of attending and explaining the cause of the assault. He at the same time pointed out that the case was clearly one of suicide. The jury decided to close the case, and returned a verdict of 'Suicide while temporarily insane.'*⁵¹

November 1889: Elizabeth Lowden's husband had deserted her and their two young daughters, Elizabeth, aged four years and ten months, and Lillian, three years and three months. Six months later, Elizabeth was supporting herself and her children on seven shillings a week, 'charring or doing work at home'. They occupied a single room at 26 Bracklyn Street in Hoxton that cost the single mother two shillings out of the seven shillings she earned a week. One day, Elizabeth found engagement for a day's work, and left the girls locked inside their home. She also left a fire burning to keep her children warm, with a guard to keep the flame confined to the fireplace. The door she locked, leaving the key outside for a girl who was supposedly coming to watch the children. The girl, if there was one, never came. Meanwhile, a fire broke out in the Lowdens' room. Smelling smoke, Emma Sims, a butcher's wife living downstairs, ran up to see what was happening. She tried the door, but found it locked. Apparently unaware that Elizabeth had left the key outside, Mrs. Sims burst the door open, only to be confronted by a sheet of flame that prevented her getting to the children, who perished. A fireman, Engineer Horton, told the inquest how he had extinguished the fire and found little Elizabeth and Lillian stretched out side-by-side on the bed. He believed that the fire had smouldered for some time before Mrs. Sims had discovered it. The children, he thought, unable to escape through the locked door, had sought shelter in the bed. The jury's verdict was 'accidental death'. They attached no blame to the mother, who was described as a 'steady, industrious woman'. They sent a small sum of money to the police for her benefit.⁵²

October 1890: During a late night drinking session, forty-two-year-old George Hudson got into an altercation with two young men named Williams and Ward. They knocked Hudson down to the ground twice. The second time, Hudson's head struck the curb, and he died a short time after. When Williams and Ward were arrested, each swore the other had been responsible for knocking Hudson down. At the inquest, three additional witnesses were unable to shed any light on who had done what. Because, as the High Court had opined of the first Bravo inquest verdict in 1876, it was better to attach no blame than to accuse an innocent person of murder or manslaughter, Macdonald advised that the jury's verdict should be conservative when placing blame:

*The coroner told the jury that the best thing they could do was to certify the cause of death and leave it to another tribunal to decide who was responsible for it. The jury were locked up for nearly three hours, and ultimately returned a verdict of 'Manslaughter' against both Ward and Williams, a verdict which the Coroner said he did not think would be sustained in another Court.*⁵³

51 'Inquests,' *The Times*, 22 October 1888.

52 'Inquest,' *The Times*, 15 November 1889.

53 'Inquests,' *The Times*, 14 October 1890.

Although Macdonald disagreed with the verdict and advised against it, he did not inhibit his jury.

January 1891: Yesterday Dr Roderick Macdonald, MP, Coroner for the North-Eastern Division of London, held an inquiry at the North-Eastern Hospital for Children, Hackney-road, into the death of Sampson Marshall Steadman, aged six months, the illegitimate child of a silk weaver residing at 5, Homfray-street, Hackney-wick. Mary Ann Marshall, a young girl, who gave her age as 18, stated that she was the wife of a labourer. The deceased was her child, born before marriage. Her husband had been out of work three months, so she had been obliged to go back to her work as a silk weaver, at which she could earn 6s. 6d. a week. While she was away she left her husband or her father to look after the baby.

The Coroner. - You know your child's arm and leg were broken. Who do you think did it?

Witness. - I don't know.

The Coroner. - Didn't you notice when washing the child that its arm was broken?

Witness. - No, Sir.

The Coroner. - The limbs were broken in two places, and must have been like a flail.

Witness. - I didn't notice it.

The Coroner. - I am afraid there is something more under this than we see. When did you first see the lump on the leg?

Witness. - The Sunday before Christmas.

The Coroner. - The arm was dangling days before you brought the child here. When it was put into splints you brought it backwards and forwards, till one fine day you came, and the doctor saw that the thigh had been broken. Didn't you even notice that?

Witness. - No, Sir.

The Coroner. - You are not fit to have a child. Talk of want of sense, you are worse than that. (To the doctor). How do you think the thigh got broken?

The doctor. - I think there must have been considerable violence. It is the strongest bone in the body, and I can only say that I think it could be caused by the child being held up by the splints and dropped.

The Coroner (to the mother). - I am afraid we shall not get to the bottom of this. How do you think the jury will believe you when you say you did not know the child's leg was broken?

Witness. - I know I handled it gently.

Sampson Marshall, husband of the last witness, said he knew nothing about the child being injured. He went out looking for work, and left it at home with the grandfather, and on his return always found it in the same position. Mr Edmund Percival France, house surgeon at the Children's Hospital, said the child, was brought by the mother on December 15. He was told it was suffering from lumps in the left arm and leg. He examined the child and found the bones of the arm and leg fractured. The injury must have been caused about ten days previously. The limbs were put into splints, and the child was brought to the hospital from time to time. On January 3 the mother said the child had been crying all night. Witness examined the child and found that the thigh had been recently fractured. It was then admitted as an in-patient, but died on Sunday last. Witness had since made a post-mortem examination. The body, which was very much wasted, weighted only 63/4lb., whereas the ordinary weight of a child that age was 16lb. or 17lb. The lungs were inflamed, but all the other organs were healthy. The cause of death was the inflammation of the lungs, accelerated by the fractured bones and the weak condition of the child. Witness had made some experiments with the bones, which were somewhat softer than usual owing to the weak condition of the child, but still a great deal of force must have been used to cause the fractures. The Coroner said that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children would probably go further into the matter. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony.⁵⁴

Despite severely censuring the mother, Mary Ann Marshall, Macdonald left further investigation to another agency.

February 1891: Yesterday at the Shoreditch Town-hall, Dr Roderick Macdonald, MP, Coroner for North-East London, publicly presented Mr Robert Marsh, a butcher, of 406, Kingsland-road, Haggerston, with the 'Quiver Heroes' Medal' for gallant and heroic conduct in rescuing three children from a burning house on the 10th of last month. It will be remembered that early in the morning of that day a fire broke out at 462, Kingsland-road, and it was discovered that three little children were imprisoned in the burning building. Marsh, who happened to be passing, immediately went to their aid, but time after time was driven back by the smoke and flames. At last he succeeded in entering the room on his hands and knees and saw by the light of the burning furniture the three children, whose ages were seven, five, and two-and-a-half years, lying unconscious in different parts of the room. One by one he carried them to the door, where they were taken from him by a friend of his, but on reaching the landing with the last child he lost

⁵⁴ 'Inquest,' *The Times*, 17 January 1891.

consciousness and fell down the stairs, fortunately escaping serious injury. The children had in the meantime been taken to the Metropolitan Hospital, where one of them, the youngest, succumbed to her injuries. Dr Macdonald, in making the presentation, said that no more heroic conduct was possible than for one man to risk his life to save others, and he felt that no words he could use could adequately express his admiration of such a noble deed.⁵⁵

March 1891: Coroner Macdonald held an inquest yesterday at the Shoreditch Town-hall on the body of CHARLES GUIVER, aged 34, lately living at a common lodging-house in White's-row, Spitalfields, who figured as one of the witnesses at the inquest connected with the recent Whitechapel murder. The evidence was to the effect that ever since Guiver had looked upon the body of the murdered woman, Frances Coles, he had become seriously affected, both physically and mentally. Last Wednesday he had a fit while in bed and fell on to the floor dead. Dr Dukes, of Brick-lane, said he made a post-mortem examination of the body of the deceased. He was of opinion that death was caused by apoplexy, and was undoubtedly accelerated by the excitement and shock which the deceased had recently undergone. The jury returned a verdict to that effect.⁵⁶

October 1891: Nineteen-year-old Rosalie Sanders was madly in love with Ernest Cassini, a piano tuner. Cassini loved her in return, courting her for three months, and in the last five weeks of that courtship, visiting her as often as three or four times a day. He asked her secretly to marry him. Secrecy was the order of the day for the couple, because they saw one another despite the disapproval of Rosalie's mother, Matilda Marie. Matilda actually wanted her daughter to marry a fish merchant, William Cuthbert, who was under the impression that he had been engaged to Rosalie for two years. When Cuthbert discovered a love letter from Cassini to Rosalie, he demanded an explanation, which Rosalie indignantly refused to give. She did not love him. No doubt, Cuthbert stank of fish. Regardless, Rosalie's mother sided with the fish merchant and forbade her to see Cassini again. There were hard feelings between mother and daughter. Miserable, Rosalie confided to her housemaid that she couldn't live without Cassini, and that she would poison herself. At breakfast one morning, Rosalie attempted a reconciliation with her mother. 'Will you kiss me, mamma?' she asked. Matilda Marie replied, 'Will you kiss Mr Cuthbert, whom I think you have treated so cruelly? When you have kissed him I will kiss you, and love you more than ever.' It was a desolate bargain for a young, romantically naive girl - the passionate embraces of Ernest Cassini for the cold, fishy lips of William Cuthbert. Rosalie's teenage heart could offer only one response to such a proposal. She marched upstairs and shot herself. She left behind a hard note:

It is all your fault, mamma. You know that I love Mr Cassini twenty million times more than Mr Cuthbert, and that I can never marry the latter; and yet you wish to force me into it. But I hope you will live to regret your folly.
- ROSIE.

The jury returned a verdict of 'suicide whilst temporarily insane.'⁵⁷

Whether Matilda Maria Sanders lived to regret her folly, or regretted that she failed to kiss Rosie goodbye, is unknown.

November 1891: Yesterday, Dr Macdonald, MP, coroner for North-East London, held inquests at the Bethnal-green Vestry-hall, on the bodies of six babies, ranging from five days to 14 months old, and three adults. Four of the children died from suffocation while in bed with the parents, and in two cases it was found that four persons were sleeping in the same bed. With regard to the cases of suffocation the coroner remarked that it was very hard to believe that they were all accidental, but the difficulty was to prove they were otherwise. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the jury were bound to say they were accidental. Verdicts of accidental death in the cases of suffocation were returned, and natural death in the remainder.⁵⁸

December 1891: Yesterday Dr R Macdonald, Coroner for North-East London, held an inquiry at the Bethnal-green Vestry-hall, with reference to the death of ABIGAIL SULLIVAN, aged 31, a shirt ironer, lately residing at 4, Old Nichol-street, Bethnal-green, who was fatally stabbed by James Muir, a shoemaker, on Wednesday night last. Muir has been arrested, and now stands remanded from the Worship-street Police-court, charged with the wilful murder of the deceased. Mrs. Lewis said that since Muir left the house about a fortnight ago, the deceased had been staying with her. On Wednesday night witness returned home and found Muir in her room. Sullivan entered shortly afterwards, and after a few words picked up a table and went towards Muir. Witness persuaded the deceased to place the table down again, and, then turned towards the fire place. Muir was then in the act of raising his hand to the deceased in a threatening manner, but witness saw no weapon. On turning round she asked Muir what he had done, and he replied, 'I am going out to get a drink,' and left the house at once. Witness then found the deceased bleeding from a wound in the right breast. A doctor was sent for, and he pronounced life to be extinct. Deceased was a hard-working woman. She and Muir used to quarrel frequently, but the man was always the aggressor. Other evidence showed that Muir was subsequently arrested in the street, when he dropped a bloodstained butcher's knife which was subsequently identified by the witness Lewis as her property. When taken to the station he said 'I'll confess to it,' and accused Lewis of being the cause of it all. The jury returned a verdict of manslaughter against Muir, who was committed for trial on the coroner's warrant.⁵⁹

55 'Inquests,' *The Times*, 12 February 1891.

56 'Inquests,' *The Times*, 3 March 1891.

57 'Inquests,' *The Times*, 9 October 1891.

58 'Inquests,' *The Times*, 11 November 1891.

59 'Inquests,' *The Times*, 22 December 1891.

October 1892: Alfred Nicholls, a nine-year-old student of the Noel Park Board School, was alleged to have died from a blow on the head administered by his teacher, Albert Choice. Alfred's father testified that Alfred had become ill, complaining of head pains. When asked whether he felt well enough to go to school, Alfred replied, 'I had better go to school, or the teacher will beat me again.' Choice had beaten the boy because he had missed four words in dictation. Young Mr Nicholls seems to have presented a favourite target for Choice, the teacher caning Alfred on the head (leaving a lump the size of his mother's little finger), and giving him eight 'handers' (slapping his open palm with a ruler). His mother, Emma Jane Nicholls, complained to the School Board and insisted that Alfred stay home. The boy refused, fearing Choice's retribution; he was able to attend school briefly before becoming confined to his bed, complaining of pain in his head until he died. Choice initially denied assaulting Alfred before admitting that he actually had. He apologized and offered to pay for Alfred's medical expenses. At the inquest in January 1892, medical testimony differed over the cause of death: meningitis, which a head injury could have exacerbated (as it had in the death of Sir Charles Lyell in 1875), or typhoid fever. The jury found typhoid fever the cause of death, but attached a rider to the School Board, calling on it to prevent teachers from striking children on the head. When the School Board's solicitor protested the rider (the jury had ruled that Alfred's death had nothing to do with Choice's caning him), Macdonald had his clerk simply inform the Board of the rider, with the jury's assent.⁶⁰

The Skeletons of Spitalfields

The Times reported on 10 October 1892:

*Information was received on Friday by the police of the H division at Commercial-street station that a quantity of human bones, together with three skulls, had been found by workmen engaged on buildings in course of erection at Flower and Dean-street, Spitalfields. The facts were inquired into on Saturday, and it was found that two workmen at the buildings referred to were engaged in excavating for the foundations of a wall when they came upon some bones and a box containing two skeletons of adults. A third skull, that of a child, was also found. The wood of the box did not look like coffin wood of the ordinary kind, and in getting it out of the hole in which it was found it was broken to pieces. The bones, too, were scattered and mixed up with the excavated earth, and only a very small portion of the three skeletons could be handed over to the police and to the coroner's officer. Mr Hewett Oliver, surgeon, of Kingsland, examined the bones on Saturday, and while agreeing that they were the remains of a child about eight years old and of two adults - a man of middle age and a woman about 70 - found that so much of the skeletons was absent that he could pronounce no further opinion. Plain clothes constables have been set to work to sift the earth excavated and to endeavour to discover any further portions of the remains or other matters likely to throw further light on the matter. Whether an inquest will be held will be for the coroner, Mr Macdonald, to decide after the medical examination is complete. It is the medical opinion that the bones have been interred for some 20 or 30 years.*⁶¹

Holding an inquest on skeletons must have given Macdonald some pause. Considering whether to proceed, he would have had to take into account the condition of the bones. What information might be gathered from the remains? Would an inquest to determine identity and cause of death bear fruit? In the fifth edition of Jervis of 1888, Rudolph Melsheimer wrote the following passage, with which Macdonald and all coroners must have been familiar:

*So, if an inquisition be quashed, the body may, by order of the Court, upon motion be disinterred for the purpose of taking a second inquisition; but the Court will exercise a discretion in making or refusing the order, according to the circumstances of the case, and the length of time the body has been buried. So essential is the view to the validity of the inquisition, that if the body be not found, or have laid so long before the view, that no information can be obtained from the inspection of it, or if there be danger of infection by digging it up, the inquest ought not to be taken by the coroner, unless he have a special commission for that purpose; but as the proceeding before the coroner is one only of several, application should be made, in such cases to the magistrates, or justices authorized to inquire of felonies, &c., who, without viewing the body, may take the inquest by the testimony of witnesses. Indeed, it would seem that coroners may be amerced for taking up a body that has been buried so long, that, from its state of decomposition, no information can result from the view; and that, in such a case, the Court into which the inquisition is returned may, upon affidavit of the circumstances, refuse to receive and file it.*⁶²

Because of the view, Melsheimer wrote, coroners should not hold inquests where the body is in such a state that nothing can be determined by it. Melsheimer writes in the context of secondary inquests, and we've seen how the High Court struggled with the exhumation of poisoning victim Charles Bravo, but the general idea is that coroners should not perform exhumations too long after death. In the case of the Flower and Dean skeletons, Macdonald had of course performed no exhumation; others had found the bones and reported them to him. He was bound, under pain of fine, to institute some sort of inquiry, regardless of whether he held an inquest, but Melsheimer seems to be saying that in cases like the Skeletons of Spitalfields, magistrates and justices should hold inquiries because they could take witness testimony with no requirement to view the body.

⁶⁰ 'Inquests,' *The Times*, 7 January 1892.

⁶¹ 'Skeletons Found at Whitechapel,' *The Times*, 10 October 1892.

⁶² R E Melsheimer, *The Coroners' Act, 1887, With Forms and Precedents. Being the Fifth Edition of the Treatise by Sir J Jervis on the Office and Duties of Coroners*. London: H Sweet & Sons, 1888, 27-8.

Macdonald, however, decided to proceed with his own inquest:

*At the Town-hall, Shoreditch, yesterday, Dr R Macdonald, coroner for North-East London, held an inquiry with reference to the discovery of human remains on the site of a common lodging-house at Flower and Dean-street, Spitalfields. The evidence showed that some workmen in the employ of Messrs. Pete Brothers are engaged at the present time digging a trench for a concrete wall on the site of what was formerly 6, Flower and Dean-street. On Thursday last a skull was found, and on Friday morning two skeletons in a box, or coffin, were discovered. Subsequently the police made a very careful search of the ground, and brought to light a great number of other bones. The lodging-house, which consisted of three houses thrown into one, had been in the occupation of the same tenant for 40 years. The leaseholder was a Mr Ritchie, of Well-street, Hackney, now 83 years of age; he took over the premises in 1851, when they were inhabited by persons of the lowest class. Inspector Seabright, H. Division, deposed that he had made inquiries of various people. One old lady said that she could remember the houses 80 years ago. At that time they were occupied by Spitalfields weavers. Witness had also learnt from old records that in 1765 a riot took place in Spitalfields, and following this an attack was made upon some of the weavers who were using improved looms. Various outrages followed, and a number of lives were lost. Dr Franklin Hewitt Oliver, of Kingsland-road, deposed that he had carefully examined the bones. There were in all 150 bones and 18 fragments of bones, not including three fairly-complete skulls, one skull in 11 fragments, and a bone each of three other skulls. He had pieced them together, and formed the opinion that they were the remains of seven persons - four adults and three children. There was nothing about any bone indicating disease, injury, or violence before death, or giving any suggestion as to the cause of death. Among the articles he examined were the jaw bones of sheep, the tooth of some animal. He was [of] opinion that the bones had been in the ground from 75 to 100 years. The coroner remarked that when discoveries of this kind were made it was only right and proper that a public inquiry should be held, so that the matter, if possible, might be cleared up. The jury thanked Dr Oliver for his evidence, and returned verdicts to the effect that the bones were found buried, but that the evidence failed to show who the deceased persons were or how they died.*⁶³

Here the inquest failed. Although there was a story that the bones belonged to weavers from circa 1765, Macdonald and his jury couldn't establish their identities and the causes of death - those two major goals of the inquest. The remains yielded no clue. Had Macdonald acted improperly? Perhaps. Again, Melsheimer would certainly have questioned Macdonald's decision to proceed:

*The view must be such as will be calculated to afford information to the coroner and the jury; and therefore, where the skull of a man who had been dead five years was dug up, which the coroner told the jury he could identify, and the inquest proceeded, the Court refused to file the inquisition [Melsheimer cites 1 Str. 22].*⁶⁴

On the other hand, Macdonald hadn't exhumed the skeletons. He and his jury had merely tried to determine to whom the already unearthed remains belonged and how they had died. In deciding to hold this inquest, Macdonald had exercised the same tool all coroners used when they decided which cases merited inquests - discretion, which is always arguable.

The First Idea Alfred Hodgkinson Had

During part of the Autumn of Terror of 1888, Roderick Macdonald was on a working holiday in Scotland, where he attended a land law reform meeting in Inverness on 27 September 1888.⁶⁵ On his return to London around the time of the Double Event, the murders of Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes on the early morning of 30 September, he took a particular interest in the Ripper inquests. His deputy, Alfred Hodgkinson, had been following the news and had had an idea. Impressed by Hodgkinson's idea, Macdonald thought it worth writing a letter to *The Daily News*:

SIR, A remarkable incident in connection with the recent murders is that in no one instance has it been found that the victim made any noise or cry while being done to death. My assistant [Alfred Hodgkinson] suggests a theory in reference to this very remarkable fact, which strikes me as having something in it, and as such ought to be made public. The theory is that the murderer goes about with a vial of rum or brandy in his pocket drugged with an opiate - such as a solution of morphia, which is almost if not quite tasteless; that he offers a swig of it to his victims (which



Shoreditch Town Hall

⁶³ 'The Discovery of Skeletons in Spitalfields,' *The Times*, 12 October 1892.

⁶⁴ Melsheimer, 27.

⁶⁵ 'Land Law Reform,' *The Times*, September 28 1888.

*they would all be likely greedily to accept), when he meets them; that in about ten to twenty minutes the poison begins to do its work on constitutions well soaked with alcohol, and that then they are easily dispatched without fear of making any noise or call for assistance. Having been out of town lately for my holidays, I have not closely followed the evidence at the inquests, but there are two questions which would require clearing up if there is anything in this theory - 1st. Have the stomachs been ripped open to do away with the evidence of poisoning in this manner? and 2nd. Has any analysis of the contents of the stomach been made? - Yours respectfully, R. MACDONALD, Coroner for N.-East Middlesex.*⁶⁶

Analysis of stomach contents, like the medical post-mortem, was an optional feature of the inquest. Thomas Wakley's Medical Witness Act of 1836, which first gave coroners the power to compel medical witnesses to testify and examine bodies, was reproduced in the Coroners' Act of 1887, section 21 (2):

*The coroner may, either in his summons for the attendance of such medical witness or at any time between the issuing of that summons and the end of the inquest, direct such medical witness to make a post-mortem examination of the body of the deceased, with or without an analysis of the contents of the stomach or intestines.*⁶⁷

Roderick Macdonald might have thought he had very good reason to follow up on Wynne Baxter's handling of one victim in particular, Annie Chapman. We shall examine why shortly. In the meantime, the way the Middlesex magistrates had handled the division of Baxter's Eastern District affected which coroner would have jurisdiction in presiding over the inquest on Mary Jane Kelly held on 12 November in Shoreditch Town Hall.

The Inquest on Mary Jane Kelly

'Do you think that we do not know what we are doing here, and that we do not know our own district?' a bristling Roderick Macdonald demanded of a jurymen who had dared to question his jurisdiction during the inquest on Kelly. During the inquest, Macdonald received no answer, but later critics have answered with a resounding, 'No!' These critics have charged Macdonald with holding the Kelly inquest illegally, browbeating his jurors, and outright incompetence.

Let us examine in detail the three main charges levelled by critics of Macdonald's handling of the inquest:

(1) Because the scene of Kelly's murder was in Wynne Baxter's jurisdiction, Macdonald had no authority to hold the inquest.

(2) Macdonald suppressed evidence by not documenting the full extent of Kelly's injuries.

(3) The inquest was cut short to suppress evidence.

We might also add these questions to ponder: Did Roderick Macdonald know what he was doing? Did he know his district? Is the Mary Kelly inquest legally sound?

'It Happened Within My District'

In tackling the first charge - that Macdonald acted out of jurisdiction - it is generally accepted that the scene of Mary Kelly's murder, 26 Dorset Street, Spitalfields, lay within Wynne Baxter's South East Middlesex district and, under ordinary circumstances, Baxter would have held the inquest. However, as is also generally accepted, when authorities transported Kelly's body to Shoreditch Mortuary, which was within Macdonald's district, jurisdiction automatically switched to Macdonald. During the inquest, Macdonald claimed his right to hold the inquest - 'jurisdiction was where the body lay.'⁶⁸

Section 7, subsection 1 of the Coroners' Act of 1887, which covered local jurisdiction of coroners, shows Macdonald was correct. The emphasis is ours:

*The coroner only within whose jurisdiction the body of a person upon whose death an inquest ought to be holden is lying shall hold the inquest, and where a body is found dead in the sea, or any creek, river, or navigable canal within the flowing of the sea where there is no deputy coroner for the jurisdiction of the Admiralty of England the inquest shall be held only by the coroner having jurisdiction in the place where the body is first brought to land.*⁶⁹

A Handbook for County Authorities, published the following year, 1889, puts the matter in clearer terms. 'The coroner within whose district the remains lie, whether the murder was committed in that district or not, is the proper person to hold the inquiry.'⁷⁰ The *Handbook* adds a footnote 'This point was raised at the inquest on the Whitechapel murder' - an example in which a Ripper inquest, Macdonald's inquest, made its way into a procedural manual.

⁶⁶ 'To the Editor of the Daily News,' *Daily News*, 4 October 1888.

⁶⁷ Melsheimer, 92.

⁶⁸ 'Inquest: Mary Kelly,' *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1888.

⁶⁹ *The Public General Acts Passed in the Fiftieth and Fifty-First Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, etc.* London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1888), 350.

⁷⁰ Alexander Pulling, *A Handbook for County Authorities*. London: William Clowes and Sons, Ltd, 1889, 128.

Given the vehemence of some of the criticism, one would think that the Kelly inquest set a precedent concerning jurisdiction. However, the 1887 Act's stance on local jurisdiction was nothing new. Case law and statute had determined the issue over forty years earlier. Another East Middlesex coroner, William Baker, who defeated Thomas Wakley in the 1830 election, wrote in 1851:

*A case has recently been reported in the second volume of Carrington and Kirwan's Reports, p. 470, Regina v. Ellis, which was tried at the Central Criminal Court, under the 6 & 7 Vict. c. 12. In this case the party died in the county of Surrey, and was brought home to his residence in the city of London. The inquest was held before the coroner in London, under the provisions of that Statute, and the case (one of manslaughter) tried on the coroner's inquisition, before Tindal, C J, and Rolfe, B; and it was held by those learned judges, that the inquest was properly held in London, and the offence properly charged in the inquisition.*⁷¹

In addition, 6 & 7 Victoria c. 12, 'An Act for the more convenient holding of Coroner's Inquests,' passed on 11 April 1843, states:

*That the coroner only within whose jurisdiction the body of any person upon whose death an inquest ought to be holden shall be lying dead shall hold the inquest, notwithstanding that the cause of death did not arise within the jurisdiction of such coroner...*⁷²

Jurisdiction really did stay with the body. The practice was one of convenience. On this point, Macdonald was entirely safe. He enjoyed the backing of established case law and legislation going back to at least the 1840s, legislation that Parliament had reinforced in 1887. The Kelly inquest is legally sound on the question of jurisdiction, sound enough for the procedural manual, *A Handbook for County Authorities*, to cite it.

Yet the problem of jurisdiction lingers. Conspiracy is charged. Roderick Macdonald stole Mary Kelly's body from Wynne Baxter. The police, believing that Wynne Baxter's inquests were too open and damaged their investigation, manipulated the boundary between North East and South East Middlesex. In other words, they snuck Mary Kelly's corpse into Macdonald's district. There, the theory goes, Macdonald, who after all was a divisional surgeon himself, was more sympathetic to keeping the Ripper investigation out of the public eye. An aura of illegality surrounds our concept of Macdonald's Kelly inquest.

This is a myth. Forget for a moment about Section 7(1) of the Coroners' Act of 1887. Even if that had never been written, Macdonald would have still held the inquest. He was the coroner for Spitalfields. Macdonald and his officer, Thomas Hammond, said as much at the inquest convened on 12 November at Shoreditch Town Hall:

Juror: I do not see why we should have the inquest thrown upon our shoulders, when the murder did not happen in our district, but in Whitechapel.

The Coroner's Officer (Mr Hammond): It did not happen in Whitechapel...

Juror: We are summoned for the Shoreditch district. This affair happened in Spitalfields.

*The Coroner: It happened within my district.*⁷³

However, Wynne Baxter appears to have believed Miller's Court was within his Whitechapel jurisdiction. The new boundary, by November 1888 still only a few months old, was illogical - the Middlesex Magistrates appear to have botched the redistricting of Spitalfields just as they had botched Wynne Baxter's salary. Spitalfields was a subdistrict of Whitechapel. It was as if the magistrates had decided to found an independent nation, Little Scotland, within the borders of England. Therefore, both coroners could, and apparently did, claim jurisdiction over the crime scene.

On Saturday, 10 November, both coroners visited Miller's Court, although the experienced Baxter could not have failed to realize that Kelly's removal to Shoreditch mortuary had already taken the inquest out of his hands. He went anyway, doubtlessly feeling that he had every right to visit a crime scene within his own district. *The Times* of 12 November recorded:

*On Saturday both Dr Macdonald and Mr Wynne Baxter, the coroner for the other portion of the district, visited Dorset-street, and each gentleman maintains that the murder occurred in his district; but removing the body to the Shoreditch mortuary settled the point as to who was to hold the inquiry, as that building is in Dr Macdonald's district. After the inquiry is over, or when the coroner signs the certificate of burial, a question will probably arise as to which parish will have to defray the cost of the burial of the deceased, as, although the inquest will be held in Shoreditch, the murder took place in Whitechapel.*⁷⁴

The Times report of the visit of the two coroners to the crime scene in Miller's Court appeared in print on Monday, 12 November, the same morning that the Kelly inquest opened. If Roderick Macdonald (who at the inquest displayed

⁷¹ William Baker, *A Practical Compendium of the Recent Statutes, Cases and Decisions Affecting the Office of the Coroner, etc.* London: Butterworths, 1851, 19.

⁷² Wellington, 149.

⁷³ 'Inquest: Mary Kelly,' *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1888.

⁷⁴ 'The Whitechapel Murder,' *The Times*, 12 November 1888.

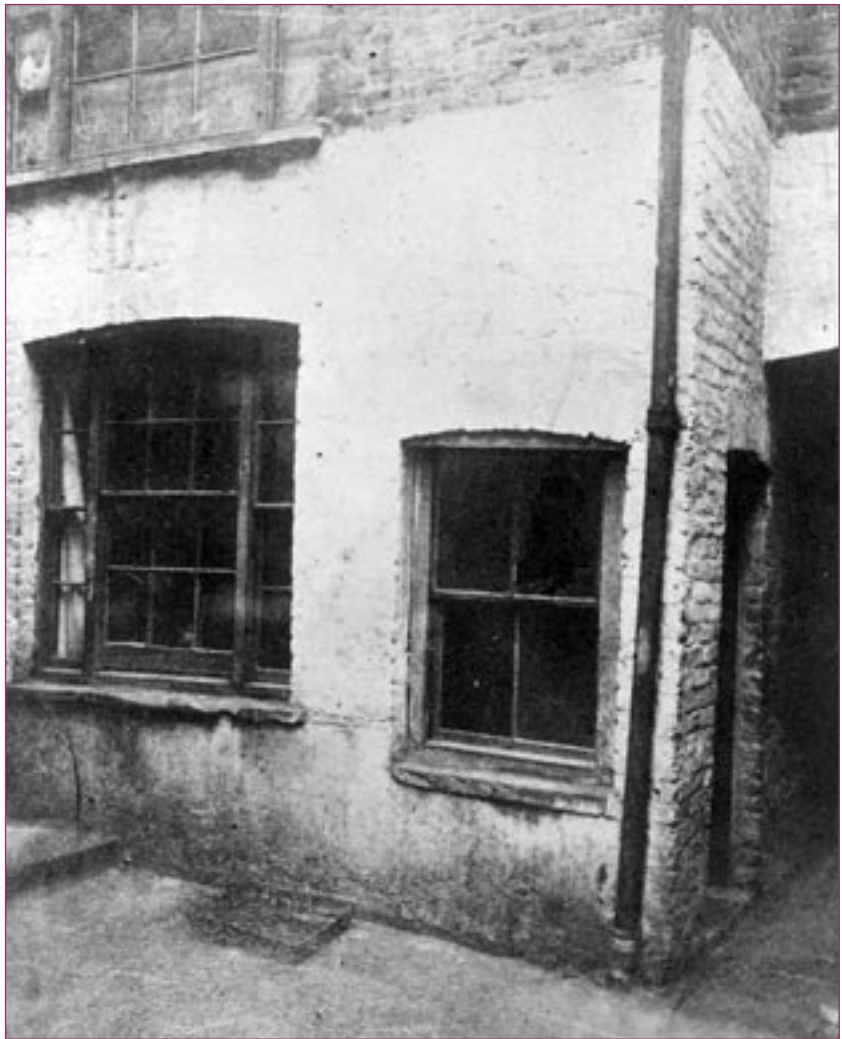
knowledge of what the press was writing) read it, he could not have appreciated Baxter's appearance, or *The Times'* assertion that the murder had happened in Whitechapel. It hadn't - it had happened in Spitalfields, within his district. Macdonald's jurisdiction may not have been logical, but the freeholders had elected him to it all the same.

Indeed, by appearing at Miller's Court, Wynne Baxter had not accorded Macdonald the same professional courtesy that Macdonald claims to have paid him during an earlier case. Roderick Macdonald claimed the jurisdiction fiasco over Mary Jane Kelly was a replay of a previous incident in reverse. In that earlier case, the murder of Annie Chapman in Hanbury Street, Spitalfields, on 8 September, the crime had occurred in Macdonald's district, but the body had been removed to a nearby mortuary within Baxter's sphere of authority:

*In a previous case of murder which occurred in his [Macdonald's] district the body was carried to the nearest mortuary, which was in another district. The inquest was held by Mr Baxter, and he [Macdonald] made no objection. The jurisdiction was where the body lay.*⁷⁵

The *Star* sought to explain the confusing situation:

The removal of Kelly's body to the Shoreditch mortuary is likely to lead to some complications through the intersection of the local boundaries and the jurisdiction of the two coroners for the newly-formed divisions of Eastern Middlesex. Spitalfields, although within the Whitechapel district for all local purposes, is within the North



Photograph of the outside of 13 Millers Court, Spitalfields

*Eastern Division of Middlesex, and is therefore under the jurisdiction of Dr Macdonald. All the other portions of Whitechapel remain under the jurisdiction of Mr Baxter, so far as coroner's inquests are concerned. The Hanbury-street murder, which occurred in Spitalfields, took place in the open air, and it being incumbent on the police to remove the body, they naturally conveyed it to the local mortuary in Old Montague-street. But in the Dorset-street case, there was no duty cast upon the police to remove the body from the house where it was found, and the coroner's officer for the district being communicated with, he was obliged to take it where he could. If he had taken it to Old Montague-street, it would have gone from his control, so he took it to Shoreditch, which is within his district. It remains to be seen whether the Shoreditch Vestry will be content to afford mortuary accommodation in such instances of a neighbouring district not within their parish, to oblige the coroner or his officer, but it is pretty certain when it comes to a question of parochial burial, the relieving officer will be found in a difficulty as to whether he is justified in incurring the expense for the Shoreditch ratepayers. This difficulty may be got over by removing the body back again to Whitechapel, and placing it in the Old Montague-street mortuary, so as to throw the cost of the burial upon the Whitechapel Board of Guardians. Here again another difficulty arises, because the body will come into Mr Baxter's district, who, according to the state of the 'Coroner's Quest Law,' will be obliged to hold another inquest, if only a formal one.*⁷⁶

Had it not been for the nearness of the shed within Baxter's district, to which Annie Chapman's body was taken, the Kelly inquest would have been the second time an inquest on a Whitechapel murder would have been held in Macdonald's North East Middlesex district. Alfred Hodgkinson would have held the Chapman inquest (remember that Macdonald was in Scotland at the time). Instead, the body had been removed to Baxter's district. Properly, therefore Macdonald had not complained.

⁷⁵ 'Inquest: Mary Kelly,' *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1888.

⁷⁶ 'Who Will Hold the Inquest?' *Star*, 10 November 1888.

We are now able to respond most confidently to our first issue. Roderick Macdonald had full authority to hold the Mary Jane Kelly inquest even if we dispense with the fact of the body's removal to Shoreditch mortuary. In 1888, Spitalfields was part of the North East Middlesex coroner's district. At no time was Mary Kelly's body within Wynne Baxter's jurisdiction.

The division of the East Middlesex district in 1886-1889 provides an excellent area for further research. Why did the magistrates divide it as they did? The answer seems to rest with how the local sanitary districts and mortuaries were organized.

When Macdonald died in 1894, the London County Council took advantage of the vacant office to revise the two eastern districts once again, and moved Spitalfields back to Baxter's South East district (or Eastern district, as it is referred to below):

The Public Control Committee reported that the avoidance of the north-eastern district by the death of the coroner afforded an opportunity of which they thought advantage should be taken to bring the whole of the sanitary districts of Poplar and Whitechapel within the eastern coroner's district. They therefore made the following recommendations, which were approved:

(a) That a petition be presented to her Majesty the Queen in Council, praying that her Majesty will sanction the alteration of the north-eastern, eastern, and central coroners' districts of the County of London by the transfer from the north-eastern district to the eastern district of the parish of Bow, forming part of the Poplar sanitary district, and the parish of Spitalfields and the Liberty of Norton Folgate, forming part of the Whitechapel sanitary district, and the transfer from the north-eastern to the central coroner's district of the Liberty of Glasshouse-yard, forming part of the Holborn sanitary district, so that the whole of such sanitary districts may be within the district of the same coroner...⁷⁷

So, a little justice for Wynne Baxter - Spitalfields, which had been his for all of 1887 and the first part of 1888, was now returned to his arms.

As of 28 May 1894, Wynne Baxter's district was comprised of Bromley, St Leonards; St Anne, Limehouse; Mile End New Town; Mile End Old Town; All Saints', Poplar; St Mary, Stratford-le-Bow; Ratcliffe (that part of St George-in-the-East which lies in the county of London); the precinct of St Catherine; St Paul, Shadwell; St John, Wapping; that part of St Mary, Whitechapel, which was in the County of London (all of Whitechapel must have been Baxter's territory); St Botolph Without, Aldgate; Christ Church, Spitalfields; and the liberty of Norton Folgate.

Following Macdonald's death, the North Eastern district was comprised of St Matthew, Bethnal Green; St John at Hackney; St Luke: St Leonard, Shoreditch; and St Mary, Stoke Newington.⁷⁸

Interestingly, there is mention of an earlier petition for alteration dating from 1892, during Macdonald's lifetime. Because 1892 fell within Macdonald's initial five-year period (1888-1893), the petition's timing threatened a replay of the Baxter scenario (instead of redistricting his district and salary, the Council granted Macdonald a raise of £300 in October, retroactive to 1 July of the same year; his salary was then £1,401 annually).⁷⁹ Since the petition appears to have been tabled and amended only after Macdonald's death in 1894, perhaps the London County Council had learned a lesson from the blunders of the Middlesex Magistrates in 1886-1888 - do not redistrict during the coroner's lifetime.

Suppression of Evidence

Here we will address the second issue that the Kelly inquest presents - the medical testimony, or its lack of detail. Did Macdonald intentionally hold it back? Macdonald told the jury:

*If the coroner's jury can come to a decision as to the cause of death, then that is all that they have to do. They have nothing to do with prosecuting a man and saying what amount of penalty he is to get. It is quite sufficient if they find out what the cause of death was. It is for the police authorities to deal with the case and satisfy themselves as to any person who may be suspected later on.*⁸⁰

Did Macdonald misdirect the jury? Baxter's inquests were exhaustive. Macdonald's Kelly inquest was preliminary. Which was correct procedure?

Some have made the charge that there was a legal obligation for the coroner to record all of Mary Kelly's wounds, as per *De Officio Coronatoris*, 4 Edward I, 1275.

...all wounds ought to be viewed, the length, breadth, and deepness, and with what weapons, and in what part of

⁷⁷ 'Division of Coroners' Districts,' *The Times*, 21 March 1894.

⁷⁸ John Hunt, *London Local Government: The Law Relating to the London County Council, the Vestries and District Boards Elected Under the Metropolis Management Acts, and Other Local Authorities*. Vol. 2. London: Stevens and Sons, Ltd, 1897, 752-3.

⁷⁹ 'The London County Council. Revision of Coroners' Salaries,' *The Times*, 25 October 1893.

⁸⁰ 'Inquest: Mary Kelly,' *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1888.

the body the wound or hurt is; and how many be culpable, and how many wounds there be, who gave the wound.⁸¹

Contemporary support for the invocation of *De Officio Coronatoris* comes from a former deputy-coroner, Rowland Adams Williams, who wrote a letter to *The Times* that was published 26 September 1888. Williams actually criticized Wynne Baxter's Chapman inquest, specifically Baxter's decision not to insist on Dr George Bagster Phillips' full post-mortem testimony immediately, rather than during successive adjournments. Williams wrote:

By the Statute de Coronatore, the coroner is bound to inquire the nature, character, and size of every wound on a dead body and to enter the same on his roll. Originally this was to be done *super visum corporis*, and the necessity thus arises, for it is the coroner's duty to explain the effect of the wounds and any appearances there may be. This is also a reason why the inquest should be commenced as soon as possible before any marks can be effaced, and even before it is moved. In this case, had Dr Phillips's evidence been given at once, as it ought to have been, and as I should have insisted, I think 'Leather Apron' should not have been arrested. The criminal is probably a person making research from motives of science or curiosity, and not a drunken loafer. If the body had not been washed, and it is a contempt of the coroner's court to do so, there would probably have appeared on the body some finger mark, which would have been very useful. The object of the inquest is to preserve the evidence of the crime, if any. Until some person is charged, the justices of the peace cannot act. Their function is to say whether a *prima facie* case has been made out against the prisoner. A prisoner may not be caught until the evidence of death have disappeared. It is, then, the duty of the coroner to register all the marks which there may be in case of death.⁸²



Newspaper sketch of Dr George Bagster Phillips

Critics have applied Williams' argument to Macdonald's Kelly inquest. Some have misinterpreted Williams to mean that in 1888, *De Officio Coronatoris* of 1275 should have directed Macdonald's inquests. That is incorrect; the relevant legislation for coroners was the Coroners' Act of 1887. Therefore, Williams didn't argue law. In his letter, Rowland Adams Williams invoked the spirit of that statute - coroners should record all the pertinent details, quickly. Williams argued Wynne Baxter's discretion in keeping back testimony for adjournment. 'Get all the evidence in, and get it in right away,' if we may paraphrase, is an opinion.

Although it is no longer in effect, modern critics' application of *De Officio Coronatoris* to 1888 is understandable. The statute makes appearances throughout the 19th century. Whenever Victorians debated coronial procedure, *De Officio Coronatoris* reared its ancient head. For centuries, it was technically on the books. Thomas Wakley cited it. The section of *De Officio Coronatoris* that directed the coroner to 'go to the place where any be slain, or suddenly dead, or wounded' was the basis for his 'Instructions from the Coroner of Middlesex' in September 1839, which instructed authorities to inform him of all sudden deaths in his district.⁸³ As we explored in Part I of our series, there was much disagreement over which deaths coroners should investigate. The public and magisterial outcry demonstrates that *De Officio Coronatoris* was not in common practice even in 1839, much less 1888.

When the Attorney General invoked *De Officio Coronatoris* in the High Court in 1860, no less an authority than the Lord Chief Justice, the highest judicial figure in the kingdom (and therefore Chief Coroner), suggested that the statute had outlived its usefulness. This was in 1860, *Queen v. Sylvester* - twenty-eight years before the Kelly inquest. 'In modern times all these minute details had not been inquired into'⁸⁴ and 'if the coroner had done what that statute directed he would have done what no coroner in England did.'⁸⁵ Parliament had not kept up with practice.

In any case, *De Officio Coronatoris*, in 1888, was no longer on the books. The Coroners' Act of 1887 repealed it. Let's use it to address Rowland Williams's argument - the coroner (through the medical witness) should record detailed information of the wounds. What was the correct procedure as outlined in the 1887 Act? Let's look at subsections of section 4 of the act. It is basic. Read it with the Kelly inquest in mind (emphasis is ours):

(1) The coroner and jury shall, at the first sitting of the inquest, **view the body**, and the coroner shall examine

81 Wellington, 41.

82 'The Whitechapel Murders. To the Editor of *The Times*,' *The Times*, 26 September 1888.

83 'Unnecessary Inquests. - The Parish of St. Marylebone,' *The Times*, 5 October 1839.

84 'The Queen v. Sylvester,' *The Times*, 26 November 1860.

85 'Queen v. Sylvester,' *The Times*, 31 January 1861.

on oath touching the death **all persons who tender their evidence** respecting the facts and all persons having knowledge of the facts whom he thinks it expedient to examine.

- (2) *It shall be the duty of the coroner in a case of murder or manslaughter to put into writing the statement on oath of those who know the facts and circumstances of the case, **or so much of such statement as is material**, and any such deposition shall be signed by the witness and also by the coroner.*
- (3) *After viewing the body and hearing the evidence the jury shall give their verdict, and certify it by an inquisition in writing, setting forth, so far as such particulars have been proved to them, **who the deceased was, and how, when, and where the deceased came by his death**, and if he came by his death by murder or manslaughter, the persons, if any, whom the jury find to have been guilty of such murder or manslaughter, or of being accessories before the fact to such murder.*
- (4) *They shall **also inquire of and find the particulars for the time** being required by the Registration Acts to be registered concerning the death.*⁸⁶

The proceedings of the inquest, as set out in the 1887 Act, are basic and simple. View the body. Examine the evidence of all people who tender their testimony and anyone else the coroner and jury find expedient. Put as much of the statement as the coroner deems material into writing. Determine, if possible, who died, when, how, and where. In cases of murder, the jury should try to determine who the murderer was, if they can. In Kelly, Macdonald's inquest accomplished all those goals except exposing the murderer's identity, which no Ripper inquest did, and which no one has ever done since. There was no evidence.

Within the basic procedure, Baxter and Macdonald seem to have had different philosophies. Macdonald advocated the preliminary inquiry, Baxter the exhaustive inquiry.

How could two such different views of the inquest both be correct? The answer lies in the simplicity of the legislation; it provided the coroner with a powerful tool that isn't mentioned anywhere in the text - discretion. Under such legislation, Baxter's exhaustive inquests follow procedure. So does Macdonald's Kelly inquest. Discretion is the difference.

Of course, the medical evidence is important. In cases of murder, the post-mortem is crucial. Shouldn't Macdonald have pressed Phillips as Baxter had? If he had, many of the details of Jack the Ripper's worst crime would not have been lost to us until 1987, when Dr Thomas Bond's medical report to Robert Anderson resurfaced. Macdonald talks about the minutiae of the medical evidence, but the post-mortem was valuable evidence - as Baxter said, the mutilations tell us something about the murderer, and as the 1887 Act also states, one of the purposes of the coronial inquest in cases of murder, was to discover, if the jury was able to do so, the identity of the murderer through examination of witnesses. What was the murder weapon? The post-mortem was not minutiae; the body was the inquest's central piece of evidence. Macdonald's discretion impeded our understanding of the worst of the Ripper's crimes.

What was the coroner's obligation to enter the full details into the public record? Again, 4 (1) of the 1887 Act: 'the coroner shall examine on oath touching the death all persons who tender their evidence respecting the facts and all persons having knowledge of the facts whom he thinks it expedient to examine.' Whom he thinks expedient - in other words, Macdonald had discretionary power on what evidence he injected into the public record, provided the jury was satisfied with the evidence presented. Juries had the ability not only to assess but also to discard medical evidence. It is worth noting that section 21 [3] gave juries the power to compel the coroner to order another post-mortem if the majority of them were unsatisfied with the first.

But we are talking about crucial evidence in a murder case. Why would Macdonald gloss over it? Certainly, it's reasonable to think that Macdonald, also divisional surgeon for K district at the time of the Kelly inquest,⁸⁷ understood and sympathized with fellow divisional surgeon Phillips's point of view that the gruesome details could be skipped in the public forum. Throughout the century, inquests revealing such intimate details were labelled as sensationalistic and even unethical.

This brings us to the judicial philosophy that had been debated in the days of Wakley. How open should the coroner's court be? For a Parliament wrestling with the residue of Peterloo, the secretive nature of the 1819 Oldham inquest, and Radical reform, the answer was that publicity was the soul of justice. However, there was also a very real concern that coroners' inquests, by revealing evidence openly, aided criminals. As noted in *Hansard* on 20 June 1832:

Sir Robert Inglis thought that Coroners should possess the discretionary power, which they seldom exercised except in extreme cases, of excluding the public from their Courts. It sometimes happened that the publication of the evidence taken before a Coroner facilitated the escape of a prisoner, and in other cases it operated to the prejudice of a prisoner, by creating an unfavourable impression against him previously to his trial. What was meant by publicity was, that reporters should be present to send forth to the world every thing which occurred before the Coroner, and

⁸⁶ *The Public General Acts Passed in the Fiftieth and Fifty-First Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, etc.* London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1888, 348-9.

⁸⁷ *The Times*, 28 September 1888. Macdonald, in his capacity as divisional surgeon, assisted in treating and removing to Poplar Hospital a man who had bludgeoned and cut the throat of a woman, then slashed his own throat.

to that he decidedly objected, for the reason which he had stated.⁸⁸

The publicizing of details could also be harmful in non-criminal cases. For example, how public should the details of suicides be, and should the feelings of the family matter? Such issues concerning the public nature of inquest testimony are still debated today, with a trend towards closing inquests related to suicide and child death. The coroners of 1888 also wrestled with the subject, although nearly everyone agreed that coroners' courts should be open. The 1888 edition of Jervis devotes several pages to the subject.

Baxter's response was to leave sensationalism to the discretion of the press. How did Roderick Macdonald handle sensationalism?

Interestingly, there is a suggestion in the newspaper record that Macdonald may have tried to limit the attendance of the inquest. Let's look at an interesting exchange in the House of Commons in 1832. The topic was how open was open:

Mr Pettit said, as he understood it, the Jury would view the body for the satisfaction of their own consciences and understanding, at which process it was not necessary that the public should be present, and that they would then retire to the place which was fixed upon for the holding of the inquest, to which the public would have the right of admission.

*Mr O'Connell said, it seemed to him that there would be no doubt upon this point. The public would have a right of admission; but the public were only as many as could be conveniently and decently accommodated.*⁸⁹

The *St James Gazette* noted on 13 November 1888:

*The inquest on the body of Mary Jeanette Kelly, who was found murdered and mutilated in Miller's court, Dorset street, was opened at the Shoreditch Town Hall yesterday before Dr Macdonald, the coroner. The room in which the inquest was held was small and very few of the general public were admitted.*⁹⁰

Of course, for all we know, Macdonald always appropriated small rooms at Shoreditch Town Hall. It might have been that, on the day of the Kelly inquest, the Hall's larger spaces were occupied.

In any case, the openness of the court and the evidence it presented was a debatable topic. For Baxter, the question was easy. For us, it's also easy - we want all the details. For Macdonald, it was perhaps more difficult. He exercised his discretion upon the post-mortem testimony; as a result, it was lost to us. Australian writer S Gouriet Ryan has devoted several articles to the idea that we still lack the full story of the nature of Kelly's injuries and that the resurfaced Bond report is incomplete. We don't have the detailed report Dr Phillips would have made for Macdonald.

Macdonald exercised a discretion with which we might not agree, but which he certainly possessed. Indeed, it is not inconceivable that Macdonald quietly supplied the criminal court with Phillips's report to support the Kelly depositions.

However, there is one rather crucial fact we have not addressed. Initially, Macdonald was perfectly willing to adjourn and have Phillips return to give further evidence. His original intention was not to gloss over the medical details, but include them in the record, just as Baxter had done. Let's go back to what we know about the Kelly inquest:

*The jury had no questions to ask at this stage, and it was understood that more detailed evidence of the medical examination would be given at a future hearing.*⁹¹



Mary Jane Kelly crime scene, 13 Millers Court

⁸⁸ *Hansard*, 20 June 1832, Col. 921-38.

⁸⁹ *Hansard*, 20 June 1832, Col. 921-38.

⁹⁰ 'The Murder at the East End. Inquest and Verdict,' *St James Gazette*, 13 November 1888.

⁹¹ 'Inquest: Mary Kelly,' *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1888.

That is Baxter's procedure - adjourn for further medical evidence. Instead, Macdonald's jury closed the inquest and returned their verdict. Before we can decide whether Macdonald was at fault for not including detailed medical evidence, we need to examine the adjournment. What in the world happened to change Roderick Macdonald's mind?

'The Question is Whether You Will Adjourn'

Of the canonical five Whitechapel murders, Mary Kelly's inquest is the only one that was not adjourned and reconvened. In that sense, its short length seems unusual. Taken in the broader context of inquests overall, its brevity was typical. Most inquests were single-day affairs. Adjournments were not unusual, but they were not the norm.

The coroner adjourned at some risk, as legal commentator Rudolph Melsheimer wrote in 1888 (emphasis is ours):

*If, during the inquiry, it appears that there are persons whose testimony is material, and who are not in attendance, the coroner may, in the same way, issue his summons to compel their appearance. For this purpose, or where the jury suspect that undue influence has been used, the coroner may adjourn the inquest to a future day, to the same or another place, taking the recognizances of the jurors to attend at the time and place appointed, and notifying to the witness when and where the inquest will be proceeded with. A memorandum of this adjournment and of the recognizances should be entered on the depositions and signed by the coroner. Care should be taken to hold the Court on the day fixed, otherwise the proceedings would drop, and anything done subsequently would be coram non judice. In the use of this power of adjournment great discretion is necessary, for undue or frequent adjournment is a matter and cause of complaint above, and the coroner should not practise it except upon absolutely real necessity.*⁹²

Inquests adjourned to hear further material testimony. Coroners had to take care to proceed on the date specified. Inquests should not adjourn too often.

Why, in Mary Kelly's case, did Macdonald resist adjournment?

The reason he gave was solid enough: 'My own opinion is that it is very unnecessary for two courts to deal with these cases, and go through the same evidence time after time, which only causes expense and trouble.' Duplication of proceedings was a common criticism of coroner's inquests; adjourning to hear 'minutiae' only for a criminal court to hear the same testimony was seen as a waste of taxpayers' money. It's very hard to say, but Macdonald's view of the inquest appears to have been that they should be preliminary affairs. This is in keeping with his advice in the George Hudson case of 1890 ('the best thing they could do was certify death and leave it to another tribunal to decide who was responsible for it') and in the case of Sampson Marshall Steadman in 1891 ('the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children would probably go further into the matter').

Legally, inquest verdicts didn't determine guilt in criminal cases. At this stage, whether the suspects were guilty or not, they were merely the subject of accusations, as the fifth edition of Jervis reminded coroners: 'According to the best opinions, the coroner's inquisition is in no case conclusive, and the inquiry is therefore preliminary only.'⁹³ Whatever the view of the inquest - exhaustive or preliminary - we're talking of opinions and discretion. The important thing for coroners to observe was the 'who, when, how, and where' outlined in the Coroners' Act of 1887. With the exception of detailed medical evidence, the Kelly inquest had presented all the known material testimony. The inquest couldn't make any accusations of murder, because they had no evidence. The police would have to continue their investigation; a criminal court would determine guilt. Macdonald saw the Kelly inquest as a preliminary affair.

However, that reasoning doesn't explain the shift in Macdonald's attitude. He went from expecting an adjournment to advising against one. Obviously, he went into the inquest with the full knowledge that Mary Kelly had been murdered - he could reasonably expect a criminal case to follow in a second court. Why then, did he suggest that there would be an adjournment for further medical evidence? Macdonald's talk of not wanting to duplicate a later criminal proceeding (which of course he had no guarantee would occur) is unconvincing.

Jury Interference?

There was another reason for closing the inquest on Mary Jane Kelly - the real reason. It was unspoken, but eminently practical, and the single most important factor in the Kelly inquest. Quite simply, during the inquest, it came to Macdonald's attention that someone was trying to inhibit the jurors in their duty:

An adjournment for a few minutes then took place, and on the return of the jury the coroner said: It has come to my ears that somebody has been making a statement to some of the jury as to their right and duty of being here. Has any one during the interval spoken to the jury, saying that they should not be here to-day?

Some jurymen replied in the negative.

The Coroner: Then I must have been misinformed. I should have taken good care that he would have had a quiet

⁹² Melsheimer, 30.

⁹³ Melsheimer, 21.

*life for the rest of the week if anybody had interfered with my jury.*⁹⁴

Presumably, someone in Shoreditch Town Hall told some jurors that Macdonald had no jurisdiction over the inquest, and that therefore (incorrectly) they had no right to hear the evidence. This incident is the major difference between Baxter's inquests and Macdonald's inquest on Mary Jane Kelly.

Don't believe for a second that Macdonald thought he had been misinformed. Members of the jury had already brought the issue up ('Mr Baxter is my coroner'). Despite the denial by 'some' of the other jurymen, the coroner finished with the remaining witnesses, then made an about-face and recommended that the inquest conclude, despite having proposed that the medical evidence be explored in a subsequent session. Interference with the jury was a serious business, grounds for the High Court to quash the jury's verdict. For a coroner, this would have been akin to a teacher being called to the principal's office to explain himself.

Roderick Macdonald took the possibility extremely seriously. Look at his threat to imprison the culprit. Someone made approaches to his jury, and the integrity of the Kelly inquest was at stake. Two jurors had already questioned his jurisdiction. An adjournment offered further opportunity for behind-the-scenes interference. If we have someone telling the jury that they had no right to hold the inquest, there was a danger that inhibited jurors might not have appeared on the date fixed for the adjourned inquest, and that the proceedings would drop.

Read accounts of the major inquests that the High Court questioned during the nineteenth century. The inquest on John Lees (Peterloo, 1819): the High Court found no problem with Thomas Ferrand's inhibition of his jury, but the public certainly did. The inquest on Charles Bravo (The Balham Mystery, 1876): the High Court quashed William Carter's first inquest because he restricted his jury's access to relevant testimony that the jury wanted to hear. In both examples, note that the public and judicial criticism of the inquests addressed the same questions: Was the jury inhibited during the inquest? Were they able to assess evidence to their satisfaction? We should add, of course, that juries had to act within the law.

A third case is also instructive: the High Court's review of Wiltshire coroner George Sylvester's handling of the inquest for Francis Saville Kent (the Road Murder, 1860). Francis Kent, the four-year-old son of a factory inspector, was brutally murdered; his throat was cut and he was stabbed in the chest, his body found stuffed down a privy. The inquest jury returned a verdict of murder by persons unknown (five years later, the victim's half-sister, Constance Kent, confessed).

Soon, however, jurors began to complain that they were not satisfied with Sylvester's inquest. Sylvester, they said, had tried to hush up the matter by excluding important witnesses.

Sylvester had instructed the jurors:

*...it was not the place of the jury to find out [who] murdered the child, but how the child met its death; and that inquiry was to find expressly the cause of the death; but it was duty of the magistrates to investigate and find out the [perpetrator] of the crime, and no doubt they would do so after the close of the inquest.*⁹⁵

This sounds a little like Macdonald at the Kelly inquest, doesn't it? 'If the coroner's jury can come to a decision as to the cause of death, then that is all that they have to do.' Can we use *Queen v. Sylvester* as a precedent for the Kelly inquiry to determine whether Macdonald's statement was a misdirection?

The jury looking into the murder of young Francis Kent had wanted to examine members of the Kent family who were under suspicion of murder. The Queen's Bench considered quashing Sylvester's inquest and one of its grounds was Sylvester's instruction to the jury. The question revolved around whether Sylvester inhibited the inquest and whether he had properly withheld witnesses that the jury wanted to hear. Because these witnesses, the family of Francis Kent, were under suspicion of murder, it would have been illegal for Sylvester to have summoned them to testify under oath and take their deposition in writing (Constance and her brother William were actually examined, but Sylvester didn't take their testimony down). The High Court found that Sylvester had acted correctly and the open verdict stood.

One point on which the Lord Chief Justice did criticize Sylvester was not taking Francis Kent's father up on his offer to testify (which circumvented the summons problem), but look at what the Chief Justice said about Sylvester's discretion:

*His Lordship said he thought the coroner would have exercised a sounder discretion if he had accepted the offer; but it was not for a mere error in judgment that this Court would set aside an inquisition found by a coroner's jury...*⁹⁶

Did Macdonald Inhibit the Jury?

In truth, of course, the Kent and Kelly inquests are not that similar, but a comparison of the cases is valuable in so

⁹⁴ 'Inquest: Mary Kelly,' *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1888.

⁹⁵ 'The Queen v. Sylvester,' *The Times*, 26 November 1860.

⁹⁶ 'The Queen v. Sylvester,' *The Times*, 31 January 1861.

far as it reflects on the question of whether the coroner illegally inhibited his jurors. The Kent jury wanted to hear further witnesses (improperly); the Kelly jury was satisfied in regard to the testimony they had heard and desired no further testimony. Macdonald hadn't limited evidence to the cause of death only - eleven witnesses besides Dr Phillips appeared at the inquest.

This is an important point. Macdonald inhibited no one. Notice, he didn't close the inquest himself. That was the decision of the jury. Critics paint Macdonald as an overbearing coroner because of the jurisdictional conflict, but note his regard for the jury as the evidence was heard:

[The Coroner to the Jury] ...The doctor [Dr Phillips] has sent a note asking whether we shall want his attendance here to-day. I take it that it would be convenient that he should tell us roughly what the cause of death was, so as to enable the body to be buried. It will not be necessary to go into the details of the doctor's evidence; but he suggested that he might come to state roughly the cause of death.

The jury acquiesced in the proposed course...

The jury had no questions to ask at this stage, and it was understood that more detailed evidence of the medical examination would be given at a future hearing.

[The Coroner]: Is there anything further the jury ought to know?

[Abberline]: No; if there should be I can communicate with you, sir...

[The Coroner to the Jury] ...I do not want to take it out of your hands. It is for you to say whether at an adjournment you will hear minutiae of the evidence, or whether you will think it is a matter to be dealt with in the police-courts later on, and that, this woman having met with her death by the carotid artery having been cut, you will be satisfied to return a verdict to that effect. From what I learn the police are content to take the future conduct of the case. It is for you to say whether you will close the inquiry to-day; if not, we shall adjourn for a week or fortnight, to hear the evidence that you may desire.

*The Foreman, having consulted with his colleagues, considered that the jury had had quite sufficient evidence before them upon which to give a verdict.*⁹⁷

Far from inhibiting the jury, Macdonald moved through the testimony with an eye to satisfying them. If he did not, it meant a potential appearance before the High Court to explain why he had inhibited the jury's right to examine evidence. The Victorian inquest was largely about the jury, and it was the jury who decided, with Macdonald's advice, whether they should continue in Kelly's case. There was no coronial browbeating and no intimidation of the jury as they assessed the evidence.



Chief Inspector Frederick George Abberline

Macdonald's statement, 'If the coroner's jury can come to a decision as to the cause of death, then that is all that they have to do', wasn't a misdirection because he did so with the support of the jury and he excluded no witnesses they wished to hear.

Yes, the jury expected to hear more from Phillips. Yet, unlike the jury in the Chapman inquest - 'We are of opinion that the evidence the doctor on the last occasion wished to keep back should be heard. [Several Jurymen: Hear, hear.]'⁹⁸ - the Kelly jury decided that what they had already heard was sufficient, and it was the jury not the coroner that closed the inquest. If the jury decided they wanted to hear minutiae, minutiae they would hear. They had every right to dispense with Macdonald's opinion and go into adjournment and convene again.

There is also the question of the jury not hearing George Hutchinson's eyewitness testimony of seeing a man with Mary Jane Kelly in Miller's Court on the night of the murder. However, at the time of the inquest, nobody knew about Hutchinson because he had yet to come forward to the police. This wasn't Macdonald's fault. While coroners had the power to summon witnesses, they could only summon witnesses of whom they were aware. There was an onus on all potential witnesses to make themselves known to the coroner, who made an appeal for people to step forward.

*If any one can give evidence on behalf of our sovereign lady the Queen, when, how, and by what means [the victim] came to his death, let him come forth, and he shall be heard.*⁹⁹

⁹⁷ 'Inquest: Mary Kelly,' *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1888.

⁹⁸ Ryder, Stephen P, ed, 'Annie Chapman's Inquest.' *Casebook: Jack the Ripper*. www.casebook.org/official_documents/inquests/inquest_chapman.html accessed 26 February 2006.

Inquests, as we see, depended on the participation of the public.

We can still lay blame, however. When we complain about the Kelly inquest closing early, causing us to lose much of Dr Phillips's medical evidence and completely to miss George Hutchinson's eyewitness account of a possible suspect, we can thank whoever was this 'somebody' behind the scenes who approached jurors, questioned Macdonald's jurisdiction and argued with the jury's right to hold the inquest.

We can also blame the Middlesex magistrates responsible for the 1886-1888 division of East Middlesex. The short-sighted magistrates had created problems for the coroners who were concerned with the Whitechapel murders. The birds had truly come home to roost, stumbling smack into the middle of the Kelly inquest. Had there been no division or had it been more logical, Wynne Baxter would have held the inquest. Had the alteration been less adversarial in nature, perhaps Macdonald's Kelly inquest would have been safe to adjourn, and we would know more about the testimony of Dr Phillips and George Hutchinson, because they likely would have been questioned by Macdonald and the jurors.

In advising that the inquest not adjourn, Macdonald's discretion will always be fair game for debate, but critics must allow that the coroner's discretion existed, and they must also take into account the coroner's concern for his jury. Wynne Baxter exercised his discretion in a different way, but then no outside force attempted to interfere with his juries. How would Baxter have reacted in Macdonald's place?

The Bottom Line

The inquest into the death of Mary Kelly was legally sound, properly held by Roderick Macdonald and not Wynne Baxter. Jurisdiction was with the body and Roderick Macdonald was Spitalfields coroner. Macdonald's procedure was correct. The jury viewed the body. Twelve witnesses, including Dr Phillips - all the relevant witnesses there were at the time - gave their testimony to the jury's satisfaction. The facts of the murder - who died, when, how, and where were answered, as best as they could be. On the subject of coronial discretion, by advising that the inquest not adjourn, Macdonald preserved the integrity of his jury against an outside force, with the jury's acquiescence. The jury was satisfied on the evidence, and it was the jury's decision to close the inquest, not Macdonald's. It was to the jury that the coroner answered, not history.

We can now answer the coroner's questions. At the Kelly inquest, Roderick Macdonald did know what he was doing, and he did know his district. Argue discretion all day, but charges of illegality and incompetence in the Kelly inquest do not hold water.

The Hundred Cases of Thomas Hammond

The questions about the inquest on Mary Jane Kelly aside, there is, however, a genuine black cloud across Macdonald's coronership. Macdonald knew what he was doing, but did he know what his officer and clerk, Thomas Hammond, was doing? Apparently not.

In December 1891, the London County Council prosecuted Thomas Hammond on charges of fraud and forgery. Hammond had played a subsidiary role during the Kelly inquest. He transported Mary Kelly's body to Shoreditch mortuary and addressed the jury at the beginning of the inquest.

As Macdonald's clerk, Hammond was responsible for submitting expense vouchers to the Council. The Council accused Hammond of inserting false entries - payments to doctors for conducting post-mortems when they had performed none, and charges for space rented for inquests when there had been no inquest held. It was Macdonald's responsibility to balance the charges, but Hammond had altered vouchers after Macdonald had signed them, forging the names of payees, doctors and landlords. The Council found a hundred cases of Hammond committing fraud, and Macdonald testified at his officer's trial.¹⁰⁰

In January 1892, Hammond, a coroner's officer of 28 years experience, surrendered to his bail.

'I don't quite understand this,' Hammond commented as he was arrested, 'but I suppose I must go.' Hammond went, all right - to gaol. He was sentenced to three years' penal servitude.¹⁰¹

In a century of public suspicion that coroners wasted ratepayer money, Hammond serves as a legitimate example of abuse in the coroner's court, and a justification for decades of magisterial interference, for which all good coroners - and the residents of their districts - paid the price.

Two years later, the LCC cited cases of fraud by coroners' officers like Thomas Hammond as grounds that coroners fill new appointments from the ranks of the Metropolitan Police, thereby putting them under the LCC's direct control.¹⁰² This makes Thomas Hammond an infamous character - but not for being the man who removed Mary Kelly from her gory lodgings in Miller's Court.

99 Melsheimer, 233.

100 'Police,' *The Times*, 23 December 1891.

101 'Central Criminal Court,' *The Times*, 15 January 1892.

102 'The London County Council,' *The Times*, 18 January 1893.

The Second Idea Alfred Hodgkinson Had

The June 1892 collision of two trains at the Bishopsgate Street Station provided further jurisdictional nonsense between the North East and South East coroners' districts. Most of the victims were removed to mortuaries within Wynne Baxter's district, but two were taken to Shoreditch mortuary - Macdonald country. Because both coroners had bodies within their jurisdictions, this meant two inquests for the same accident. Macdonald was absent at this time, leaving Alfred Hodgkinson to act in his place.

In 1888, Baxter and Macdonald had not conferred about Annie Chapman or Mary Kelly, but now Hodgkinson personally approached Baxter for a possible solution. Hodgkinson's idea was simple: he and Baxter should hold a single joint inquest to avoid an unnecessary duplication of process and expense:

*...Mr Hodgkinson, Deputy-Coroner for North-East London, yesterday saw Mr Baxter with the view of arranging that the two inquiries might be held together at the adjournment at the Town-hall, Shoreditch, on Monday, as this course would obviate the necessity of holding two separate inquiries, the evidence in both being practically the same. Mr Baxter, however, argued that he had no jurisdiction in another coroner's district except in the case of the illness or death of the coroner, and he declined to create a precedent in this case.*¹⁰³

Section 7 (1) of the Coroners' Act of 1887 stipulated that 'the coroner only within whose jurisdiction the body of a person upon whose death an inquest ought to be holden is lying shall hold the inquest...' ¹⁰⁴ Section 20 of the Coroners' Act of 1844 provided the exceptions Baxter cited - this is the same legislation the Middlesex Magistrates could have used in 1886 to prevent the legal problems their division of East Middlesex had caused.

*And be it enacted, That, except as aforesaid, every Coroner for any County, or any District thereof, or his Deputy, after he shall, in pursuance of the Provisions of this Act, have been assigned to or elected by the Electors of any particular District, shall, except during Illness or Incapacity or unavoidable Absence as aforesaid of any Coroner for any other District, or during a Vacancy in the Office of Coroner for any other District, hold Inquests only within the District to or for which he shall have been assigned or elected.*¹⁰⁵

Thus, Hodgkinson and Baxter went their separate ways, each holding his own inquest. It is interesting to speculate that Macdonald's absence, if we interpret the 1844 Act literally, might have afforded Baxter an opportunity to hold an inquest at Shoreditch Town Hall jointly with Hodgkinson. In any case, Baxter didn't want to set the bad precedent of officially acting in Macdonald's jurisdiction. Therefore, there was no cooperation.

Speed Bonnie Boat

Roderick Macdonald retired from the House of Commons in 1892. Following the scandals trailing Charles Parnell, the Scottish MP had joined the ranks of Parliament's anti-Parnellites.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps the divisions between the Home Rulers disheartened him. Perhaps Macdonald simply wanted to make more time for his new wife - for, in January 1890, Roderick Macdonald had married Frances Emma Maryon Perceval, the great-granddaughter of Spencer Perceval, the only Prime Minister in British history to be assassinated.¹⁰⁷ Despite her heritage, we know little of Fanny Perceval Macdonald, just as we know little of Fanny Bramah Diplock. We don't even know how old she was; we speculate that she was significantly younger than her husband, who was now in his fifties. Macdonald's marriage is another possible area for future research - it might yield a different view of the Scottish reformer and coroner.

Like Macdonald, Fanny had also rewarded bravery in the face of sudden death:

*Mr George Sawdie, pier-master to the Eastbourne Pier Company, was presented on the 3d inst by Miss Fanny Perceval with the honorary silver medal of the Royal Humane Society, for conspicuous gallantry in saving a young lady from drowning off the pier on the 21st of August last, at great risk to his own life.*¹⁰⁸

In May 1890, Fanny was presented to Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace as 'Mrs Roderick Macdonald, by the Hon Mrs Robert Spencer.'¹⁰⁹

Sadly, the Macdonalds weren't destined for long-term happiness. Fanny died at the Macdonald residence at 252 Camden Road on 15 March 1893, barely three years into the marriage.

Eight months later, Macdonald was ill himself. Cancer bled him white, as J M Macdiarmid might have said, and stranded him in Camden Road, probably confined to the same bed in which Fanny had died.

¹⁰³ 'The Disaster on the Great Eastern Railway,' *The Times*, 16 June 1892.

¹⁰⁴ Melsheimer, 224.

¹⁰⁵ Wellington, 163.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Stenton, Stephen Lees. *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament 1886-1913* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1978), 230-31.

¹⁰⁷ 'Marriages,' *The Times*, 30 January 1890.

¹⁰⁸ 'Reward for Bravery,' *The Times*, 8 October 1881.


¹⁰⁹ 'The Drawing Room,' *The Times*, 10 May 1890

With pecuniary legacies of £11,500, and even more to be distributed among seven hospitals, Macdonald was a wealthy man. He prepared his will on 6 November 1893, witnessed by J Tubbs, clerk to Alfred Hodgkinson, and Georgina Edwards, a hospital nurse. There were numerous beneficiaries. Alfred Hodgkinson, who was also one of the executors of the will, received £250. A Miss Helen Mackenzie received an annuity of £75. The three daughters of Macdonald's friend, Robert Moir (Surveyor of Taxes for Manchester), got £1000 each. Macdonald's godson, the eldest son of Charles Perceval, Fanny's uncle, received £500. Angus Sutherland, MP for Sutherlandshire, got £500. Macdonald left another £250 to Miss Louise Wood, a solicitor's daughter, 'for her kindness to my late dear wife.' Likewise, a Mrs. Harrison of 2 Cross Road, East Croyden, 'who was for some time my late dear wife's confidential domestic servant,' received £100. A former servant of the coroner, Mrs Matilda Paul, received £100. Macdonald's secretary, Alexander Provan, received another £100.

In his will, Macdonald did not fail to remember his Scottish roots. His brother, Donald Macdonald, got the family croft near Dunvegan. His cousin Donald MacFarquhar, the smith and joiner, resident of 'North Britain' (Macdonald's wry expression; he had not lost his sense of Scottish nationalism), received £250. Donald's sister, Mary MacFarquhar, received the same. The three sons of Roderick Macneil, Macdonald's uncle, received £500 each, despite Macdonald only being able to remember one of their names (Hugh). Peter Maclean of Dunvegan Isle received £1,000, as did the Scottish Corporation in Fleet Street. A miller named Norman Macdonald, also of Dunvegan Isle, got £250.

The will was generous to hospitals, as the balance of the estate went to Glasgow Royal Infirmary and six hospitals in London, to be chosen by Macdonald's trustees. Macdonald set the stipulation that the trustees consider the number of non-paying beds in each institution. Macdonald also gave the Caledonian Asylum in Holloway Road the sum of £1,000.¹¹⁰ The dying coroner hadn't forgotten the under-privileged of Scotland and the East End.

Roderick Macdonald died at his home in Camden Road on 9 March 1894. Mythology tells us that Charon in his boat ferried the souls of the Greeks across the Styx. We don't know, but it's rumoured that as Macdonald breathed his last, it was that darling of Scottish nationalism, Flora Macdonald, who came for him, as she must come for all stranded Scots of North Britain. As she rowed him across the sea to Skye, their bonnie boat sped.

Roderick Macdonald  *Coroner.*

¹¹⁰ Will of Roderick Macdonald. QE/D/3/4, Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children, Royal London Hospital Archives and Museum.

Acknowledgments

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In Future Issues... Future issues of *Ripperologist* will feature Robert Linford, David O'Flaherty and John Savage on Samuel Langham, the continuation of their comprehensive study of the Coronial system in England and Wales, Stephen Long on the Real Fagin and the child gangs of Whitechapel, Antonio Sironi and Jane Coram on the Night of the Double Event, Claudia Aliffe on the Wicked Women of Britain, Cindy Collins Smith on the Curse upon Mitre Square, Simon D Wood on Millers Court Revisited, Stanley Dean Reid on the Most Wanted Criminals in World History, Robert McLaughlin on Vacher l'Eventreur, Jeffrey Bloomfield on the Bravo murder case, Zoraida Dunne on William Palmer, Christopher T George on Neil Cream, Eduardo Zinna on Buck Ruxton, Leslie A Klinger on Jack the Ripper and Sherlock Holmes, John Ruffels on *The East End Murderer - I Knew Him*, John Crawford on Algernon Haskett-Smith, Stepan Poberowski on Russian perceptions of Jack the Ripper, Daniel Olsson on Long Liz Stride's journey to England, East End Life by Adam Wood, The Last Word by Christopher-Michael DiGrazia, Crimebeat by Wilf Gregg, Cyberjack by Monty, Press Trawl by Chris Scott, Ripper Fiction, In Brief, I Beg to Report, Dear Rip, Ripping Yarns and more, much more... can you afford to miss out on any of it? Subscribe now!



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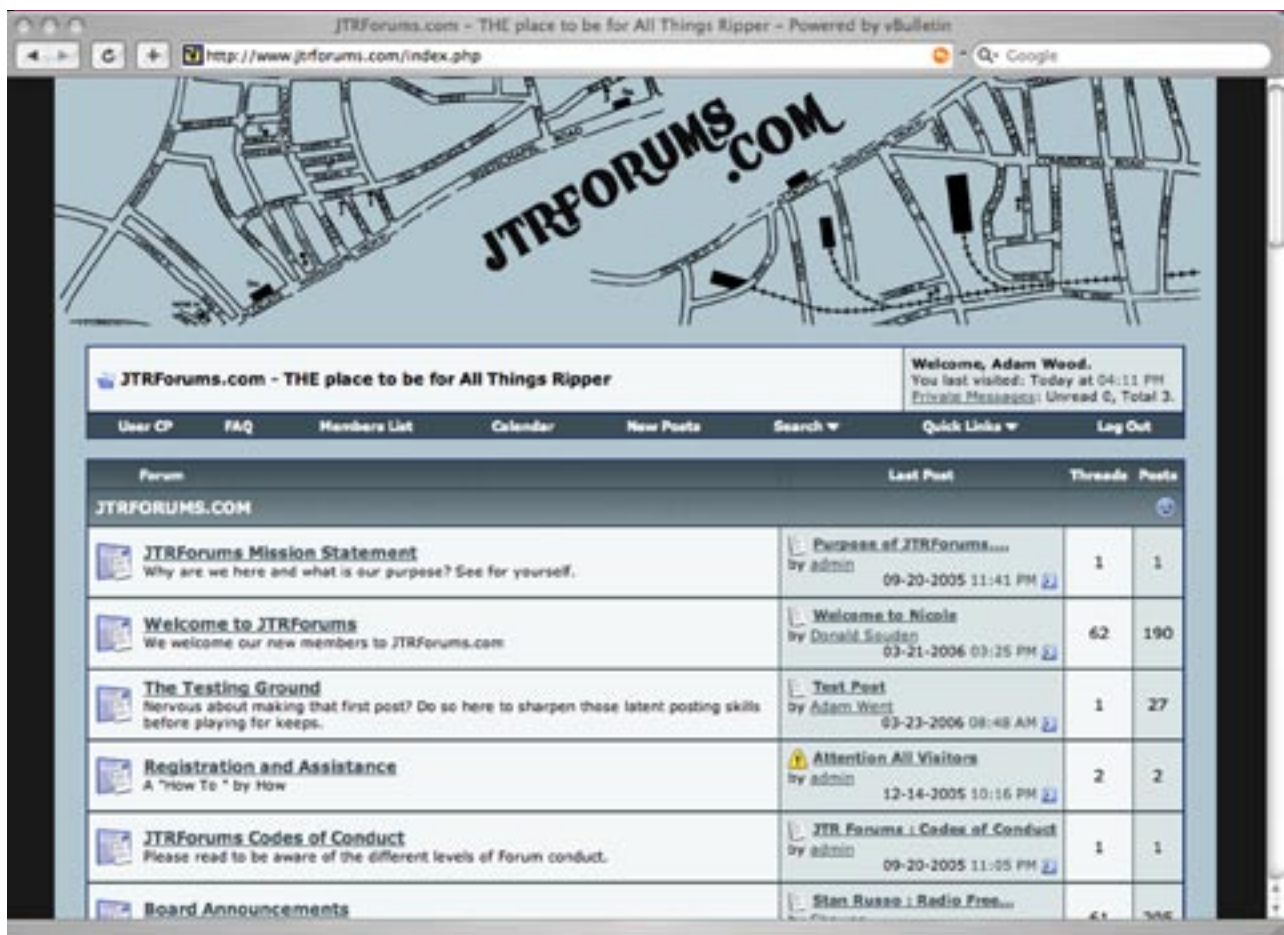
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Cyber Jack: the Ripper on the Internet

MONTY

As I write this, it is March the 17th, St Patrick's Day. It is also my birthday. I am currently slumped over a table, a crisp Irish stout in one hand and a printed copy of last month's *Rip* in the other. There is a diddle-eye band in one corner of the pub and a dancing Leprechaun at the bar. This is living. This is real life. Anyway, you're my mate, ain't yer? You're all my mates. I love you, dancing Leprechaun. Not as much as I love the *Rip* though, the *Rip* is the Dogs; anyway, this isn't why you subscribed to *Ripperologist*. A drunken rant. You can subscribe to *Ripperana* for that. Let's start (*I wish you would* -Reader)



JTR Forums

Howard Brown and Tim Mosely are the fixers of [JTR Forums](#), whilst door duties (Administrating) is shared by the Aussie Kray Twins Adam Went and Jules Rosenthal. Now, confession time here. I am fully aware of this site's existence for sometime but have not ventured in there until coaxed by Mister Brown in last month's *Ripperologist*. You can call it an error on my part, I do not care. However, I like to think I am a fair kind of Guy so I ventured in. Now, I'm not one for politicking but I do know how this site came about. Suffice to say friendships were broken and I hope that they are not broken beyond repair. That would be a shame. Enough of that subject.

So this site is a spanking new addition to the Cyber world of Jack. That's a good thing in my book. Similar in set up to the *Casebook* and *Jack the Ripper Forums* and just as easy to navigate, it has potential. Being new, there is not as much content in terms of post contributions but that will come. What it does offer is a laid back outlook coupled with

the serious and humorous, plenty of URLs (enough to put me out of a job) and the opportunity for the individual to develop an idea or theory, more on that in a moment. New members are welcomed and Tim's front-page creation is in blue, and blue is my favourite colour, so he is on to a winner there.

Shall we take a peek?

The *Individual Forums* section offers the individual the chance to bring up any topic for discussion. There is a mixture of topics and not all are Jack related. Those that are include the outstandingly modest Peter Wood's thread entitled [James Maybrick was Jack the Ripper](#). And author Stan Russo questioning the reasoning behind what he deems as the current trend in Ripperology, [Why do people give up?](#) Basically, if there is a specific you wish to discuss, this is the sub forum for you to do so.

Tough Case chap Chase Goodwin (that cannot be a real name, can it?) crops up in discussion here. This Guy claims to have [solved the case](#). Ms Cornwell will not be pleased. What a man!

This [thread](#) tackles the issue of *Jewish Police Constables* and the possibility of a link with Anderson's witness. It would tie up neatly with Macnaghten's City PC but...

There are a series of motives and reason threads in the [Motives and Reasons](#) sub forums, where else? Here are just a couple threads from there:

'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' *Proverbs* 22:6. [Jack the abused child?](#) A debate on Jack's childhood here. Just what did shape the most notorious Serial Killer of any time?

Was Jack a sufferer of some kind of mental condition? [This thread](#), asks if you feel this was the case or was he just as sane as you or I? Well, ok, as sane as you then .

Finally, for JTR Forums, *JTR Forums topic of the month*. Cue marching band, Mosely and Brown in rah-rah skirts with pom-poms! The topic for March is the possible [use of empty buildings by Jack as boltholes](#). We all know that some theories out there include the 'bolthole stay', mainly as a way of explaining the time gap between Eddowes's murder, PC Long's first visit to Goulston Street (when he claims her apron was not there) and his second visit sometime later (when he found her apron). This thread opens a debate about the feasibility of a hideaway.

Over all, this fledgling site has great potential. As mentioned, the user content is not as great as the other two big sites but this will be tackled as more people add their own views, research and anything else they think as valued. My only gripe is the name. *JTR Forums* is too close to *Jack the Ripper Forums* in my view. The friction between these two camps is odorous as Skunks predator repellent or my Hai Karate. I cannot help but feel a move away in name would not only diffuse the situation but also help establish this site with its own identity. That's the bad stuff. There is plenty good stuff. Like I say, the outlook is laid back but do not be fooled by this. The knowledge is intense and threads created by Tim Mosely on *Motives and Reasons* have links listed for those who wish to delve into the topics he has set up. A great idea if you are researching something along similar lines.

Like I said, and I have many times already, great potential supported by competent and knowledgeable people. Coupled with the relaxed atmosphere makes visiting this site pleasurable and informative. A good site that will only get better.

Right, back to a site that some feel is hard to improve on. Myself included.

The Casebook: Jack the Ripper message boards

have had a few thread gems in this past month. The first is born out of an article in *New Scientist* on 25 February 2006 and is about Time Carriers. Created by Mr Poster, it brings light on to the timing situation and explains possible [discrepancies in the timings given by witness](#).

The *Moab and Midian* letter is up for discussion on its [own thread](#). A Tom Bulling hoax or a real deal? Mr Wescott would love to chat with you about this.

There used to be a time in the 1990s when Joe Barnett was all the rage in the suspects field. Then that nasty old diary came along, the Littlechild letter was rediscovered and Joe was relegated behind Master Maybrick and Doctor Tumblety. Get back in touch with your Barnett side on [this thread](#).

[Was Mary Kelly killed by Jack the Ripper?](#) Different *Modus Operandi* but, like husbands, *Modus Operandi* can change.

Simon Wood's article *The Enigmas of Millers Court* in *Ripperologist* 62 (December 2005) [comes under scrutiny on this thread](#). Do you see a knife, mirror and ring?

Mitre Square as you have never seen it before: Jake Luukanen has created this evolving thread showing a [3D view of the Square in 1888](#). The work is incomplete and will be for some time as Jake is committed to other projects, mainly working for a living. However, when he does have the time he wishes to recreate the square and how it looked on that infamous night in September 1888. His work, as it stands at the minute, can be view on this thread and Jake welcomes

any constructive opinions. For me, this man can do no wrong. View this thread and do it now.

There have been new additions to the [Casebook Press Project](#). Hard work by the few has resulted in contemporary news article for the majority to enjoy and use. Well done Guys, I'm sure the Typers' cramps are worth it...

The coolly indomitable

Jack the Ripper Forums

next. The writing in *Goulston Street* [crops up](#): some may think this is re-hashed stuff. Maybe it is, then again maybe not. Have a look and decide for yourself.

A questionable victim, [Martha Tabram](#), is debated: was she or was she not a victim of Jack the Ripper? Either way she came to an end no one deserves.

The gruesome aspect of Jack's crime, [mutilations](#). What are the links, if any, between this terrible and disrespectful act and Jack's psychological make up?

[Mrs Lilley of Bucks Row](#): Did she hear the attack on Polly Nichols? Or was it all one big mistake?

Catherine Eddowes had some carvings cut into her face, so did Carrie Brown. Were they [Roman Numerals](#)? Are these two crimes linked? Check this thread to find out some people's views.

Right, on to the more unusual. Ahhh, the smell of linseed oil, the sound of leather upon willow. No, not a night out at Madame Fifi's knocking shop. No, I am talking about Cricket. The season will soon be upon us folks and anyone who knows Monty knows he loves his Cricket. We all know another Monty who loved Cricket also, don't we, boys and girls? Montague Druitt's cricket career is [analysed here](#).

Also available are the [match statistics](#) of his game for the Gents of Bournemouth versus Parsees at Bournemouth on 3 and 4 August 1888; and his game for [Blackheath versus the Brothers Christopherson](#) at Blackheath on 8 September. A five wicket haul against Parsees by MJ Druitt. Not a bad effort at all.

Some light hearted looks at Jack now. [Cartoonstock](#) gives us a laugh, not that cutting a Teddy bear's head off is funny, but if you like that sort of thing...

Vickie Britton aids you through this [Case study into Jack the Ripper](#). I hope you were taking notes, as there is a quiz at the end. Did I say quiz? I meant exam, sorry.

Finally,

Monty's site of the month.

Actually, there are two. Howard Brown has put me on to this site. Thomas Schachner and Andreas Rizzi's German-language site [Jack The Ripper.de](#) is very good, excellent in fact. As the only pieces of German I know is Bundesliga and Fussball I wouldn't know how good it is so I'd be interested to hear from any German speakers out there, come on, write/mail the *Rip* and let me know, is it as good as Brown says it is?

Lee Jackson's [The Victorian Dictionary](#), covers everything within the Victorian era. And I mean everything. The research and work that has gone into this site is phenomenal. An ideal tool for those of you who are researching this period. Maps, schooling, workhouses, slang, Policing, lighting, social conditions, leisure, publications, weather, science, transport, disease, crime, markets, organisation, you name it, this site has it. It is one of my most favourite sites. The information Mr Jackson has collated is interesting, informative and thought-inducing. I cannot speak highly enough about this site. Just go and look for yourself, you will see I speak the truth.

Right, I'm off to find the craic. Top of the morning to yer and other Irish sayings.

Slainte Mhath

Monty

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CHRIS SCOTT

Press Trawl

Decatur Republican
17 February 1891

HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CASE

London, Feb. 16.

Sadler, the suspected Whitechapel murderer, obtained an admission from a witness who said he saw him with Carrotty Nell on the night of the murder, to the effect that he, Sadler, was scratched and bloody at that time. The object of Sadler in asking the question was to show that the murder. The police will busy themselves pending the adjournment in scouring for evidence.

Bangor Daily Whig and Courier
17 February 1891

WAS HE THE MURDERER?

The Latest Whitechapel Case being Heard in Court

London, Feb. 17.

The police say that the circumstances surrounding the arrest of the man Sadler strongly tend to prove him to be the murderer of Carrotty Nell, the last Whitechapel victim. The Stepney police station, where he is detained, was this morning surrounded by a vast crowd, mostly women, who uttered wild threats of lynching and tearing the prisoner to pieces. When he was removed to the police court an immense force of police was employed to keep the mob from doing him harm.

The prisoner was placed in the dock this afternoon. His face was dirty and scratched. He seems utterly careless as to what happens to him and is apparently entirely composed. He kept his hands in his pockets and glanced calmly around him as if he was a disinterested spectator of the proceedings.

During the course of the prisoner's examination a man testified to the fact that he had seen Sadler in company with the murdered girl Thursday night. As the witness was making his statement the prisoner watched him sharply and suddenly exclaimed, addressing the man in the witness box, "Be careful about what you are saying."

Continuing, witness described in detail the visit of Sadler to a small coffee shop. Sadler, according to the witness, sat in the coffee shop with the murdered girl and seemed to be quarrelling with her. Sadler, the witness, said, claimed to have been robbed. Finally Sadler and Carrotty Nell left the coffee shop separately.

Colorado Springs Gazette
17 February 1891

THE MURDERER FOUND

London, February 16.

The latest discovery made by the police in connection with the Whitechapel murder bids fair to connect the man Sadler now in custody with this Jack the Ripper crime. The police now have in their possession a sharp, dangerous looking knife stained with blood and showing traces of having recently been washed. The blood stains were examined microscopically by Dr. Phillips, the police surgeon attached to the Leman street police station. Dr. Phillips has no doubt that the stains are those of human blood. This formidable knife has been traced to the possession of Sadler, who as already stated was a fireman on board a steamer which recently arrived from Turkey. The police have no doubt that Sadler was the murderer of Carrotty Nell.

From the time that it became known that Sadler had been arrested and was formally charged with the murder of Carrotty Nell, the greatest excitement has prevailed in and about Whitechapel. The police station where the prisoner is detained is surrounded by a vast crowd of people, mostly women. The women are eager for a sight of the prisoner. Wild threats of lynching and tearing the prisoner to pieces were uttered by the most excited of these females. When

the man was removed to the police court an immense force of police was employed and every precaution was necessary in order to prevent the Whitechapel mob from lynching the man.

Opinions differ as to whether the man charged with the murder of Carrotty Nell is the murderer known as Jack the Ripper. The inhabitants of Whitechapel believe that he is, but the police have not committed themselves to an opinion on the subject up to the present time.

Manitoba Daily Free Press
21 February 1891

A FRIEND FOR SADLER

London, Feb. 20.

Sadler, the alleged murderer of Carrotty Nell, has written a letter to the London Star claiming to be innocent, and that the police, determined to fasten on someone as a scapegoat for the Whitechapel tragedies, have apparently selected him and persistently ignore all the facts tending to show his innocence. The Star has engaged counsel to defend Sadler, who is without means to defend himself, and proposes to see that no injustice is done him. The belief in Sadler's innocence is growing.



Body of Frances Coles

Decatur Morning Review
25 February 1891

HIS STORY DISPROVED

**The Man Who Is Accused of Killing Carrotty Nell
He Sold a Knife to a Seaman**

London, Feb 24.

A statement by Sadler, the man who is charged with having murdered Carrotty Nell in the Whitechapel district ten days ago, was read at the coroner's inquest in the case Tuesday. In his statement Sadler gives a coherent account of his doings between the time of his leaving the woman in a lodging house and the time of his arrest.

Denied Selling the Knife

As far as his drunken condition that night permits him to recollect, at the moment of the murder he was going to a hospital to get wounds dressed that he received in a row at the docks. He denied selling a knife on the day following the murder, and said that he had not had such a knife in several years. A seaman identified Sadler as a man who had come to the Sailors' Home on the morning the crime was committed and sold him a big bladed clasp knife, saying he had cut many a model with the knife.

Trenton Evening Times
4 March 1891

SADLER GOES FREE

London, March 4.

When Sadler, the alleged murderer of Carrotty Nell, was discharged from jail on the coroner's finding for lack of evidence, the populace who wanted to lynch him when he was arrested assembled in great crowd and made a hero of him, cheering him loudly. Last night Sadler was on one of his accustomed sprees such as got him into trouble. He held quite a reception in an East End place.

Sandusky Daily Register
4 March 1891

BLAMED ON JACK THE RIPPER

London, March 3.

The fireman, Sadler, who was arrested on Feb. 13th last, the day the woman named Frances Coleman, otherwise known as Carrotty Nell, was found murdered in Whitechapel, and who was charged with having murdered her, has been discharged. The police could not collect sufficient evidence to connect him with the crime, which is now definitely placed to the account of the mysterious and unfindable murderer whom the police and public known only under the designation of Jack the Ripper.

Jamaica Daily Gleaner
10 March 1891

Replying to an interrogation as to the charge made by the fireman, Sadler, who is held for further examination on the charge of having murdered in Whitechapel recently the woman known as Carrotty Nell or Frances Coleman, that he had been maltreated and deprived of food by the police, Mr. Matthews said that there was no foundation for Sadler's charge.

Jamaica Daily Gleaner
3 April 1891

James Thomas Sadler, who had been charged with the murder of Frances Coles, alias Carrotty Nell, was discharged by the police magistrate, as the police could not furnish sufficient evidence to connect him with the crime. Sadler announces his intention to bring legal proceedings for heavy damages against the Standard and the Telegraph for libel and against others for false imprisonment. He says he is assured by his counsel that he has a perfect case against his slanderers and those responsible for his arrest and he is determined to make them pay the penalty.



Coming in April:
The Secret Lives of MontagueDruitt



Obituary: John Dennis Profumo CBE

30 January 1915 - 9 March 2006

In the summer of 1963, I was age 15 and attending school in Liverpool - my sexuality just dawning after I had poured over an old medical text in my grandparents' sideboard drawer that featured woodblocks of the female reproductive system and had similarly ogled at photographs of naked-breasted natives in old *National Geographics*. At that moment, a national scandal broke that quickly educated me to the sexual ways of the world.

It proved a stunning eye-opener to a sexually naive youngster to read the salacious and steamy details of 'The Profumo Affair.' Rather like being alive in 1889 and reading the seedy details of the Cleveland Street scandal over 'rent boys' frequented by key men of society and government which shocked British society of that day and was rumoured to involve both Prince Albert Victor and 'Bertie', the future Edward VII. Similarly, the Profumo Affair of 1963 rocked London society and the British government, forcing the resignation of War Minister John Profumo and, in a chain reaction, that of Tory Prime Minister Harold Macmillan.

The Profumo scandal had everything. Two leading ladies: the glamorous but brassy looking dark-haired Christine Keeler, aged 19, a sometime call girl and Soho showgirl, whose photograph, naked on a chair, became an image of the time; and blonde Mandy Rice-Davies, also aged 19 - an English Brigitte Bardot with a softer sex-kitten side. Sex parties arranged by fashionable London osteopath Stephen Ward, who later took a fatal dose of sleeping pills on the last day of his trial at the Old Bailey for living on immoral earnings and died three days later (conspiracists say he was murdered and may have been a Russian spy). Sexual liaisons at Viscount Astor's Berkshire estate, Cliveden, where Keeler is said to have romped nude on the roof. West Indian jazz musician and pimp Aloysius 'Lucky' Gordon. Even a naked 'man in the mask' - rumoured to be a bigwig whose identity was never revealed - said by Ms Rice-Davies to have acted as a slave at one of Ward's sex parties. It was Keeler's sexual liaisons with both Profumo and Yevgeny Ivanov, a Soviet naval attaché, which gave the impression that military secrets could have been passed. Remember this was the height of the Cold War, the era of the H-Bomb threat and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Profumo's lie to the Commons that he was not involved with Ms Keeler forced his resignation and that of Macmillan, giving some seriousness to the whole tawdry affair.

To his credit, Profumo more than survived the scandal and emerged at the end of his life with praise as a man who did good works. Numerous accolades were accorded him when he died, aged 91, at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital on 9 March as a consequence of a severe stroke suffered two days earlier. We particularly note him in the pages of *Ripperologist* for the charity work he did at Toynbee Hall in London's East End. Profumo's remarkable transformation even earned the praise of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who said: 'He was a politician with a glittering career who made a serious mistake, but then underwent a journey of redemption in which he gave support and help to many, many people.'

As noted by Terry Kirby in *The Independent* on 11 March: 'In [our] era when politicians who resign in disgrace are sometimes back in office within months, Profumo's was indeed an extraordinary atonement. Dapper and well groomed, he first arrived at Toynbee Hall, on Commercial Street, close to the alleyways where Jack the Ripper roamed, in 1963. It was just a few weeks after his resignation from the government in the wake of what he would later call his "Keeler interlude" and the rest of the world knew as the Profumo Affair. He asked if there was anything he could do to help, was handed the washing-up, and found a new life. Later, he would supervise children's parties and help care for old people. He also helped to set up projects for the homeless and ex-offenders. Eventually, he used his extensive network of contacts and easy charm to become the charity's chief fundraiser. Jill Goldsworthy, a spokeswoman for the Toynbee Hall charity, said: "John Profumo was our longest serving volunteer. He was a wonderful man who was very kind and got on very well with people at all levels. He was very much admired and loved."'

Continued

In 1975, Profumo's redemption was complete when he was appointed CBE by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for his charitable work. He had previously been awarded the OBE (Military) for his service in World War II, in which he achieved the rank of Brigadier and served in North Africa and France.

John Dennis Profumo was the son of Albert Profumo, a barrister of Italian origin who bore the title of Fourth Baron Profumo, originally awarded to the family by the King of Sardinia. On his father's death in 1940, Profumo inherited the title but never used it. Profumo was educated at Harrow and Oxford. In March 1940, while still serving in the army, he was elected to the House of Commons as a Conservative at a by-election in Kettering, Northamptonshire. He entered the Commons in 1940 aged 25, the youngest MP at that time (at the time of his death he was the last surviving member of the 1940 House of Commons). He voted against Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's Tory government in the debate following the British defeat at Narvik in Norway. In the 1945 election, he was defeated at Kettering by Labour candidate, Gilbert Mitchison. Later in 1945, he was appointed chief of staff to the British Mission to Japan. In 1950, he left the army and at the 1950 election he was elected for Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire, then a safe Conservative seat. He rose steadily in Prime Minister Winston Churchill's Conservative government: he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Civil Aviation in November 1952 and Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation a year later.

Adding extra style to the man was that in 1954, he had married glamorous Valerie Hobson, star of such films as *Great Expectations* (1946) and *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949). *Monsieur Ripois*, released in 1954, was her last *sortie* into films. The elegant Ms Hobson stuck by her husband, even through the trying summer of 1963 when his fall from grace might have shattered another marriage. She died of a heart attack in November 1998.

After his marriage, Profumo's rise in the Tory government went on inexorably. After the failure of a British-French attempt to stop an Egyptian takeover of the Suez Canal in 1956, the international crisis led to the downfall of Churchill's *protégé*, Sir Anthony Eden. In the succeeding Tory government of Macmillan, Profumo's talents continued to be well regarded. He was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in January 1957, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office in November 1958 and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in January 1959.

In July 1960, Profumo was named to the Macmillan cabinet as Secretary of State for War and was also appointed a member of the Privy Council. In 1963, John Profumo was the rising star of the Tory ascendancy. He was a man who had everything going for him. And then disaster struck.

Stephen Ward had introduced Profumo to Christine Keeler at Lord Astor's Cliveden estate in Berkshire in July 1961. In March 1963, Profumo made a statement to MPs denying any impropriety in his relationship with Ms Keeler, leading to the scandal that broke like a tidal wave over British society.

In 1998, the Profumo Affair was depicted on the silver screen as *Scandal*, directed by Michael Caton-Jones, and hyped as 'The story that seduced the world is now the most controversial film of the year.' The promo posters for the flick showed star Joanne Whalley-Kilmer as Christine Keeler in the same pose in which Ms Keeler sat for the iconic photograph. Unfortunately, the movie itself proved a damp squib, despite the high wattage of the other leading stars, John Hurt and Sir Ian McKellan, as Stephen Ward and John Profumo, respectively, and a young Bridget Fonda as Mandy Rice-Davies. The original, steamy Profumo Affair was infinitely better. You should have been there.

CHRISTOPHER T GEORGE

[Terry Kirby,](#)
[The Independent Online, 11 March 2006](#)

[BBC News, 10 March 2006](#)

[Review of Scandal \(1998\) on Internet Movie Database](#)

['Valerie Hobson.' on Internet Movie Database](#)



Christine Keeler



Obituary: Jack Wild

30 September 1952 - 1 March 2006

Singer and actor Jack Wild, who played the ultimate Cockney boy, the Artful Dodger, in Carol Reed's 1968 film version of Lionel Bart's musical *Oliver!*, died in London of tongue and throat cancer on 1 March. Wild underwent surgery in July 2004, at which time he had some vocal chords and part of his tongue removed. Unfortunately, the cancer proved untreatable. Wild's agent Alex Jay stated on 2 March that the actor 'died peacefully at midnight last night after a long battle with oral cancer.'

Wild was born 30 September 1952 in Royton, near Oldham, England, the son of mill workers. Jack and his older brother Arthur moved from Manchester to London while Jack was still young. He was discovered by talent agent June Collins, mother of rock star Phil Collins, a childhood friend of Wild's and an actor himself before he became a musician. Ms Collins entered Jack and his brother Arthur into the Barbara Speake Stage School, a training facility for child actors. In 1965, at age thirteen, Jack started playing small roles in British television. He made several appearances in 1967-1968 in the BBC series *Z Cars*, starring actors Stratford Johns as Detective Chief Inspector Barlow and Frank Windsor as Detective Sergeant John Watts, known to Ripperologists all over for reprising their roles in the 1973 mini-series *Jack the Ripper*.

Some eighteen months after being discovered, Wild joined the cast of the London stage production of *Oliver!* starring Ron Moody as the nefarious Fagin. As the BBC put it, 'The Dickensian romp, with its dark London settings, wistful storylines and Lionel Bart's memorable score - songs such as "Food Glorious Food" and the Dodger's own "Consider Yourself At Home" - became an instant classic.' In the film version, Jack Wild played the Dodger opposite Mark Lester in the title role, Ron Moody as Fagin and Oliver Reed as Bill Sikes. After Wild's passing, Mark Lester told the BBC: 'Jack was like a brother to me during the making of the film and always was very protective. I gained a lot. The chemistry between us was just something very, very special, which lasted throughout our lives.'

Oliver! grossed \$40million US worldwide and won the Oscar for Best Picture of 1968. Wild had been tapped for Best Supporting Actor and Moody for Best Actor. At the awards ceremony on 14 April 1969, Wild stood up when he heard 'Jack.' But then he had to sit down again when the full name of the winner was announced: Jack Albertson.

Following his success in *Oliver!* Wild took the lead role in the US TV series *H.R. Pufnstuf* (1969), a Sid Krofft and Marty Krofft production. The show featured Wild playing a boy marooned in an enchanted land with puppets and actors in elaborate costumes. Though he had lost out at the Oscars, he garnered the '8th Annual Gold Star Award' from 16 magazine as the 'Best Movie Actor' and 'Most Promising TV Star' of 1969. The success of the TV programme led to his reprising the role for the film version, *Pufnstuf* (1970). Other movie roles were in *Melody* and *Flight of the Doves* (1971). During his career, he released three long-playing albums (*The Jack Wild Album*, *Everything's Coming up Roses* and *Beautiful World*) and also toured in British Christmas pantomime productions as Bob Cratchit and other roles.

Wild's slow decline began by 1972. That year, he played a supporting role in *The Pied Piper*. In 1976, he appeared in *Our Mutual Friend*, a TV mini-series, in the role of Charlie Hexam. In the 1990s he returned to the big screen playing Much, the miller's son, in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991) and the Peddler in *Basil* (1998).

He was diagnosed with oral cancer in 2000. Despite surgery in his vocal chords, he had work lined up even towards the end of his battle with cancer. Last year he was reunited with *Oliver!* co-star Ron Moody in the film *Moussaka & Chips*. Also last year, he married his second wife, actress Claire Harding.

Wild stated recently, 'Until I was diagnosed with mouth cancer, I'd never heard of it. What I learned very quickly was that my lifestyle had made me a walking time bomb. I was a heavy smoker and an even heavier drinker and apparently together they are a deadly mixture.' His agent noted that even in his days of heavy drinking and smoking, Wild was careful not to be 'photographed with a drink or cigarette in his hand because he didn't want to encourage young people.'

CHRISTOPHER T GEORGE

See back cover. As a further tribute to Jack Wild, the next issue of Ripperologist will contain an article by Stephen Long on Jack Wild, Ikey Solomon and the Real Artful Dodgers.



Obituary: Darren McGavin

7 May 1922 - 25 February 2006

Darren McGavin is best remembered as Carl Kolchak in the cult classic 1974 TV series *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*, which followed the made-for-TV movies *The Night Stalker* (1972) and *The Night Strangler* (1973).

McGavin was secretive about his origins. His real name is said to have been William Lyle Richardson and he variously claimed to have been born in San Joaquin, California, or Spokane, Washington. In an interview given to promote *Kolchak* he claimed to have been a runaway child and to have lived rough. A theatre actor, his first appearance seems to have been in 1941 in a production of *Lady Windermere's Fan*. In 1941, while playing in an off-Broadway production, he married Melanie York, his first wife. He got his first film role the following year, playing a Student (Uncredited) in *A Song To Remember*. In theatre he played Happy in *Death of a Salesman* on Broadway.

In 1951 he starred as Casey, Crime Photographer in a television series adapted from a successful radio programme. His film breakthrough came in 1955, when he played three fine character parts, as Louie the pusher in *The Man with the Golden Arm*, the artist Eddie Yeager in *Summertime* and Captain Peters in the *Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell*. In the 1950s McGavin starred in *Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer* (1956) and was later the skipper of a paddle-wheel steamer on the Mississippi River with a young Burt Reynolds as his co-star in *Riverboat* (1958). In movies he went on to predominantly play villains in *Bullet for a Badman* (1964) and *The Great Sioux Massacre* (1965). The following year he separated from his first wife. He would marry his second wife, Kathie Browne (d2003), in 1969.

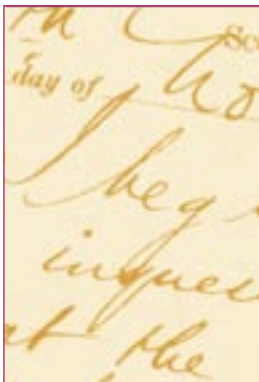
In 1972 he was cast as the grumpy Chicago news reporter Carl Kolchak, whose battered straw hat and seer-sucker suit were almost iconic, in the TV movie *The Night Stalker*, and again the following year in *The Night Strangler*. This was followed by a 20-episode series on ABC. The series, which combined newsroom drama with the supernatural was not a huge success at the time, but has since acquired a cult status.

The first episode of the series, which aired on Friday, 13 September 1974, was titled 'The Ripper'. In this episode, Kolchak came to believe that a serial killer in Chicago recreating the Jack the Ripper murders of 1888 was in reality the immortal, original Jack the Ripper. It was written by Rudolph Borchert and starred Mickey Gilbert as the Ripper and Ken Lynch as Captain R M Warren - a possible in-gag as Sir Charles Warren was the Met Commissioner at the time of the original Ripper murders. Oddly enough, the idea of a Jack the Ripper story had been mooted as a possible sequel to the high-rating *The Night Stalker* TV movie, but Richard Matheson, who penned the screenplay for both TV movies, rejected the idea because he thought it would be too similar to Robert Bloch's *Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper*.

McGavin won an Emmy for a role on the TV series *Murphy Brown*. In 1999 Chris Carter acknowledged that *Kolchak* had been an inspiration for his classic TV series *X Files* and he cast McGavin as agent Arthur Dales, who had started the files. Sadly, McGavin suffered a stroke while filming his third appearance, his penultimate role. His very last role was a cameo appearance as a journalist in the pilot episode of the remake of *Kolchak* called *Night Stalker* in which Stuart Townsend plays Carl Kolchak.

McGavin died aged 83 in a hospital in San Francisco, California, on 25 February 2006. No cause of death was specified.

PAUL BEGG



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

I Beg to Report

WATCH YOUR STEP. 'And when the first killing occurs - in a booby trap that seems jointly designed by Rube Goldberg and Jack the Ripper - it comes as a genuine shock.'

[Mindhunters Film Review, Daily Yomiuri Online, 23 February 2006.](#)

LOVE AND THE SINGLE RIPPER. What is Love? Cabaret performer Barbara McCarthy tackled the question in her revue, *What Is Love?*, on 23 March in Montclair, New Jersey. Apart from *Where Is Love?* by Lionel Bart from the musical *Oliver!* McCarthy sang *You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby*, by Johnny Mercer and Harry Warren, from the movie *Hard to Get*, and *Makin' Whoopee*, by Gus Kahn and Walter Donaldson, from the stage show, *Whoopee*. Her musical director is pianist Regan Ryzuk, an award-winning composer, who is also her accompanist. 'He's delightful to work with', said McCarthy, who originated the leading role of the Landlady in the New York City and New Jersey productions of Ryzuk's musical *Jack the Ripper*, based on the classic story *The Lodger*.

For more information on Barbara McCarthy, [visit her Web site.](#)
[The Montclair Times, Montclair, New Jersey, USA, 15 March 2006.](#)

COMING TO AMERICA. *Ripperologist's* North American Editor Chris George's *Jack - The Musical*, a dramatic speculation about the Ripper for which he wrote the lyrics and co-wrote the book with French composer Erik Sitbon, will have its USA Premiere in May 2006. The play, a production of [Actors Scene Unseen](#), will run for four performances at the 175-seat Duke Power Theatre, Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, Spirit Square, 345 North College Street, Charlotte, North Carolina, on the weekend of May 13-14. General admission tickets are \$25.00 each, [available by clicking here](#), or calling 704-372-1000.

REMEMBER THE VICTIMS. But people don't remember the victims for long. They remember the murderers. 'We make celebrities out of serial killers,' said Jack Levin, director of the Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict at Northeastern University in Boston and author of six books on mass murderers and serial killers. 'They're glamorized and romanticized. People forget about the gruesome details of their crimes.' 'The public's fascination with serial killers has mimicked hero worship,' said Levin, pointing out the sale of Charles Manson T-shirts and John Wayne Gacy trading cards. 'Jeffrey Dahmer was featured on the cover of an entertainment magazine. And the monikers society gives these killers - 'Jack the Ripper,' the 'Boston Strangler' - live long after a killer dies, much longer than their victims are remembered.'

[Excerpted from Christine Schiavo, Serial killers leave grieving families tainted, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 4 March 2006.](#)

WISCONSIN RIPPER. 'We are planning to present *Ripper*, also by Marty Duhatschek, as our Halloween offering. It's an exciting and chilling story that combines elements of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and the Jack the Ripper legends.' Jennifer Frank, Educational Outreach and Promotions Director, Rebel Alliance Theatre, [Advance Titan](#) (Student weekly at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh), Wisconsin, 8 March 2006.

BRADY AND HINDLEY TOGETHER AGAIN. Channel 4 has defended *Longford*, a TV drama described as 'a portrait of a fascinating, extraordinary man and the beliefs that lay behind his relationship with Britain's most notorious murderess' - Myra Hindley. Kevin Lygo, of Channel 4, said: 'We don't really go into the hideousness of the crimes. The drama is about Longford and his Catholic-induced obsession with forgiveness. It follows his story and asks whether forgiveness is appropriate in this case. The film has extraordinary performances.' Oscar-winning actor Jim Broadbent plays Longford, a campaigner for penal reform who spent three decades fighting to have Hindley freed from prison. He believed she should be allowed a chance of rehabilitation. Oscar-nominated actress Samantha



[Samantha Morton as Hindley, Andy Serkis as Brady](#)

Morton plays Hindley and *King Kong* and *Lord of the Rings* star Andy Serkis plays Hindley's lover, Ian Brady.

Samantha Morton, who has a five-year-old daughter, said she was at first unsure whether to take part in the programme. 'I initially didn't even want to look at the script. I didn't want anything to do with it. But I believe it is my duty as a performer to raise issues we're afraid to look at.'

Jim Broadbent has also defended *Longford*. 'This is a serious film about Longford and his relationship with Myra Hindley,' he said. 'It is not a sensational look at the Moors Murders.' He added that he had gone to 'a lot of lengths' to resemble Longford, whom he described as 'a profoundly religious man' who 'believed in the power of forgiveness'. Broadbent also said it was 'ridiculous' Samantha Morton should be 'vilified' for accepting the role. 'There is always going to be a reaction when there's a mention of Myra Hindley and the press are going to overreact to some extent,' he added. 'There is a sort of feeding frenzy, and any mention of Hindley can get that famous photo on the front page again.'

Winne Johnson, 72, whose son Keith Bennett was killed by Brady and Hindley, has branded the film 'disgusting'. She said: 'People like Longford should not be promoted in this way. He doesn't deserve this kind of attention.'

In 1966, Brady and Hindley were convicted of the murders of Lesley Ann Downey, aged 10, in 1964, and Edward Evans, aged 17, in 1965. Brady was also convicted of the murder of 12-year-old John Kilbride. In 1987, Brady and Hindley confessed to the murders of Pauline Reade, aged 16, and Keith Bennett, aged 12. The bodies of Downey, Kilbride and Reade were found buried on Saddleworth Moor, in Greater Manchester. Bennett's remains have never been found. The couple were jailed for life and Hindley died behind bars in 2002, aged 60. She remains one of the most abhorred criminals in Britain. In 1997, Marcus Harvey's controversial portrait of her, made out of children's handprints, was vandalised at the Royal Academy in London. Brady, 67, remains in Ashworth high-security hospital in Merseyside.

Last year, ITV announced it was to make a 'major factual drama' about Brady and Hindley with the support of their victims' relatives. Writer Neil McKay said *See No Evil: The Story of the Moors Murders* would give 'an unsensational account of the most notorious crimes of the last century.' Brady wrote to the chairman of Granada Television - the makers of the drama - to complain about the programme, adding the publicity about his crimes was 'now rivalling *Coronation Street* in longevity'.

Channel4Sales.com, 1 March 2006

[The Mirror](#), 2 March 2006

[Daily Telegraph](#), 2 March 2006

[BBC News](#), 2 March 2006

[BBC News](#), 27 March 2006



German cannibal Armin Meiwes

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER? The state court in Kassel, Germany, upheld an appeal by self-avowed cannibal Armin Meiwes and banned *Rohtenburg*, a film loosely based on Meiwes's life which was expected to open in local theatres on 9 March. The court ruled that Meiwes's individual right not to be slandered outweighed artistic freedom and that he should not

become the object of a horror film. Meiwes, 44, a computer technician, was jailed for eight-and-a-half years in 2004 after he was found guilty of manslaughter for killing and partly eating Bernd-Jürgen Brandes, a 43-year-old computer engineer from Berlin, in March 2001. The case was complicated because Brandes allegedly consented to his fate after replying to an advert on a cannibal chat group site on the internet. Meiwes says he simply carried out a willing victim's instructions. But last year an appeals court ordered a retrial after state prosecutors argued Meiwes's crime was murder. If found guilty, Meiwes could face a life sentence. He argues that a film portraying him as a monster could prejudice his case.



Thomas Kretschmann
as the cannibal in *Rohtenburg*



Victim Bernd-Jürgen Brandes

Rohtenburg was directed by Martin Weisz and stars Thomas Kretschmann, who has also appeared in *King Kong* and *The Pianist*. The film producers, Atlantic Streamline, will appeal the decision. 'If this court ruling is held up on appeal, it will have devastating consequences for cinema and the film industry,' said Helge Sasse, the media lawyer who together with Atlantic Streamline head Marco Weber controls Berlin-based producer-distributor Senator Entertainment. 'It is incomprehensible and, in our opinion, a violation of Germany's constitution that future cinematic treatments of

real-life people be entirely dependent on the approval and the greed of the individuals themselves,' Sasse added.

Der Spiegel, 3 March 2006

Hollywood Reporter, 4 March 2006

Horror Channel, 6 March 2006

BOYS WILL BE BOYS. 'The Religious Right, perhaps again with way too much disposable time, immediately put these youngsters in the same category as Nazi baby-killers and Jack the Ripper. Close, maybe; but not exactly.' 'Roger', in a communication to the *Shelby County Reporter* commenting on three Alabama youngsters arrested for burning Baptist churches 'as a joke'. On 3 February, the three youths set fire to five churches in Bibb County. On 7 February, they burned four more churches in West Alabama in an attempt to throw federal investigators off track.

Shelby County Reporter, Columbiana, Alabama, USA, 14 March 2006.

DE GUSTIBUS NON EST DISPUTANDUM. Two men in Russia's Far East who killed and ate a man, sharing the meal with their girlfriends, were found guilty of murder and sentenced respectively to 20 and 13 years in prison. In October 2004, they killed a man, dismembered his body and cooked it. Then they invited their girlfriends to dinner, telling them the main course was dog's meat. The women only learned what they had eaten after they finished dinner. They were not prosecuted because Russian criminal law does not say anything about cannibalism. Nor about dog's meat either.

Mosnews.com, 27 February 2006.

MAYBRICK DIARY INK TESTING REACHES IMPASSE. Plans to test the ink in the controversial Maybrick Diary have broken down. As we reported in *Ripperologist* 63, the testing was to be done by an unnamed scientist at the University of South Florida in an arrangement with John Omlor, a professor at that institution who had offered to cover the cost of the testing from his own university funds. Jennifer Pegg of Leicester was to act as liaison between Mr Omlor and London-based Robert Smith, the owner of the diary.

Mr Smith had stated in a letter posted by Ms Pegg on the [Casebook: Jack the Ripper message boards](#) on 25 November 2005 that he would be willing to 'release the diary if such tests are scientifically feasible' and he agreed that 'the diary ink should be tested against the formula which Alec Voller used to make Diamine black manuscript ink up to 1992.'

Mr Omlor has said that the entire Diary would not have to be sent to Florida for testing by the scientist but just the ink from a dot or a straight line. He wrote on the *Casebook* message boards on 18 January: 'Ideally, he would like to see the text and take and extract the samples in the lab. But I suppose he could also work from provided samples of the paper with ink on it and the paper with no ink on it. Some time ago I counted the number of straight lines in the diary (it was in the forties, I think) so we know there is plenty of ink to be analysed without touching a single word of the diary's text. And he would of course be very sensitive to preserving the integrity of the original material in any case.' Mr Omlor noted that '...if provided with the appropriate samples, he would also be able to tell us if the ink matches the old Diamine ink named by Mike [Barrett] in his confession [to forging the diary].

'If it had been practical, the testing of the ink would have been done by means of GC-MS testing, a method that combines the features of gas-liquid chromatography (GC) and mass spectrometry (MS) to identify different substances within a test sample.

The proposal to test the Diary fell through when Ms Pegg was unable to establish to her satisfaction how much ink would have to be taken from the Diary.

Ms Pegg reported on the *Casebook* boards on 18 March: 'I am no longer in a position whereby I feel confident that I am being supplied with the proper information from Florida. I have, since the 27th of January tried to establish the most basic of details about these tests, most importantly how much ink from the diary would be required in order to conduct any of the suggested tests. Most recently I asked on the 13th of March (Monday) which is when I was told 10-20ml. On Friday after I stated I didn't think the test could be done if it needed that amount of ink (without risking destroying the writing in the document) I was told that that was the amount of pre-1992 Diamine ink that would be required as John [Omlor] mentioned earlier. In fact, so I was told, they would require only a few small samples of diary ink. I was still not told an actual amount. All this despite the fact that I was asking about the ink required for a more limited test that as far I understood it would not require any pre-1992 Diamine ink (an answer to a previous question about whether the tests could be done if no pre-1992 Diamine ink could be found)... Under these circumstances I cannot, with good conscience, say that it is a viable option to proceed with attempting to get the diary over to Florida.'

At this point Mr Omlor withdrew his offer to facilitate the testing and stated that he was washing his hands altogether of anything to do with the diary. This would seem to close the door on anyone stepping into Ms Pegg's shoes.

TORTURE BARBIE. Researchers have found that children routinely torture their Barbies through such methods as scalping, decapitation, burning, breaking and microwaving. Academics from the University of Bath conducting an in-depth look into the role of brands among schoolchildren were taken aback by the rejection, hatred and violence Barbie provoked when they asked the children about their feelings for the doll. Violence and torture against Barbie were

repeatedly reported across age, school and gender. No other toy or brand name provoked such a negative response. 'You might expect little girls to love their Barbie and expect an imaginary love in return. Instead girls feel violence and hatred towards their Barbie,' said researcher Dr Agnes Nairn.

One interpretation of this phenomenon is that the children are reacting to the proliferation of different types of the doll, which range from Fashion Barbie to Queen Elizabeth I Barbie and even Geisha Barbie. 'The children never talked of one single, special Barbie. The girls almost always talked about having a box full of Barbies. So to them Barbie has come to symbolise excess. Barbies are not special; they are disposable, and are thrown away and rejected,' added Dr Nairn. 'On a deeper level Barbie has become inanimate. She has lost any individual warmth that she might have possessed if she were perceived as a singular person. This may go some way towards explaining the violence and torture.'

Previous research from the US into Barbie abuse suggested that prepubescent girls destroyed the doll because she reminded them of adulthood at a time when they were still clinging to their childhood, but Dr Nairn found no evidence of this. She also dismissed the idea that overweight little girls might be jealous of Barbie for having a tiny waist. It was more likely to be a simple reaction against a toy that the children had grown out of. 'The children we were talking to were aged 7 to 11, whereas the right age for having a Barbie seems now to be 4, even though Barbie doesn't exactly look like it is aimed at four-year-olds,' Dr Nairn added.

The researchers concluded that, while adults may find a child's delight in breaking, mutilating and torturing their dolls to be disturbing, from the child's point of view they were simply being imaginative in disposing of an excessive commodity, in the same way as one might crush cans for recycling. The article doesn't mention what little girls do to Ken.

The Times, 19 December 2005



Burn, Barbie, Burn

THE NUMBERS GAME. '13. Many cultures have associated the number with bad luck but perhaps none more so than modern day America. Cities lack 13th Avenues and many buildings in the States have no 13th floor. Conspiracy numerologists are quick to point out some of the world's most notorious killers, including Jack the Ripper and Charles Manson, have 13 letters in their name.'

Numbers across the world, The Independent, 13 March 2006

MAYBRICK'S BOOZER? The Poste House in Cumberland Street, Liverpool, is one of a number of drinking holes in the city on the Mersey singled out for mention in a new 28-page *Liverpool Echo* 'Great Merseyside Pubs' guide that was celebrated with a pub crawl by Paddy Shennan and two boozing buddies.

In truth, the Cumberland Street Poste House may or may not have been the place meant in the controversial Maybrick 'Ripper' Diary when the writer said he 'took refreshment' at somewhere called 'the Poste House.' Diary sceptics point out that the Cumberland Street establishment did not bear that name during James Maybrick's lifetime but much later. Some have hypothesized that the writer might have meant another establishment that went by the popular name of 'poste house' possibly because it was an old posting inn.

Such quibbles though didn't concern Mr Shennan who cited the Poste House to receive the 'I Don't Believe ALL These People Have Really Had A Pint Here, But It Makes For Some Good Stories' award:

This titchy boozer is said to have served, although not all at the same time, Prince Philip, Jack the Ripper suspect James Maybrick, Adolf Hitler, Bob Dylan, Blondie's Debbie Harry, Noel Gallagher from Oasis and wordsmiths James Thackeray, Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Although the pub has seen better days (new seating is on the way, I'm told), it could have seen much worse days - a campaign by Camra Liverpool and Districts saved it from demolition five years ago.



The Poste House

There were about 20 to 30 people in so it was a bit of a tight squeeze, especially for BFJ and BFM. It was now 5.20pm and we were back on the Jennings Cumberland - despite the evil temptations on offer, including: treble Drambuie or Tia Maria for just £2.80, treble Bells or Grouse for £2.30 and treble Baileys for £2.30.

The three of us thought we were seeing things - and we probably would have been, if we'd gone onto the shorts.

The 28-page Merseyside Pub Guide is available for sale for £1.50.' And the best boozer goes to....'

[Liverpool Echo, 13 March 2006.](#)

A DAGGER OF THE MIND. 'Was there any more reality to that sinister blade, glittering in Vincent's hand? The indications were that it was also a product of his imagination. The knife had been employed as a weapon by both Jack the Ripper and his Parisian counterpart Prado in recent times, and their crimes had been widely reported.' Martin Gayford, *The Yellow House*, a book on the nine weeks Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin spent living together in the Yellow House in Arles in 1888. During the episode mentioned in this excerpt, Van Gogh reportedly attacked Gauguin with a straight razor. Later in the year, Gauguin attended the execution of the Spanish murderer Prado in Paris.

[Daily Telegraph, 11 March 2006.](#)



The execution of Prado

JACK THE BRUSH. 'Matt Sesow's *Father of the Bride* threatens to steal the show with its irrepressible expressionistic angst. This 2001 acrylic painting on cardboard is defined by the remarkable violence of its brush strokes, which recall the kinetic force of Jack the Ripper with their razor-sharp slashes and blade-like shredding effect. These kinetic linear forms combine to create a grotesque portrait of an imposing man in a blue blazer and orange tie, dried white mounds of paint forming his monstrous teeth. Sesow's composition is even more impressive with the knowledge that he had one hand amputated in a freak childhood accident. At the age of eight, this self-taught artist was struck by a landing airplane whose propeller severed his arm and resulted in the loss of his dominant hand.'

[sesow.com, 22 March 2006.](#)

FROM THOSE WONDERFUL FOLKS WHO GAVE YOU JACK THE RIPPER. 'Remember the cheeky advertising jingle devised by Tourism Australia, the one that ends with "So where the bloody hell are you?" Such language! Well, in England it is too much, apparently. In its prudish wisdom, the BBACC [the British Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre, the authority which clears all advertising material for television] has deemed the advertisement unsuitable for public broadcast. This from the country that gave the world such marvellously tasteful TV fare as *Benny Hill*, the *Carry On* genre, *Little Britain*, *Ali G* and so on. This from the land - God save us - that gave us pork pies, Oswald Mosley, Jack the Ripper, fox hunting, bloaters and Gary Glitter. They have the hide to pretend they are offended by the word "bloody?"'

[The Daily Telegraph, Sidney, Australia, 11 March 2006.](#)



Lara 'Bloody' Bingle, the face of Australian tourism

VIRTUAL RESPECTS. Webcams are being installed at Chanterlands Crematorium in Hull so people who are unable to travel to a funeral can pay their respects online. Hull City Council said the move was part of a refurbishment of the chapels designed to enhance services. Mike Anderson, from the council's bereavement services, said: 'There will be web-cams installed at each of the chapels and the people who actually want to watch will be issued with a code to access the service, obviously ensuring privacy and security. In the past we have had people who have used camcorders to record the service for members of the family who've emigrated or are ill. Obviously the beauty of this system will be that it's in real time.'

[BBC News, 6 March 2006](#)

NO SUCH THING AS A NICE MASS MURDERER. 'Milosevic was a very evil man - a merciless opportunist, willing to do anything that would maintain and increase his power. He presided over appalling acts of genocide, rape and the massacre of a great many innocents. Some have said that, compared to earlier mass murderers, like Hitler, Stalin and Pol Pot, his were smaller atrocities. That's like deciding that Jack the Ripper was a much nicer bloke than any other serial killer whose total score of victims was higher.'

[Milosevic: Distorting justice, News24.com, Cape Town, South Africa, 14 March 2006.](#)



Judge Judy

JUDGE JUDY TRIES THE RIPPER. Australian high school students have presented *A Dramatic Look at History* at the 2006 Festival of Arts at Adelaide, South Australia. The show takes a look at the main events of history in different dramatic styles, squeezing them into roughly 50 minutes of song, dance and skits. History whizzes by from the invention of the wheel in *Cave Yard Blitz*, via the birth of Christ, through Henry VIII as hammed-up soap opera *Days of Our Wives*, to the Great Plague, the Salem witch trials and Jack the Ripper tried by American celebrity legal grouch [Judge Judy](#). The 20th century gets a look-in, too, with a whistle-stop tour of the Great Depression, World War II, the swinging '60s, disco '70s, daggy '80s and *Seinfeld* '90s to arrive, spewed up by the Spice Girls, at the present day.

[Star News Group, Pakenham, Victoria, Australia, 14 March 2006.](#)

WOULD YOU BUY A USED CAR FROM THIS MAN? A Moscow man who had a second-hand Mitsubishi Pajero SUV delivered to his door found something he didn't expect: the partially decomposed body of a man inside. The Moscow transport police said that the car was delivered from Japan in a transport container by sea and by train. In Moscow, it was unloaded from the container and towed to the customer, who had ordered and pre-paid the purchase. Only then was the body found in the passenger compartment. Despite current low temperatures in Russia, the body had partially decomposed. So far, police investigators have failed to identify the body, a man of Caucasian appearance about 40 years of age. Police add that the dead man could be a stowaway who got into the container at a train station and froze to death in the car. An alternative version is that he was a victim of gang wars and the body was put in the car as it arrived from Japan.

[MosNews, 26 February 2006](#)

IT'S ONLY A GAME. 'After a bizarre stretch in which he gave three games for breaking someone's neck and one game for a throat slashing gesture, here are the top 5 suspensions [hockey great] Colin Campbell would have handed down through history: 5. Jack the Ripper: "It was more reaction than premeditation. \$1,000 fine."; 4. John Wilkes Booth: "President Lincoln left himself in a vulnerable position. Two games."; 3. Charles Manson: "Were any Leafs hurt? No. Give him three games."; 2. Lizzie Borden: "On a lot of those whacks she was just following through. One game."; 1. Jason, from Friday the 13th: "Decapitation looks bad when you slow it down, but it was just a hockey play".'

[Robert Tychkowski, Slam! Sports, Hockey, Edmonton Sun, Alberta, Canada, 18 March 2006.](#)

SERIAL KILLER FOR A DAY. A young man who had fantasies of being a serial killer like Freddie Krueger of *Nightmare on Elm Street* has been convicted of the murders of two men and two women he knifed to death within three days in September 2004. Daniel Gonzalez, 25, from Woking in Surrey, will be imprisoned for life for the 'shocking and brutal' attacks. Chief Inspector Dave Cobb said unemployed Gonzalez wanted to be 'remembered as a famous serial killer'. 'But I hope he is forgotten and that we only remember his victims,' he added. 'He admitted he was an individual intent on killing, [but] he was clever and manipulative and did not want to accept responsibility for what he did.'

The defence argued Gonzalez should be found guilty only of manslaughter through diminished responsibility because voices in his head told him to kill. Defence witness Dr Edward Petch, a psychiatric consultant at Broadmoor Hospital, said that Gonzalez was a schizophrenic capable of 'extreme, unprovoked and unpremeditated violence'. Prosecutor Richard Horwell said Gonzalez killed 'because of the callous, cold person he is'. 'It is his very personality that led him to kill - disinhibited by a cocktail of drugs and alcohol,' he added. A jury at the Old Bailey in London took just 90 minutes to find Gonzalez guilty of murder on Thursday. Judge Ann Goddard told the jury: 'This has not been an easy case for you to listen to because the events have been so terrible.' She said her only option was to give Gonzalez a mandatory life sentence, but that she still needed to fix the minimum term he will serve before being considered for parole.

Speaking after the murder verdict, Gonzalez's mother, Lesley Savage, expressed her 'sincere condolences' to the families of the four murdered people. But she added: 'Every time we asked for help for Daniel or Daniel did himself, we were told we would have to wait for a crisis to occur before he could get the help he needed.' She said her son had been failed 'by a system that is underfunded and seems incapable of providing joined-up care over any period of time.' Gonzalez was treated for seven years by North West Surrey Mental Health Partnership. Its successor, the Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust, said on Thursday that Gonzalez's murders were 'not preceded by a history of violence



Daniel Gonzalez

and for that reason the trust does not believe his actions could have been predicted'. 'Despite the murder verdicts there will be a comprehensive and independent inquiry into Mr Gonzalez's care and treatment by the NHS and we will cooperate fully with that inquiry.'

BBC News, 16 March 2006.

SICKERT AND CEZANNE 'CRIME SCENES' ON SHOW. The 1908 painting *Jack the Ripper's Bedroom* by Impressionist painter and Ripper suspect Walter Sickert is on display in a special exhibition, '[Partners in Art - Crime Scenes](#),' at the [Walker Art Gallery](#), Liverpool, paired with an equally chilling Cezanne murder scene. Sickert's painting is believed to show the painter's bedroom at 6 Mornington Crescent, Camden Town. According to an often told tale, Sickert's landlady had told the artist that a veterinary student whom she claimed was the Ripper had previously rented the flat. The painting is one of a series of Sickert paintings inspired by the September 1907 murder of prostitute Emily Elizabeth Dimmock in Camden Town, London.

Moirá Lindsay, assistant curator of fine art at the Walker, commented: 'Some people think they can see a figure at the window although I think it is a high back chair. But it is a very strange painting and not really typical of Sickert.' The Sickert painting is on loan from the Manchester Art Gallery. Cezanne's *The Murder* (1868) from the Walker's own collection, is an early work and again not typical of the artist. It shows a woman being held down, possibly by another woman, while being stabbed by a man. The two-painting exhibition runs until 31 May at the Walker Art Gallery, William Brown Street, Liverpool. Tel: 0151 478 4199.

Liverpool Daily Post, 1 March 2006.

TALK ON SICKERT, CORNWELL AND THE RIPPER. 'At the Scene of the Crime - Unraveling Sickert's Identity' will be the subject of gallery talks by Korie Twigg at 6:00pm and 7:00pm on 30 March at the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC. The talks are being given in connection with the exhibition, 'Degas, Sickert and Toulouse-Lautrec: London and Paris, 1870-1910.' The talks will consider Walter Sickert's candidacy for the mantle of Jack the Ripper as posited by American writer Patricia Cornwell in her book *Jack the Ripper: Case Closed*. Ms Cornwell's theory will be considered in relation to Sickert's paintings, looking for clues that could reveal the artist's identity as the killer. The exhibition continues through 14 May. Admission charges \$12 for adults, \$10 for visitors 62 and over and students. No charge for visitors under 18 or Museum Members. The Phillips Collection, 1600 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009. Tel. (202) 387-2151 x260 or e-mail programs@phillipscollection.org



Superimposed photographs of Isabella Ruxton and 'skull no. 2,' in the 'Jigsaw Murders' case in Lancaster, England, 1935. (Courtesy of the University of Glasgow and the National Library of Medicine.)

EXHIBIT OF HISTORIC FORENSIC SCIENCE ARTIFACTS. Photographs from Britain's infamous 'Jigsaw Murders' case of 1935 are one of the highlights of a new exhibition at the National Library of Medicine near Washington, DC. 'Visible Proofs: Forensic Views of the Body' can be seen now through 16 February 2008. In the 'Jigsaw Murders' case, after painstaking forensic work to reassemble the mutilated bodies of Lancaster resident Isabella Ruxton and her maid Mary Rogerson, Mrs Ruxton's husband, Indian-born Dr Buck Ruxton, was found guilty of the women's murder. Doctors had to reassemble forty-three pieces of tissue from the women in a gory scene that must have been reminiscent of the 1888 reassembling of the body of Mary Jane Kelly. The investigators laid a photo-transparency of one of the skulls found over Mrs Ruxton's portrait to establish that the skull belonged to her.

The exhibition also covers a wide variety of historic forensic science cases. Included are the surgical instruments used in President Abraham Lincoln's autopsy on 15 April 1865; a fingerprint from Francisca Rojas, who was convicted in Argentina in 1892 for the murder of her children in the first case in which fingerprints were used as evidence; a human heart with a bullet hole in it; a stomach poisoned by arsenic; a kidney punctured by a fatal knife wound; and the famous 'Nutshell Studies,' dollhouse crime scenes based on true cases which were created in the 1940s as a forensic teaching tool. The work of American anthropologist Clyde Snow's in the field of human rights forensics in the mid-1980s is also highlighted. Dr Snow excavated mass graves that led to the

conviction of members of Argentina's military junta and his work became a touchstone for investigations of massacres worldwide.

The National Library of Medicine, the world's largest medical library, is located on the campus of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. 'Visible Proofs' is open to the public and admission is free. Visiting hours are 8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday and 8:30am to 2:00pm on Saturdays. National Library of Medicine, 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894. Tel. (888) 346-3656.

'Killer Instincts,' Washington Post, 14 February 2006.

WHITECHAPEL LIBRARY ON FILM. The Whitechapel Library has been a vital source of education, political education and access to books in English, Yiddish and now Urdu and Bengali for thousands of people since it opened in 1892. Famous users include the First World War poet Isaac Rosenberg, painter Mark Gertler, novelist Esther Kreitman - the sister of Isaac Bashevis Singer - anarchist Rudolf Rocker and playwrights Bernard Kops and Arnold Wesker. To mark the Library's closure Lone Star Productions are planning to record in July a series of video interviews of users for an oral history project and a film to be called University of the Ghetto. Lone Star are keen to hear from those who might be interested in being interviewed. Ask yourself the following questions: Are you a long-term user of the Whitechapel Library? Do you have memories of what it was like 20, 40 or 60 years ago? Did you first discover books here? Did you do your homework here as a child? If you would like to take part in this documentary or want more information contact Susan Croft on 020 8802 6568 or go to [her website](#).



Whitechapel Library

Jewish East End Celebration Society (JEECS).

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE. 'Let me tell all these sweet people, no one walks around housing colonies with a T-Shirt proclaiming "HEY, ME A PERVERT!", and even Jack the Ripper's neighbours thought the chap was a gentle young fella.'

Anil Thakraney, on a well-regarded young man accused of sexual assault by an older woman, Rape or great sex? Sunday Mid Day, Mumbai, India, 19 March 2006.

FASHION JACK. 'Think the complete opposite of Jack the Ripper but just as artistic and dressed just as stylishly.' Joshua Michael Torres on musician Dick Morrissey, Concert Review: Morrissey rocks his 'English heart',

The Oklahoma Daily, Student Media at The University of Oklahoma, 20 March 2006.

TALES MY GRANDMOTHER TOLD ME. 'She would tell me how as a teenager she was called out in the night to wash the dead. She told me of Jack the Ripper, who terrified London - where she had been taken at 18 to be a companion to the lady whose husband owned most of Islay.'

Donald M Murray, The Boston Globe, 21 March, 2006.

WEARISIDE JACK GETS EIGHT YEARS. John Humble, the unemployed labourer who admitted being the hoaxer known as Weariside Jack, was sentenced at Leeds Crown Court on 21 March to eight years' imprisonment for perverting the course of justice. Humble taunted detectives when he claimed to be the Yorkshire Ripper in three letters and an audio tape in the 1970s. His actions made police concentrate their hunt in Sunderland while the real Ripper continued to kill in Yorkshire.

Judge Norman Jones, QC, said Humble's offences were at the upper end of seriousness when it came to perverting justice. The Judge said it could not be said Humble's actions caused or directly led to the deaths of three women who were murdered after the hoax letters and tapes had moved the focus of the police investigation to Sunderland. Nor could it be said the killer would have been caught earlier had it not been for Humble. But Judge Jones explained that when the real killer Peter Sutcliffe was caught, he told police the hoax letters and tape had given him 'confidence'. The Judge concluded: 'The least that could be said was these victims would have stood a better chance of not being attacked had these police resources been directed in West Yorkshire.'

A confidential police document dated September 1979 obtained by the BBC shows how police officers trying to catch the Yorkshire Ripper in 1979 were told to eliminate anyone who didn't have a North-Eastern accent. The real Ripper, Peter Sutcliffe, came from Bradford, not the North-East. However, the North-Eastern accent on the hoax tape sent by Humble in the summer of 1979 clearly sidetracked the inquiry. The internal document from West Yorkshire Police murder incident room listed five points for elimination of suspects from the inquiry. One of them stated 'if his accent is dissimilar to a North-Eastern (Geordie) accent.'

Paul Worsley, QC, prosecuting, told Leeds Crown Court that Humble had a fascination with Jack the Ripper after borrowing books about the killings in London from his local library in Sunderland. 'Considerable trouble had been taken to reflect the original phrases in these letters and tapes,' he added. Mr Worsley said Humble had also been persistent

with his letter writing, and did not stop, even when he knew the police were taking them seriously. 'He was to send another letter and then a tape. That made it clear he wanted to send the police off the trail of the true killer.'

During police interviews, Humble admitted that he was responsible for sending the letters and the tape, but would not accept it amounted to perverting the course of justice. The best explanation he could offer was that, at the time, he had been out of work, bored and probably drunk. 'I was a fool for doing it,' he said, explaining that he had wanted 'notoriety' but knew that his actions were 'evil'. But he also said that when he called incident rooms in Bradford and Sunderland in September 1979 to tell officers his letters and tape were a hoax, no-one believed him. When asked why he had phoned in twice he said: 'Because I felt guilty.' Referring to the murder of Barbara Leach he said: 'Because that lass, one of the lasses, was murdered.' 'I blamed myself for it,' he added. 'That's why I phoned in. They took no notice and another two got killed.'

Simon Bourne-Arton, QC, defending Humble, said that his client was a 'hopeless alcoholic' who had lived with the secret of what he had done for 27 years. Humble had never intended to help Sutcliffe remain free, but instead may have wanted to embarrass police. Mr Bourne-Arton said Humble's dislike of police developed after he was arrested as a teenager for assaulting an off-duty police officer after a disturbance in a nightclub. 'That was to result in him never trusting the police thereafter,' Mr Bourne-Arton said. 'It was not hatred in the form of obsessive hatred but quite clearly there was a definite and distinct dislike of the police.' As Humble sat slumped forward in the dock, Mr Bourne-Arton continued:

'The years of abuse have resulted in him being now less than bright. Up until yesterday, the only notoriety he would have had in Sunderland was to be known in the cemeteries and park benches as "John the Bag". Had it not been for these matters that brought John Humble before Your Lordship yesterday, he would have led a spectacularly inadequate life.' Mr Bourne-Arton emphasised Humble was a '50-year-old hopeless alcoholic'. 'He did not for one moment think the police would ultimately react to the extent that they did,' he added. 'It was not until he was to hear his voice being broadcast over the television that he became so aware.'

Besides sending police on a wild goose chase while the real Yorkshire Ripper continued his killing spree, Humble's actions also took their toll on the close-knit mining community of Castletown, where voice experts believed the hoaxer originated. Humble had no connection with the small pit village, having lived his adult life on the other side of the River Wear, which splits Sunderland in half. It was in that same river that he tried to commit suicide in November 1979, round the time the letters were posted. He jumped off a 90ft bridge with his pockets filled with stones but he was pulled from the river and saved by police officers.

Humble was identified as Wearside Jack in September 2005, when the West Yorkshire police began a cold-case review, tracked down part of the seal from the back of one of the envelopes and obtained a DNA profile of the hoaxer. It was fed into the national police database and provided a one-in-a-billion match with Humble, who had given a saliva sample in 2001 when he was arrested and cautioned for the minor offence of being drunk and disorderly.

The police arrested Humble on 18 October at the rented house he shared with his brother and sister in Sunderland. Alcohol had taken over his life to such a point that even at the time of his arrest he was drunk. Detectives had to wait almost a day before he was sober enough to be interviewed. A police source said he had to be told he had been taken to West Yorkshire. 'He had no idea where he was,' he said. 'And it came as a bit of a shock when he came round.'

Neighbours and relatives said Humble's life had been on a downward spiral for years and his best friend was the bottle. In 1990, aged 36, he married 40-year-old Anne Mason in a secret register office ceremony after a whirlwind romance. Ms Mason's family were banned from attending, with only Humble's family allowed to be there and act as witnesses. In the early years of their marriage, Humble was said to be the perfect stepfather to Anne's children. The couple split up after nine years but have never divorced. Humble went back to live with his brother in their family's former home, but started drinking heavily after his mother died soon afterwards.

At the time of his arrest, he was seen as a harmless loner, who spent his time indoors drinking cheap cider. A neighbour said: 'John was fine when he was younger. He loved to play darts in the local pub and worked really hard on the buildings. But it all changed once he left Anne.' Another neighbour, Antoinette Steel, added: 'First thing on a morning when the shop opened, (he and his brother) would go down for drink and would be back there at teatime.' Lesley Carr said: 'I felt very sorry for them. They used to get in such a state with the drink. They were always getting picked on by kids around here who would even rifle their pockets in the street.'

Asked if Humble's actions had contributed to the death of the Ripper's last three victims, Detective Chief Superintendent Chris Gregg of West Yorkshire Police said outside court that it could well be the case. 'We will never know for sure.'



John Humble

While this inquiry was being deflected to the North East, Peter Sutcliffe was still at large in West Yorkshire,' he added. Mr Gregg also said: 'Whilst the person responsible for sending the hoax - letters and tapes - remained unknown, it left a great many people with unanswered questions, in particular the families of the victims who lost their lives at the hands of Peter Sutcliffe.' He concluded: 'We were determined to do everything we could to find the answers to those questions and at least give some degree of comfort now that the case has been closed once and for all.'

In 1981, lorry driver Peter Sutcliffe, the real Yorkshire Ripper, was given 20 life sentences for killing 13 women and attempting to kill seven more in West Yorkshire between 1975 and 1981.

BBC News, 20 and 21 March 2006

The Times, 21 March 2006

The Scotsman, 22 March 2006

DNA AND THE RIPPER. Dr Maryanne Demasi, MD, the new host of Australia's premiere science television show, Catalyst, says 'The fact that people are now appreciating that science is sexy and such an integral part of life is great.' Catalyst's first episode for 2006 is described as 'an intriguing mix of the curious and the macabre, magnifying the microbots that make up a quarter of all mammals, investigating the Coriolis effect on water down a plughole, and seeking to reveal the identity of Jack the Ripper.' 'That's an amazing story,' Demasi says of Brisbane researcher Dr Ian Findlay, whose DNA technique needs just one cell to profile rather than up to 500 cells. Findlay and a Catalyst team flew to London where they spoke with a pre-eminent Ripperologist and obtained letters believed to be from the serial killer from the National Archives for testing. 'They took swabs from the back of the stamps and gum on the envelope,' explains Demasi. But did they solve the mystery that has enthralled generations? 'They got partial identity but there is an interesting twist to the story,' says Demasi. 'So stay tuned.' We are certainly going to.

The Age, Melbourne, Australia, 23 March 2006

HOW NOT TO MARRY A MILLIONNAIRE. Tatjana Edwards, *née* Plotnikova, 27, has been sentenced to life in prison for murdering her husband Gwyn, 72. She admitted stabbing him at their home in Ottershaw, Surrey, but told police it was an accident. According to her, she had tried to kill herself with a kitchen knife last June when her husband tried to disarm her, after which the blade sank into his abdomen. A post-mortem examination revealed Mr Edwards bled to death.



Tatjana Edwards

The jury of four men and eight women took four hours to find her guilty of murdering her husband during a row on 11 June last year. As the verdict was announced at London's Southwark Crown Court on 23 March, after a 13-day trial, Tatjana gasped, buried her head in her hands and collapsed, sobbing inconsolably. Judge Geoffrey Rivlin later sentenced her to life in prison with a minimum term of 12 years.

Estonian-born Tatjana Plotnikova recounted how she arrived in Britain in April 2002 as a student but ended up being drugged, raped and forced into prostitution before eventually escaping her pimp's clutches. While selling sex for £200 a time at a Hampstead brothel in north London, Tatjana met a client, Gwyn Edwards, who hinted he was a multi-millionaire. After a whirlwind romance, she agreed to forsake her weekly £6,000 income for what she thought would be a new life of even greater luxury.

But not long after moving into Edwards's rented bungalow and going through a modest ceremony at the local register office, she began to realise the truth. As matters went from bad to worse, she 'drained' the marketing consultant's bank account with endless demands for cash, numerous trips abroad and a seemingly insatiable desire for designer

clothes and other luxuries. Meanwhile she complained endlessly about his 'boring' life, his personal habits and a host of broken promises ranging from a fruitless house hunting exercise to a cancelled breast enhancement operation.

Prosecutor Wendy Joseph said that, almost certainly during a final row about money, Tatjana stabbed her husband in the stomach. The jury did not believe Tatjana's claims that it had been a fatal accident.

BBC News, 23 March 2006.

OLDEST TORTOISE IN THE WORLD DIES. Adwaita, an Aldabra tortoise that once belonged to Clive of India, an 18th Century British general, died of liver failure in Alipore Zoo in Calcutta on 22 March 2006. His name, Adwaita, means 'the only one' in Bengali. Aldabra tortoises are found in the four-island Aldabra atoll of the Seychelles, which has about 152,000 giant tortoises. They average about 120kg (265lbs) and are thought the longest-lived of all animals.

West Bengal Forestry minister Jogesh Barman said: 'Historical records show he was a pet of British general Robert Clive of the East India Company and had spent several years in his sprawling estate before he was brought to the zoo about 130 years ago. We have documents to prove that he was more than 150 years old, but we have pieced together other

evidence like statements from authentic sources and it seems that he is more than 250 years old.' Mr Barman added Adwaita was probably one of four tortoises sailors brought from the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean and presented to Clive. Adwaita was the only one that lived.

Lord Clive, the son of a Shropshire squire, was a soldier and adventurer who rose through the military hierarchy of the East India Company. He won the Battle of Plassey against the Nawab of Bengal in 1757. He later became an opium addict and committed suicide in 1774, at the age of 49.

[BBC News, 23 March 2006,](#)

[Daily Mail, 24 March 2006.](#)



Adwaita, who probably lived to over 250 years old

JACK THE RIPPER IN SUDAN. 'The situation is analogous to the man who discovers that he has prostate cancer but refuses to let Jack the Ripper perform the surgery.' Mike Whitney, on why neither United States nor United Nations peacekeeping troops should be deployed in the Sudan.

[Jack the Ripper in Sudan, oped.news, 25 March 2006.](#)

BRITISH LIBRARY SHELVES EMPTIED. It has been revealed that more than 2,000 items with a collective value of £100,000 have either been stolen, or misplaced, from the British Library since 2001. The list includes a 16th Century volume on Pompeii - worth £45,000 alone - four Shakespeare plays, and two unnamed books on Jack the Ripper.

The British Library houses more than 150 million items, including print copies of *Ripperologist*, stored on over 450 miles of shelving. Significant items include *The Magna Carta*, the Gutenberg Bible, Da Vinci notebooks, and the only manuscript of *Beowulf*.

[The Evening Standard, 27 March 2006](#)

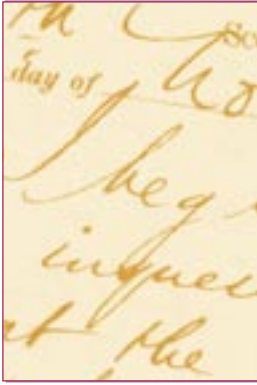
JACK IN FLORIDA. In 1870 American Henry Morrison Flagler and Englishman Samuel Andrews became the partners of John D Rockefeller in the Standard Oil Company. In the years to come Flagler acquired enormous wealth and power and helped to establish Palm Beach as the winter playground for the wealthy of America's Gilded Age. In West Palm Beach he built a 55-room home he called Whitehall, which in 1902 was described in the New York Herald as 'more wonderful than any palace in Europe, grander and more magnificent than any other private dwelling in the world.' This was an exaggeration, but Whitehall, now a museum to Flagler and the glories of America's Gilded age, is none-the-less a [hugely impressive building](#).

For the past 21 years the Flagler Museum has hosted the Whitehall Lecture Series, described as 'dedicated to offering lectures of the highest quality [by] speakers from prominent museums and universities around the country, and experts in architecture, history, fine arts, decorative arts, and historic house museums.' Presented on six consecutive Sundays in February and March, the lectures this year covered a diverse range of subjects that included Buffalo Bill, Andrew Carnegie, and Jack the Ripper.

The theme of the talks this year was *Heroes and Villains of the Gilded Age*. The Flagler had decided that Jack the Ripper topped the list of villains. This decision had been made last year, long before the Ripper topped the poll in Britain's [BBC History Magazine](#).

The lecturer on Jack was *Ripperologist*'s own Executive Editor, Paul Begg, and by all accounts the event, held in Whitehall's opulent Grand Ballroom, was a great success. Said Begg, 'Early on Sunday morning, after a substantial breakfast in the lovely courtyard of the Brazilian Court Hotel on historic Australia Avenue, I strolled down Royal Palm Way to the ocean front. It was already hot and, as the saltiness of the sea air touched my nostrils, I thought how amazing it was that Jack the Ripper had brought me from the slums of 19th century London to opulent Palm Beach, where wealth oozed from every sweaty pore.'

After the lecture in Florida and a brief detour to Atlanta, Georgia, Begg travelled up to New England and met up with the *Rip*'s columnist Christopher-Michael DiGrazia at the famous Cheers bar in Boston, toured the [Lizzie Borden house](#) in Fall River and spent a week with *JTR: A to Z* co-author Martin Fido on Cape Cod.



I Beg to Report:

Wikipedia and the Missing Link

Readers of the February issue of *Ripperologist* will be aware that last December Dan Norder, the editor of *Ripper Notes*, used our becoming an e-journal as a pretence for removing a link to *Ripperologist*'s website from the Jack the Ripper page of the internet encyclopaedia *Wikipedia*, where he is an editor under the pseudonym 'DreamGuy'.

We weren't greatly concerned whether *Wikipedia* linked to us or not; in fact, it took us two months to realise the link to us had been removed! But we objected to the implication that we'd ceased publication, and so Chris George reinstated the link. It was quickly removed by another editor calling herself 'Victrix' on the grounds that an e-journal didn't meet *Wikipedia*'s 'notability guidelines'. Chris reinserted the link and DreamGuy removed it again. Chris, who didn't know who DreamGuy was, emailed him. Dan Norder/DreamGuy then feigned ignorance about *Ripperologist*'s importance in the field and pretended he didn't know Chris George, his predecessor at the helm of *Ripper Notes*, whom he described as 'the guy'.

As Ally Reinecke would [later observe](#) on the *Casebook* message boards, Norder's self-serving action was 'a petty, immature, bone-headed move...' We'd add that abusing one's privilege as a *Wikipedia* editor to censor out a rival publication has serious implications, as will soon become clear, but it was all mildly pantomimic, what with all the silly nicknames, and we reported it light-heartedly, with a 'guess-who?' ending, though we didn't name any names.

But the pantomime quickly turned into a farce when Victrix, whom Ally Reinecke would describe with enviable succinctness and accuracy as a 'freaking rabid marionette ...who doesn't appear to have a lick of sense and doesn't bother to hide her obvious enmity against *Ripperologist*', told a *Wikipedia* administrator called 'BunchofGrapes':

FYI- The ejournal you removed the link to earlier recently ran an editorial bemoaning the fact that they were not listed on Wikipedia and asked their readers to jump in and add one, or, barring that, remove mention of all other magazines.

None of this was true. Our piece wasn't an editorial, did not bemoan not being linked to on *Wikipedia* and did not ask our readers to add or remove any links. Victrix, whoever she is, was lying through her teeth.

Then Dan Norder popped up with an explanation for his actions. He basically said that he had put in the link to *Ripperologist* himself in the first place and had reinstated it after Chris George complained to him - in his secret identity as DreamGuy, of course. Norder added: 'no good deed goes unpunished.' We're not sure why he thought being caught out and having to reinstate the link merited praise or thanks or otherwise excused his attempt at petty censorship.

But then Norder made some rather extraordinary and incorrect comments about *Ripperologist* in *Wikipedia*. He kicked off with a statement that his 'comment that [we] were "still somewhat notable" despite being email-only deeply offended [us]. Well, that was just a daft remark which didn't offend us at all because our notability is not affected by being an e-journal. If something offended us, it was Norder's pretence that he didn't know much about us. We stated this very clearly: 'How could someone who volunteers to edit *Wikipedia*'s Ripper page...not know who Chris is and what the *Rip*'s status in Ripperology is?'

Norder went on to call our light-hearted report 'an attack piece...' and added that we published 'highly distorted information, claiming despite [our] chronic lack of subscribers (and [our] editor leaving, and the major bookseller in the field removing the link to [our] site from her site, and so forth and so on) to be the #1 publication.'

Some clarifications are in order. What we actually said was that *Ripperologist* has been 'widely acclaimed as the number one publication in the field', which it has, and is. As of this writing, both *Ripperologist* and *Ripper Notes* get [four stars](#) on the *Casebook*, where *Ripper Notes* is described as being 'every bit as good as *Ripperologist* magazine.' *Ripperologist*, then, is clearly the benchmark.

And we don't and never have had a chronic lack of subscribers. This seems to be both a figment of Norder's imagination and one of his favourite themes, as he would later insist that we 'lost so many subscribers that [we] couldn't go on printing anymore', which simply isn't true. Furthermore, no editor of *Ripperologist* has left. Count us. We are all here. As for [Loretta Lay](#) (the 'major bookseller in the field'), she temporarily removed the link to the *Rip* from her site for technical reasons before we went electronic and at our request. A quick inspection of the editorial

page of *Ripperologist* will reveal Ms Lay listed in a consultant capacity.

Norder went on to say: [*Ripperologist*] 'quite demonstrably simply fails *Wikipedia* notability guidelines on all counts these days.' Given that our contributors are the best in the field, our articles are as excellent as they've always been, our number of pages has increased substantially, we're monthly, we're in full colour and we offer direct links to websites, in sum, that all that's changed about us is that we've gone electronic, it's self-evident that we don't fail any notability guidelines. And there are no *Wikipedia* guidelines to the effect that e-journals don't cut the mustard.

Finally, Norder accused us of 'an orchestrated campaign to lash out at [our] rivals, which is ongoing here and on other internet sites'. Another unsubstantiated charge. Apart from a few personal posts to the *Casebook* message boards by Chris George on his own experience with DreamGuy, *Ripperologist* has made no comments anywhere or urged anyone to make comments, let alone orchestrated anything.

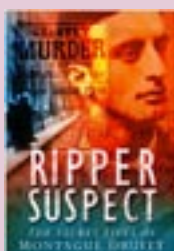
Norder's behaviour doesn't seem to have done much for his credibility. In fact, his whole performance is basically just sad. He did something silly and petty and wrong, he got caught out, and he told a tray load of pork pies in an effort to save face. At the end of the day it's no big deal - except in one respect.

Wikipedia is a brilliant idea that seems in the main to work wonderfully well, the inevitable abuses for the most part being recognised and corrected pretty quickly. But when an abuse does slip through it seems to be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the offended party to obtain any kind of redress. This is especially true when a *Wikipedia* editor is prepared to lie as Victrix did. Now, *Wikipedia* has an 'assume good faith' rule. Indeed, Administrator BunchofGrapes has said of Norder, 'he's a respected long-time contributor [to *Wikipedia*] who has done good work around here and fully deserves *Wikipedia*: Assume good faith to be applied his way.'

All that may be very well, as far as *Wikipedia* is concerned, but, when an editor hides behind a false name, does not disclose his vested interests and tells lies to an administrator, yet all the time is protected by the 'assume good faith' rule, what chance does the injured party have?

DEAR DIARY: APRIL 2006

PUBLICATION OF PUBLIC REACTIONS TO JACK THE RIPPER, edited by *Casebook* Administrator Stephen P Ryder, will be a collection of more than 200 *Letters to the Editor* published in the Victorian press from August to December 1888, presented chronologically, extensively annotated and indexed both by author and subject. It will be illustrated throughout. [Email Stephen](#) to be placed on the list for a signed copy.



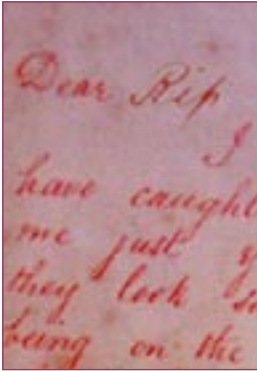
PUBLICATION OF RIPPER SUSPECT: THE SECRET LIVES OF MONTAGUE DRUITT (Hardcover, 224 pages, Sutton Publishing, £18.99, ISBN: 0750943297) by D J Leighton, explores the life of Montague John Druitt, barrister, schoolmaster, cricketer, suicide and prime suspect in the Whitechapel murders case, with special emphasis on his intriguing links with Prince Eddy, the Cambridge Apostles, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Virginia Woolf and the cricketing legend Prince Kumar Ranjitsinhji. [Buy now.](#)

PUBLICATION OF RIPPEROLOGY, by highly respected Ripper author Robin Odell, will be launched by Kent State Press at the American Jack the Ripper Conference in Baltimore (see below), Maryland. Mr Odell has described Ripperology as 'the story of what we have all come to know as "Ripperology" with some personal reminiscences and a modicum of analysis.' The book will have an introduction by Donald Rumbelow.



US JACK THE RIPPER CONVENTION, 21-23 April at the Comfort Inn, Baltimore. Speakers will be James E Starrs, Robin Odell, Donald Rumbelow, Alan Sharp, Karen Kurt Teal, Dr James Badall, and Andy Aliffe. Full details are available at the [Convention website](#).

BROADCAST OF SEE NO EVIL, ON ITV1. Dramatised documentary about the Moors murderers Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. Stars Maxine Peake as Hindley, Sean Harris as Brady and Joanne Froggatt as Hindley's sister Maureen. Airing to mark the 40th anniversary of the 1966 trial of Brady and Hindley for kidnapping and murdering five children and burying their bodies on Saddleworth Moor in Cheshire. Written by Neil McKay, made by Granada.



Dear Rip

Your Letters and Comments

[CLICK TO EMAIL US](#)

Ripperologist 64 (February 2006) I

Email to Ripperologist, 11 March 2006

Dear Rip,

What a splendid piece on Mozart by CMD in the latest.

Martin Fido
7 March 2006

Ripperologist 64 (February 2006) II

Email to Ripperologist, 11 March 2006

Dear Rip,

Just a few words to express my feelings on issue 64...

Starting with the prolific Joe Chetcuti's article on Francis Tumbelty, we learn about more of the stunts, shenanigans, and sidesteps this unique character committed. Tumbelty may have been a bizarre character, but without question, a cool headed one. Nice work by Mr Chetcuti, who is at the forefront of Tumbelty research with this latest addition to his body of work.

Next on the list is Mr Andy Aliffe's piece on the first developer of cinematography, Augustin Le Prince. Mr Aliffe goes into great detail about the work and life of this little known (to the layman) innovator, who according to Mr Aliffe's research, got the fuzzy end of the lollipop regarding credit for his pioneering work in motion pictures which on October 14th, 1888 were first done in Leeds, predating Edison and others. Le Prince disappeared in 1890 and his fate never determined.

To give an idea on how little this man is known, a book which I have, written by Valerie d'Estaing, on inventions (she of course is the daughter of the former French PM) does not mention him whatsoever. Mr Aliffe brings up the notion first mentioned by British film maker Christopher Rawlance in 1990 that the disappearance of Le Prince might somehow be linked to the Ripper. It's a sad story as well. We learn that Le Prince's widow fought for years with the corrupt powers that be at various patent offices and that the son of Le Prince died mysteriously (the result of a hunting 'accident'). Good story and a lesson on how cutthroat the world of business of patenting inventions is.

Simply put, the work by Linford/O'Flaherty/Savage on the coronial system is, to me, the reference source for this aspect of Ripperology. The Druitt Inquest is covered at length in this instalment. Some (me being one of them) people may not be aware, but taverns were used for more than just beer and darts. Inquests were held there on a regular basis in the 19th Century. The Diplock family (Thomas Diplock, the coroner for the Druitt suicide/murder) is covered thoroughly. A real piece of scholarship by this triumvirate of leading researchers.

Adam Wood's story (he has taken to examining aspects of East End life which appeal to me greatly) on Victorian funerals. 'A Death In the Family' examines the paid mourners ('Mutes')... the pomp and expenses.... Resurrection Men (not quite on a par with the Burke and Hare 'School of ghouls'... yes, Virginia, there were grave robbers alive and well in the London bone yards)... and even an excerpt from George Gissing (mentioned in Richard W-Egan's 1975 *A Casebook on JTR* and perhaps emanating from Donald McCormick, as a possible suspect), in which Gissing describes an 1889 funeral, with tongue slightly in cheek. I hope Mr Wood will continue to highlight the day to day life of East Enders. A big thumbs up for this article to Mr Wood.

I also enjoyed Mr Begg's editorial, as well as Eduardo Zinna's compilation of the opinions offered regarding the 'Worst Briton'. By coincidence, I accidentally put a VHS tape on, thinking it was a Ripper VHS, and discovering that it was the video with two of the Fred West's children during the time I was reading Mr Zinna's article. I have to agree that if the Ripper has any competition in the worst serial killer category, the Wests would have to be them. We also find that the Scots have their share of miscreants too. Yet their most famous one was an Irishman, William Burke. The mini-story on the Sawney Bean family was good reading, as I remember long ago my own dad telling me about them.

Another good issue from *Ripperologist*!

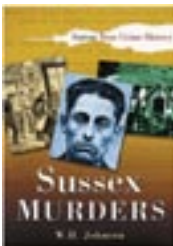
Howard Brown
Proprietor, www.jtrforums.com

Good, Mr Brown? Why not excellent? Rip.



WILF GREGG

On the Crimebeat



Sussex Murders

W H Johnson

Softback, 152 pp., Illus., Sutton Publishing, £12.99 [BUY NOW](#)

The latest in Sutton's True Crime History series. Eleven first class accounts of cases ranging neatly from 1748 to 1948. These include the horrendous murders of Chater and Galley by a ruthless gang of smugglers in 1748, the poisoning of James Whale by his wife Anne and her cousin Sarah Pledge in 1751 - their executions were different in accordance with the law at the time - Sarah Pledge was hanged but Anne Whale was burnt at the stake as she was adjudged guilty of petit treason by betrayal of her husband. Also Brighton's original trunk murder, in 1831, when John William Holloway was convicted and executed for the murder of his wife, the more well-known trunk case of Toni Mancini, acquitted, perhaps fortunately, in 1934 of murdering his prostitute girl friend and, rounding it off neatly, the unsolved murder of Joan Woodhouse at Arundel in 1948.

Mr Johnson is a practiced author of Home Counties murder anthologies. In addition to Sussex, he has covered Surrey, Essex and Kent. This is one of his best. Strongly recommended.



Murder on File

Richard & Molly Whittington-Egan

Softback, 211 pp., Illus., Neil Wilson Publishing, £10.00 [BUY NOW](#)

An updated and expanded version of their splendid Murder Almanac, (also published by Neil Wilson) but, sadly for the authors, in this case marred by shoddy production.

Over a hundred entries of their choice of 'the world's most notorious killers', datewise ranging from Burke and Hare to Harold Shipman. As to be expected from the authors, a splendid collection of cases. Each entry gives the relevant facts of the case followed by a write-up of varying length and a list of prime sources. Ripperologists may care to note that the JTR entry is short and pithy and that the last of the sources listed is Richard's still long-awaited *Quest*.

As stated, unfortunately the production is shoddy, the paper of poor quality, and the reproduction of the small pictures heading each item ranges from poor to unrecognisable. Perhaps not surprisingly, the printer is anonymous; the only reference is 'Printed in Poland'.

Notwithstanding the production, the book is wonderfully comprehensive and a first-class example of the authors' inimitable and totally individual writing style.



Killers on the Web

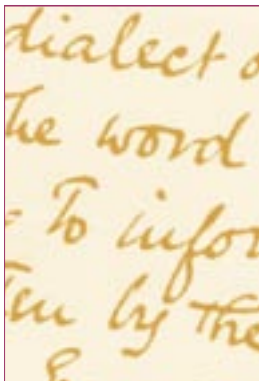
Christopher Berry-Dee and Steven Morris

Hardback, 268 pp., Illus., John Blake Publishing, £17.99 [BUY NOW](#)

The internet has become a major factor in life in every sense. This book deals with the dark side - its use by killers, criminals, paedophiles etc.

Cases cited include Armin Meiwes, the German cannibal who advertised (and found) a soul mate he could eat, necrophile Graham Coutts, who gravitated from websites dealing with sexual abnormalities to real-life rape and murder, serial killer and self-styled Slavemaster, John Robinson, who would leave the bodies of his ravaged victims in barrels, and Hong Kong's 'Milkshake Killer', Nancy Kissel, who surfed the net for drugs to incapacitate her husband prior to killing him. An interesting chapter deals with a website set up in support (without any justification, argue the authors) of Darlie Routier, currently on Death Row for the murder of her young children.

Perhaps inclined to dwell on the more sordid aspects of the cases, it is nevertheless a warning and a book casting light on the darker side of the world in which we all live.



Reviews



Jack the Ripper

Peter Foreman

Genoa, Italy: Cideb Editrice, 2005

www.blackcat-cideb.com

Softcover, 96pp, illus.

ISBN: 0783526522126

£6.38

The Jack the Ripper crimes are quite widely used these days to hook the interest of students. In this instance they're used as a Pre-Intermediate, Step 4.9. /10 teaching English, history and research skills. The book, which comes with a CD and internet exercises, has been around since January 2005 but has taken a while for us to catch up with.

It's been worth the wait. It's not a book that will interest many readers, apart from collectors, there being no pretence that it offers anything new or different, but it's a nice little book with some charming, albeit inaccurate, original artwork.

Written in English, it recounts the basic facts of the case and at the bottom of the page unfamiliar words are explained: 'Row - a number of houses in a line, like a street' or 'fence: barrier between two gardens or yards'. At the end of each chapter there are several sections of questions and before each chapter the reader is asked to listen to the relevant section on the CD and answer questions.

Each murder is discussed, there are sections on life in the East End and immigration, and an internet project guides students towards research tasks such as the source of information about organised Ripper walks or the sources of historical information about the case. The section on suspects is very short, mentions Druitt and Sickert and George Chapman, omits Kosminski and Tumblety, and for some reason favours George Hutchinson - a little odd that, as *prima facie* Hutchinson seems unlikely to have been the Ripper.

Overall, this was an impressive little book, good for students as well as teachers.



Ripper Notes

January 2006, issue 25

Edited by Dan Norder, Madison, Wisconsin: Inklings Press, 2006

www.RipperNotes.com

dan@norder.com

Softcover, 119pp, illus; ISBN: 0975912968

\$40 US, £45 in Canada and UK, \$50 elsewhere] From 2 N. Lincoln Ridge Drive, Apt 521, Madison, WI 53719

This is probably the best issue of *Ripper Notes* yet, chock full of solid Ripper-based articles that, despite regurgitating a lot of material available in the better Ripper books, nevertheless make good reading and in some cases raise several interesting points. Most notable in this respect is Tom Wescott's examination of the claims by some witnesses that Elizabeth Stride was holding grapes in her hand when found.

Wescott covers familiar ground - with due acknowledgement to Dave Yost's excellent examination of the Packer story in *The News From Whitechapel* and Gerry Nixon's superb piece about detective Le Grand in *Ripperologist* - but raises some fascinating points along the way. He convincingly argues that the blood on Stride's hand for which Dr Phillips had difficulty accounting had got there as a consequence of the earlier examination of the body by Dr Johnston, but his contention that the grapes allegedly seen by Diemschutz and others was in fact the blood on her hand is not so persuasive.

The problem is that, according to Diemschutz, Stride's hands were 'tightly clenched' and the grapes weren't visible until the hands 'were opened by the doctor', so it follows that whatever stained Stride's hand, be it blood or squashed

grapes, must have been there when Stride clenched her hands prior to death. It wasn't put there by Dr Johnston. There is also some question about where the blood was. According to Dr Phillips, it appears to have been 'on the back of the hand' and wrist, yet Diemschutz seems clear that the grapes were visible only when the hand was opened. Wescott also makes some interesting speculations about the role of Le Grand and Batchelor, suggesting that Le Grand, described as a 'scrupulous career criminal', was responsible for organising and supervising the actual day-to-day running of the Vigilance Committee and its street patrols, which opens interesting avenues for speculation in that Wescott argues that what's now known about Le Grand makes him a good candidate for the Ripper's mantle.

Wescott has an excellent command of the facts and a great eye for detail, but he makes some claims that could have done with expansion. For example, he suggests that the similarity of early newspaper reports suggests that some sort of press conference was held where various witnesses told their story. There otherwise seems to be no evidence for a press conference. Indeed, the very idea seems anachronistic - and a more probable explanation is that all the newspapers used a common source such as a press agency report.

Another example is his claim that a witness named Edward Spooner originally told the police his name was Edward Koster (or, according to one source, Costa). Two or three newspapers reported that Stride's body had been discovered by a small boy who told Koster about it, but in one report Diemschutz refers to a man named Koster (or some spelling variant) as having been among those in an upstairs room of the Berner Street club who followed him downstairs to view the body. Spooner was not a member of the club but had been in a pub until midnight with a girl and was standing with her in the street when he stopped Diemschutz, who was running past in search of a policeman, and was told about the murder.

This promises to be the first in a series of detailed examinations of various aspects of the Stride murder, and if they are all of this quality, then there will be some good reading ahead.

Jennifer Pegg continues her debunking of *Uncle Jack*, here reacting to responses to her criticisms by the book's authors and publisher. Her efforts are admittedly necessary, though *Uncle Jack* so utterly failed to make anything like a case against Sir John Williams that getting down and dirty with the book's minutiae seems like a bad case of dead-horse flogging. If *Uncle Jack* had made anything like the impact on the general public *Portrait of a Killer* made, then it might be different. There is, of course, the question of whether it's right for the publishers to go ahead with the paperback edition of the book when the theory it espouses has been shown to lack substance.

The case against Sir John Williams essentially rests on two pillars: one a letter in which Sir John appears to place himself in the East End in the evening of the day when a murder had been committed, and the other an entry in a 'diary' held at the National Library of Wales which purports to show that Sir John operated on one of the Ripper's victims. Neither piece of evidence can be described as more than flimsy, but Jennifer Pegg has shown that the illustration of the latter reproduced in *Uncle Jack* had been altered. The authors have admitted this possibility, though without an explanation. As much as an explanation is required, however, it wouldn't matter a great deal to the authors' argument, weak though it is, if the original existed and was untampered with. But Jenni Pegg argues that the original has been tampered with too!

She insists that the entry concerned differs substantially from all the other entries in the notebook, especially in the handwriting, and argues that these differences do not 'indicate that it was the work of John Williams.' However, Malcolm Edwards, the publisher of the book, has disputed Pegg's claim, saying that he asked the book's co-author Humphrey Price to take another look at the 'diary' and that Price found other entries in the same hand. Pegg says in her rebuttal that her researcher checked and reported that 'there are no other entries in this different hand'.

Jenni Pegg wrote 'if Mr Edwards had taken the trouble to do this extremely basic piece of research he would have known - if indeed he had not already known - that he was making a public statement that is factually inaccurate.' This statement seems a bit illogical, as Malcolm Edwards did take the trouble - he asked Humphrey Price to take another look at the document - and the suggestion that Edwards knew he was making a factually inaccurate statement (i.e., was lying), seems to be sailing into potentially litigious waters, perhaps navigated by *Ripper Notes* editor Dan Norder, who has elsewhere said that Ms Pegg 'single-handedly uncovered the *Uncle Jack* fraud...' Fraud. That's Norder's word, and a strong one it is.

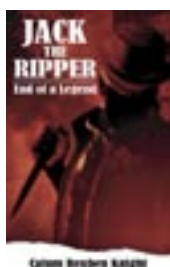
Ripper Notes otherwise has an interesting recap on the murder of Martha Tabram by the prolific Wolf Vanderlinden, which nevertheless seems to contain some errors and a misunderstanding of Professor Canter's geographical profiling. I think Canter homed in on Middlesex Street independent of the Maybrick diary, the latter coincidentally, and much to the satisfaction of pro-diary theorists, locating Maybrick's bolt hole there. There's an article about Alois Szemeredy by 'asm', which we hope isn't the start of people hiding behind pseudonyms in print as well as on internet sites. Alan Sharp has contributed a superb piece about the murder of Jane Beardmore and Joe Chetcuti has uncovered some more stuff about Tumblety. A rather weak bit by Des McKenna and a tongue-in-cheek look into the future of Ripperology by Don Souden round off an overall excellent issue.

Ripperologist has commented elsewhere on the wearisome business of Dan Norder's self-serving behaviour and subsequent remarks on *Wikipedia* and elsewhere. Among the latter was an unfounded slur that the *Rip* has 'been giving highly biased and deceptive reviews [of *Ripper Notes*] for well more than a year'. Hopefully it is unnecessary to reassure readers that our reviews always call the shots fairly and honestly. Sadly, it is quite common for the recipient

of an unfavourable review to claim that the reviewer is biased.

Norder also misrepresents *Ripperologist* in the *News and Notes* section of the current *Ripper Notes* issue, where he claims that we had planned to increase the cost of our subscription to offset costs of postage, whereas we had clearly decided only to stop giving UK subscribers free postage and packing and bring the cost of their subscriptions on a par with that paid by subscribers in other countries.

As for the question Norder raises about US subscribers who have paid extra for p&ap, they can have the postage back if they want it, but their subscription money now gets them twelve issues of *Ripperologist* instead of six. Not a bad exchange. Also, everyone who did not want to continue to receive the electronic edition of *Ripperologist* has had the outstanding of their subscription returned *whether they asked for it or not*. Just to put the facts straight.



Jack the Ripper: End of a Legend

Calum Reuben Knight

London: Athena Press, 2005

www.athenapress.com

Paperback, 313pp, illus

ISBN: 1844014843

£9.99

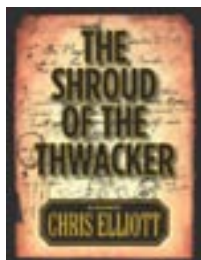
Calum Reuben Knight is a very good writer who from the opening pages describes an all too familiar scene in a refreshing way that draws you into the narrative instead of yawning and letting one's eyes drift over the page as the well-known details unfold. What follows is, I assume, a complete work of fiction spoofing Stephen Knight's *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution*, to which title *Jack the Ripper: End of a Legend* has a passing resemblance.

The book, resplendent with photographs and reproduced certificates and documentary data, does not acknowledge being fiction, which makes it a little difficult to review. As fiction it is everything *The Shroud of the Thwacker* should have been - by which I mean that it isn't brilliant fiction, but that it's a clever, well-written and recommendable spoof. If by some bizarre chance it is meant to be fact, the book is a pretty dismal affair that doesn't exactly make *Portrait of a Killer* and *Uncle Jack* look good by comparison but comes pretty close.

In this story the Ripper is in fact three people - Joseph Barnett, George Hutchinson and Mary Kelly (yes, you did read that right), and the 'theory' Knight offers is based on an anagram of the street names where the murders were committed. If this all sounds slightly reminiscent of other books you've read, so some of the errors will remind you of the books you read in days of yore, such as poor old Charles Cross being called by that medal again, George Cross, and so on.

The book comes from Athena Press, described as an 'author-funded book publishing service' - what was once called vanity publishing - and which several first-time writers (notably Ivor Edwards and D J Leighton) have found to be a way of getting picked up by a mainstream publisher. Calum Reuben Knight is a good enough writer to have a future - assuming he isn't someone already well-known in Ripper circles - but whether this book will do it for him is doubtful.

Buy it if you like spoofs, otherwise forget it.



The Shroud of the Thwacker

Chris Elliott

New York: Miramax, 2005

Hardcover, 358pp,

ISBN: 1401355245

\$22.95

I'd read about this book quite a while ago and was looking forward to it. It was touted as a gentle and perhaps mildly affectionate piss-take of Patricia Cornwell's *Portrait of a Killer*, Caleb Carr's mysteries and the Da Vinci Code, and as Ripperology can take itself too seriously from time to time this sounded like it could be fun. On top of that I liked the movie *Groundhog Day* and liked Chris Elliott's performance in that movie too, so this book really kicked off with a reader who was willing and able to be entertained. I really did.

What I got could have been served up with cranberry sauce and mashed potatoes on Thanksgiving Day.

The book owes a lot to the *Da Vinci Code* in so far as it has a modern-day researcher investigating a past crime and encountering a secret society with which he must lock horns. The crime is an obvious Jack the Ripper parody, a series

of crimes committed in New York City in 1882 by a killer known as 'Jack the Thwacker'. Three contemporaries: Caleb Spencer, the Chief of Police, Liz Smith, an investigative journalist, and Teddy Roosevelt, the Mayor of New York, try to track him down, and the modern day investigator is Elliott himself, who seeks to solve the enduring Thwacker case à la Cornwell because it would be a way to 'make a whole lot of money'.

What Elliott realises is that the Thwacker - who eviscerated prostitutes and used their intestines for works of 'art' - left clues within each murder to his identity (a parody of the Walter Sickert theory that the artist left clues to his identity in his artwork).

This could have been a genuinely funny book, the stated premise giving a lot of scope, but unless you share Elliott's sense of humour, and I quickly found that I didn't, you'll probably find the humour juvenile, forced and quickly tiresome, and the intentional anachronisms, such as the kerosene-powered mobile phone, fun when first encountered, are soon very tedious.

All in all, very tough to finish. A disappointment.

Miller's Court: Jack the Ripper's Final Victim

James Jeffrey Paul

An original radio drama from Actors Scene Unseen

Directed by Elizabeth Peterson-Vita

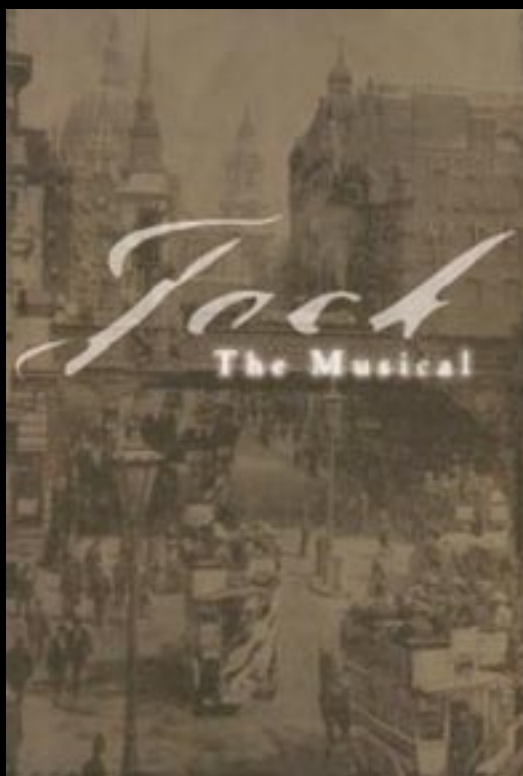
Music composed and performed by Dean Kluesner

Featuring Joe Copley as Jack the Ripper and Laura Reed Goodson as Mary Kelly

Miller's Court is a one-act play set in Mary Kelly's room on the night she was murdered. There are just two characters, Mary and Jack, and the play begins with the couple arriving at Kelly's room and Mary reaching through the broken window to open the door. A conversation ensues, first Mary telling her life story and then Jack, gradually relaxing, revealing more of his past, in particular about his uncle, a sadist who flogged young girls. The play concludes with an irony in that the gentle and caring Jack rekindles the desire for life in Mary who has been unhappy with and contemplated suicide.

The play's dialogue is convincingly written, Mary coming across as a hardened woman of the streets who has a gentle centre - yes, I know that sounds like the cliché-ridden 'tart with a heart of gold', but author James Jeffrey Paul manages to get round it.

The only complaint one really has is Mary's strong Irish accent, which sounds fake to me, and which it's doubtful she would have had if, as she claimed, she'd moved from Ireland to Wales when a child.



U.S. Premiere

Jack - The Musical

Lyrics and Book by

Christopher T. George and Erik Sitbon

Music by Erik Sitbon

Musical Direction by Lauren Konen

Stage Direction by Elizabeth Peterson-Vita

Four Fully Staged and Costumed Musical Performances

May 13, 2006 at 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM

May 14, 2006 at 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM

Duke Power Theatre

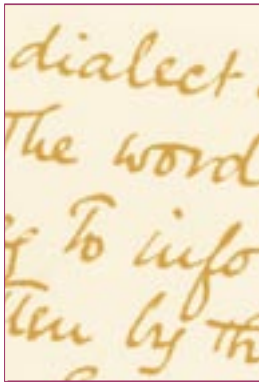
Spirit Square

Charlotte, NC

Jack - The Musical tells the story of one possible conclusion to the mystery of this most famous of unsolved cases. More an opera than a musical, Jack - The Musical features the haunting music of Erik Sitbon and the evocative lyrics of Christopher T. George.

This program contains adult themes.

[Tickets now available by clicking here.](#)



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and Other Media

Books: Oldies But Goodies



DAS PHANTOM VON LONDON. EINE GESCHICHTE UM JACK THE RIPPER - SCHAUSPIEL (Paperback, 97 pp., Monsenstein und Vannerdat, ISBN: 3865821502, €15) by [Mathias Schwappach](#), is a German-language play based on the Whitechapel Murders.

DEATH AT WHITECHAPEL (Paperback, 288 pages, Berkley, ISBN: 0425173410, \$6,99), by [Robin Paige](#), the pseudonym of a husband-and-wife writing team, deals with a husband-and-wife detective team on the trail of Jack the Ripper. We might not be giving too much away by revealing that the authors have embraced the Masonic conspiracy theory that supposedly reached to the highest levels of the British government. Secondary characters include Lady Churchill and Master Winston.

LE RETOUR DE JACK L'EVENTREUR (Paperback, 253 pages, Malko - Gérard de Villiers, Collection: *Les Dossiers de Scotland Yard*, ISBN : 2738601952, €5,20), by J B Livingstone, is a French-language thriller where Jack the Ripper returns 50 years after the Whitechapel murders.

LONDON VON SCOTLAND YARD BIS JACK THE RIPPER (Hardback, 240 pp., Eulen Verlag, ISBN: 3891024495) by [Gerald Hagemann](#), is a German-language guide to 350 London crime sites frequented by the likes of Mary Pearcey, the Ripper and Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

MARY JANE KELLY: LA DERNIÈRE VICTIME (Paperback, 90 pages, L'Harmattan, Collection: *Graveurs de mémoire*, ISBN: 2747525244, €9,50) by [Didier Chauvet](#), is a French-language book described as the first biography of Mary Jane Kelly, the last victim of Jack the Ripper.

SLUMMING: SEXUAL AND SOCIAL POLITICS IN VICTORIAN LONDON (Cloth, 368 pages, illust. 28 halftones, 1 map, Princeton University Press, \$29.95 / £18.95, ISBN: 0-691-11592-3), by Seth Koven, is an account of prominent 19th century Britons who felt compelled to visit, live, or work in the London slums in order to see for themselves how the poor lived and acquire the first-hand experience essential for all who claimed to speak authoritatively about social problems. Slumming also allowed many to act on their irresistible 'attraction of repulsion' for the poor and permitted them, with society's approval, to get dirty and express their own 'dirty' desires for intimacy with slum dwellers and, sometimes, with one another.



THE WHITECHAPEL CONSPIRACY, (Paperback, 352 pages, Ballantine Books, \$6.99, ISBN: 0449006565), by Anne Perry, is an intricate, fast-paced, atmospheric Victorian mystery cum political thriller featuring Inspector Thomas Pitt and his wife, Charlotte. Pitt manages to annoy the powerful Inner Circle and, as a consequence, loses his command of the Bow Street station and must go undercover in the East End slums chasing anarchists. Who says East End, Whitechapel and conspiracy, says Jack the Ripper. Does Miss Perry reveal the Ripper's identity? You'll have to read the book to find out.

Books: Recently Published

AN ACRE OF BARREN GROUND (Paperback, 352 pages, Scribner, ISBN: 0743259726 , £7.99) by [Jeremy Gavron](#), is a novel covering events in Brick Lane, Spitalfields, from prehistoric to present times. It is divided into some 40 chapters named after the buildings that line Brick Lane and told in different styles. The chapter about Inspector Abberline's hunt for

Jack the Ripper, for instance, reads like a police procedural, Gunther von Hagens's 2002 exhibition of plastinated cadavers at the Old Truman Brewery is evoked through newspaper coverage, and a story about hard-edged, hyped-up dotcom entrepreneurs setting up business in the area their grandparents once struggled to leave is told as a graphic novel. In every chapter, real and imaginary characters rub shoulders together and the blurred line between historical record and fiction sometimes makes the latter seem more real. The 'short stories are filled with memories of homelands and dreams for the future, and they pulse with the busy rhythm of everyday London living.' *The Independent*, 12 March 2006.

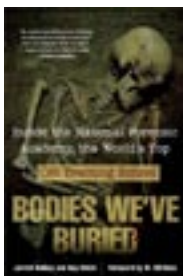


ANTI-SEMITISM AND BRITISH GOTHIC LITERATURE, (Hardcover, 256 pages, Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN: 0333929519, £47.50), by Carol Margaret Davison, examines Gothic Literature's engagement with the Jewish Question and British national identity over the course of a century, from Romanticism to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), and assesses the Count as a crypto-Jew and immigration, syphilis, Jack the Ripper, corporate capitalism and the New Woman as fin-de-siècle concerns connected with the assimilation of the Jews.

BLACK BARTY: THE REAL PIRATE OF THE CARIBBEAN (Paperback, 320 pages, Sutton Publishing, ISBN: 0750943122, £8.99) by Aubrey Burl, is the story of Bartholomew Roberts, Black Bart, a tall, good-looking, teetotal, and always well dressed pirate who is believed to have been the first to fly the skull and crossbones.

BLACK BY GASLIGHT (Paperback, 342 pages, Cavalier Press, ISBN: 0974621064, \$ 17.95), by Nene Adams, is a thriller opening in August 1888 as consulting detective Lady Evangeline St Claire rescues prostitute Rhiannon Moore from the clutches of Jack the Ripper. The two women embark upon an investigation that soon becomes a race against a killer whose only motive is madness and, while trying to save themselves, fall desperately in love.

BLOOD AND FIRE: THE DUKE OF WINDSOR AND THE STRANGE MURDER OF SIR HARRY OAKES (Paperback, 252 pages, LMH Books, ISBN: 9768184957), by John Marquis, is a semi-fictional retelling of the facts and conjectures concerning the death in 1943 of Sir Harry Oakes, who was found, a hole in his head and burnt to death, at his home in Nassau, Bahamas. Although foul play was never proved, suspicions surrounded the circumstances of his death, with speculation that the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were in some way involved.



BODIES WE'VE BURIED: INSIDE THE NATIONAL FORENSIC ACADEMY, THE WORLD'S TOP CSI TRAINING SCHOOL, (Hardcover, 286 pages, Berkley Publishing Group, ISBN: 425207528) by Bill Bass (Foreword), *et al.* 'This wonderful book will take you on a fascinating journey through the real world of crime scene investigation and the real people in it... original, informative and delightfully readable.' Patricia Cornwell.

BRITISH OUTLAW TRADITIONS, (Hardcover, University of Wales Press, ISBN: 0708319858, £47) by Helen Phillips (Editor), offers research and critical interpretations about British outlaw traditions and the way they have been imagined and presented in the Middle Ages and the centuries since. This volume focuses on the ways in which rogue-heroes have been used in literature, film and other areas of popular culture and imagination.

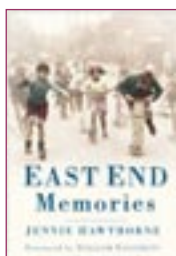
BY EAR AND EYES: THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS, JACK THE RIPPER AND THE MURDER OF MARY JANE KELLY (Paperback, 320 pages, Longshot Publishing, ISBN: 0955024005, £12.99), by Karyo Magellan, presents a new theory on the most enigmatic of the Ripper's victims. 'If there's any justice at all in our little square-mile corner of historical study, Magellan's book will emerge as the most controversial, if not the most important, book of 2005.' *Ripperologist*.



DEBUNKING HISTORY: 152 POPULAR MYTHS EXPLODED (Paperback, 348 pages, Sutton Publishing, ISBN: 0750941510, £8.99), by Ed Rayner and Ron Stapley, presents some of the most popular and enduring myths, legends, fables, folklore, misinformation and misconceptions from the American and French Revolutions to the two world wars and beyond. Arranged within well-defined geographical or thematic sections, and through a mix of short and long entries, each topic is clearly explained and the myth, error or controversy exposed.

EAST END CHRONICLES (Hardcover, 320 pages, Allen Lane/Penguin, ISBN: 0713997745, £20) by [Ed Glinert](#), covers the Silk Weavers of Spitalfields, Docks, Dockers and River Pirates, Murder and Mayhem on the Ratcliffe Highway, Mystics and Myth-Makers, The Blitz and Bombs, The Jewish Ghetto and others. Glinert discerns the influence of 'esoteric

measurements' in the location of the Ripper's killings and the murder in 1974 of Alfie Cohen, the owner of a tobacco kiosk in Commercial Road, which were linked by traces of Masonic ritual.



EAST END MEMORIES (Hardcover, 352 pages, Sutton Publishing, ISBN: 0750939966, £14, 99) by Jennie Hawthorne, is an account of the author's early life in the heart of the East End. Her vivid account of growing up is told with passion and humour - even though her drunken father struggles from crisis to crisis and illness and crime are part of everyday life. The author's captivating anecdotes, poignant and entertaining, are suffused by the sights, sounds and smells of the East End in the 1920s and '30s.

EYE ON LONDON, (Paperback, 160 pages, Capita Publications, ISBN: 0954868102, £9.99) by Colin Kendell, who chose Jack the Ripper as his specialist subject when he appeared on the BBC programme *Mastermind* ten years ago, deals with famous London landmarks and characters, such as the Tower of London, the Albert Hall, Kensington Palace and - of course - Jack the Ripper.

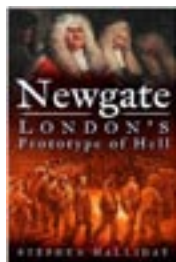
JACK THE RIPPER. MIT CD. PRE-INTERMEDIATE. STEP 4. 9./10. KLASSE (LERNMATERIALIEN), by Peter Foreman. Perfect (2006/01) Langensch. Schulb., Mchn. Reviewed in this issue.

JACK THE RIPPER - ANATOMIE EINER LEGENDE (Hardcover, 256 Pages, Illust., Militzke Verlag, €18, ISBN: 3861897539) by Hendrik Püstow and Thomas Schachner, is the first original German-language book on the Ripper.

JACK THE RIPPER COMPREHENSIVE A-Z (Hardcover, 499 pages, Castle Books, ISBN: 078581616X, £19.98) edited by [Maxim Jakubowski](#) and [Nathan Braund](#), is a re-issue of the *Mammoth Book of Jack the Ripper* first published in 1999.

JACK THE RIPPER: A CONFESSION (Paperback, 257 pages, ripperArt, ISBN: 0954660331, £9.99) by Geoff Cooper and Gordon Punter.

JACK THE RIPPER: END OF A LEGEND (Paperback, 316 pages, Athena Press Pub, ISBN: 1844014843, \$15.95) by Calum Reuben Knight, argues that Jack the Ripper wasn't one person but three, including a French woman who successfully masqueraded as the final victim - Mary Jane Kelly. Reviewed in this issue.



NEWGATE: LONDON'S PROTOTYPE OF HELL, (Hardcover, Sutton Publishing, ISBN: 0750938951, £20), by Stephen Halliday, relates the story of the largest and most notorious prison in London. Built during the twelfth century, Newgate held at various times Dick Turpin, Titus Oates, Jack Sheppard, Casanova and Daniel Defoe - and his heroine Moll Flanders. Housing varied from a private cell with a cleaning woman and regular female company to a spot on the floor. Only a quarter of its inmates survived Newgate.

PORTRAIT OF A KILLER: JACK THE RIPPER - CASE CLOSED (Paperback, 400 pp., Penguin Group (USA), ISBN: 0425205479, \$15.), by Patricia Cornwell, is a revised edition of her controversial book reportedly including more evidence for her conclusion that the killer was the artist, Walter Sickert. A British edition will follow in September.

PRINCE EDDY: THE KING BRITAIN NEVER HAD (Hardcover, 272 pages, Tempus Publishing Ltd, ISBN: 0752434101, £20) by prolific author [Andrew Cook](#), is a revisionist account of Eddy's life.

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES: BEING THE STORY OF JACK THE RIPPER AS REPORTED IN THE LONDON AND NEW YORK TIMES (Paperback, 139 pages, cover illustration by Gavin L O'Keefe, Ramble House, \$12) is a collection of news items published in The Times and the New York Times in chronological order (1885-1895).

SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE BIOGRAPHY (Hardback, 240 pp., Atlantic, ISBN: 1843542749, £ 14.99) by Nick Rennison, ventures beyond Holmes's published cases to recount how the great detective prevented Fenian attacks, advised Oscar Wilde to scarp, helped Conan Doyle to solve the Edalji case and almost caught Jack the Ripper. But why wasn't the Ripper case recorded by Watson? As the Ripper skulked about Whitechapel, Mary Morstan, Watson's future wife, made her appearance into Watson's life. The good doctor set forth her story as The Sign of Four, but did not think the Ripper case worth chronicling.



THE AMERICAN MURDERS OF JACK THE RIPPER: TANTALIZING EVIDENCE OF THE GRUESOME AMERICAN INTERLUDE OF THE PRIME RIPPER SUSPECT (Paperback, 240 pages, The Lyons Press, ISBN: 1592286755, illus., \$ 14.95) by R Michael Gordon, posits Severin Klosowski, aka George Chapman, as the Ripper and explores his responsibility for a number of murders committed in the United States.

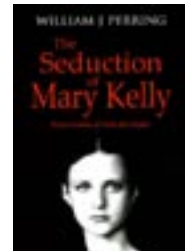
THE BLACK DAHLIA FILES: THE MOB, THE MOGUL AND THE MURDER THAT TRANSFIXED LOS ANGELES (Hardcover, 416 pages, Regan Books, ISBN: 0060582499, \$26.99), by Donald H. Wolfe, deals with one of the most notorious American murder cases. The mob is represented by Benjamin 'Bugsy' Siegel, the mogul is Norman Chandler, the publisher of the Los Angeles Times, and the murder that transfixed Los Angeles is that of Elizabeth Short, the 'Black Dahlia'.



THE HUMAN PREDATOR: A HISTORICAL CHRONICLE OF SERIAL MURDER AND FORENSIC INVESTIGATION (Hardcover, 320 pages, Berkley, ISBN: 042520765X, \$24.95) by Dr Katherine Ramsland PhD, is a detailed and comprehensive anthology of multiple murder events and serial killers. Starting with the Dark Ages and culminating with events in the new millennium, Dr Ramsland takes the reader through history with her presentation and documentation of famous cases of multiple and serial murders, the journalistic coverage of these crimes and the social reaction to the 'evil' of serial murder. She shows that the darkness that exists in human nature is not the product of modern society.

THE NEW ANNOTATED SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE NOVELS (A STUDY IN SCARLET, THE SIGN OF FOUR, THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, THE VALLEY OF FEAR) (Hardcover, 992 pages, illust., W W Norton, Slipcase edition, ISBN: 039305800X, \$49.95) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Leslie S Klinger (Editor), is the third book in a series begun in 2004. 'A must-have for any serious mystery fan, this edition will stand as the benchmark for generations to come.' Publishers' Weekly.

THE SEDUCTION OF MARY KELLY: FINAL VICTIM OF JACK THE RIPPER (Hardback, 591 pp, Coulsdon, Surrey: D'Arcy Collection, 2005, www.darcycollection.co.uk, ISBN: 0954977009, £17.95) by William J Perring, is a novel recounting 'the "known" career of Mary Kelly with all the familiar faces emerging as flesh and blood characters instead of the often one-dimensional figures they appear in the non-fiction books.' *Ripperologist*. The *Rip* also told its readers: 'You should like this book and it'll keep you occupied and out of trouble for a while.'



THE TRIAL OF JACK THE RIPPER: THE CASE OF WILLIAM BURY (1859-89) (Paperback, 192 pages, Mainstream Publishing, ISBN: 1845960114, £9.99) by Euan Macpherson, discusses Ripper suspect William Henry Bury, who was hanged in 1889 in Scotland for the murder of his wife. 'Whether Bury was Jack the Ripper or not, Macpherson's book is a damn good read and a penetrating analysis of a nasty murder by an equally nasty little man.' *Ripperologist*.

TO KILL RASPUTIN: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF GREGORI RASPUTIN (Hardcover, 288 pages, Tempus Publishing Ltd, ISBN: 0752434098, £20), by Andrew Cook, is a re-investigation of Rasputin's death which reveals for the first time the real masterminds behind the murder of the 'mad monk' who journalist William Le Queux claimed knew the true identity of Jack the Ripper.

WILL THE REAL MARY KELLY...? (Paperback, 154 pages, Christopher Scott, ISBN: 1905277059, £10.99) by *Ripperologist's* contributing editor Chris Scott, is a definitive take on the Miller's Court victim. 'Without question *Will the Real Mary Kelly* will become a "must-have" resource for any serious *Ripperologist*.' Stephen P. Ryder, Exec. Editor, *Casebook: Jack the Ripper*. 'Highly recommended.' Antonio Sironi. 'Best Book of 2005.' Karyo Magellan, *Ripperologist*.

Books: Forthcoming Publications

MARCH 2006

OXFORD: CRIME, DEATH AND DEBAUCHERY (Paperback, 192 pages, Sutton Publishing, ISBN: 075093820X, £16.99) by Giles Brindley, explores a side of Oxford's past populated with footpads and prostitutes, murderers and conmen, thieves and philanderers. Crime stories based on contemporary court records and newspaper accounts dating from 1750 to 1920 include infamous murders, hangings and dying confessions, grand and daring thefts, escapes from the county gaol, suicide in the name of love and great drinking deaths.

PLAYERS: THE MYSTERIOUS IDENTITY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (Hardcover, 320 pages, Sutton Publishing, ISBN: 0750943742, £20), by Bertram Fields, questions William Shakespeare of Stratford's authorship of the plays and poems

that bear his name. Fields proposes instead 'a magnificent collaboration between two men, a partnership protected for centuries by the greatest conspiracy in literary history.'

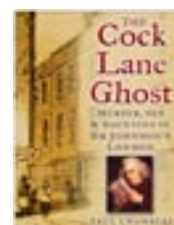


ROYAL BLOOD: KING RICHARD III AND THE MYSTERY OF THE PRINCES (Paperback, 352 pages, Sutton Publishing, ISBN: 0750943904, £9.99), by Bertram Fields, attempts to answer the intriguing questions inherent in the drama of Richard III, history's most infamous royal villain, and his nephews, the princes in the tower. The book ends re-envisioning British history: what if Richard had never accepted the Crown? What if he had instead insisted his young nephew reign as Edward V? How would our lives be changed?

SPARTACUS: THE MYTH AND THE MAN (Hardcover, 256 pages, Sutton Publishing, ISBN: 0750939079, £20), by Ripper author M J Trow, traces the story of Spartacus, through slavery in Rome and training as a gladiator, to the slave rebellion which pitted an army of 3,000 men against the might of Rome and ended with the survivors of Spartacus's defeated army either crucified or returned to slavery.

THE BTK MURDERS: INSIDE THE 'BIND TORTURE KILL' CASE THAT TERRIFIED AMERICA'S HEARTLAND (Mass Market Paperback, 352 pages, St. Martin's True Crime Classics, \$6,99, ISBN: 0312939051), by Carlton Smith, is an account of the criminal career of the recently captured serial killer.

THE COCK LANE GHOST: MURDER, SEX AND HAUNTING IN DR. JOHNSON'S LONDON (Hardcover, 224 pages, Sutton Publishing, ISBN: 0750938692, £14.99), by Paul Chambers, is the true story of William Kent's elopement with Frances Lynes to lodgings in Cock Lane, London, Frances's mysterious death and her alleged return from beyond the grave to confront her killer. The story of the Cock Lane Ghost had such effect on society that the term Cock Lane was still synonymous with folly, superstition and corruption 150 years later.



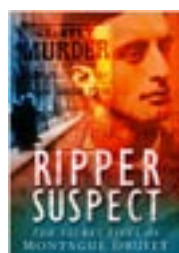
THE THEFT OF THE IRISH CROWN JEWELS: THE UNSOLVED MYSTERY (MOMENTS OF HISTORY S.) (Paperback; 272 pages, ISBN: 1843810077, £11.99), by Tim Coates, investigates the mysterious disappearance from Dublin Castle in July 1907 of the Irish Crown Jewels - the regalia or insignia of the Order of St Patrick - which have never been found.

UNCLE JACK, (Paperback, Orion) by Humphrey Price and Tony Williams, is the paperback edition of the controversial book proposing the candidacy of Royal obstetrician Sir John Williams as Jack the Ripper.

APRIL 2006

MURDER IN HOLLYWOOD: SOLVING A SILENT SCREEN MYSTERY (Hardcover, 208 pages, The University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN: 0299203603), by Charles Higham, scrutinizes the so far unsolved murder of William Desmond Taylor, a leading silent film director, and the massive cover-up that protected the famous star responsible for Taylor's death. According to the publishers, 'The result is a compelling answer to a long-standing mystery and a fascinating study of a place, and an industry, that let people reinvent themselves.'

PUBLIC REACTIONS TO JACK THE RIPPER, edited by Casebook Administrator Stephen P Ryder, will be a collection of more than 200 Letters to the Editor published in the Victorian press from August to December 1888, presented chronologically, extensively annotated and indexed both by author and subject. It will be illustrated throughout. [Email Stephen](#) to be placed on the list for a signed copy. All proceeds from the sale of the book will directly benefit the Casebook Press Project.



RIPPER SUSPECT: THE SECRET LIVES OF MONTAGUE DRUITT (Hardcover, 224 pages, Sutton Publishing, £18.99, ISBN: 0750943297) by D.J. Leighton, explores the life of Montague John Drutt, barrister, schoolmaster, cricketer, suicide and prime suspect in the Whitechapel murders case, with special emphasis on his intriguing links with Prince Eddy, the Cambridge Apostles, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Virginia Woolf and the cricketing legend Prince Kumar Ranjitsinhji.

RIPPEROLOGY, by highly respected Ripper author Robin Odell, will be launched by Kent State Press at the American Jack the Ripper Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. Mr Odell has described Ripperology as 'the story of what we have all come to know as "Ripperology" with some personal reminiscences and a modicum of

analysis.' The book will have an introduction by Donald Rumbelow.

RONNIE BIGGS (AMAZING STORIES) (Paperback, 128 pages, Altitude Publishing (Canada), ISBN: 1552659046), Art Montague.



THE MAMMOTH BOOK OF FAMOUS TRIALS (Paperback, 550 pages, Constable and Robinson, ISBN: 1845293045, £7.99), by Roger Wilkes, features 35 famous trials, including Bianchi and Buono, the Hillside Stranglers, the Moors murderers Brady and Hindley, O.J. Simpson, Bruno Hauptmann, the kidnapper and murderer of Baby Lindbergh, eleven-year-old Mary Bell, convicted of killing two little boys, Oscar Wilde and 'one of the most evil, satanic men who ever walked the face of the earth', Charles Manson.

UNHOLY MESSENGER: THE LIFE AND CRIMES OF THE BTK SERIAL KILLER (US List Price Hardcover, 304 pages, Scribner Book Company, ISBN: 0743291247, \$23.00), Stephen Singular.

WHO KILLED KING TUT? USING MODERN FORENSICS TO SOLVE A 3,300-YEAR-OLD MYSTERY (Hardcover, 258 pp, Illustrations, Appendices, Index, Prometheus Books, ISBN: 1-59102-183-9, \$25), by Detectives Michael R. King and Gregory M. Cooper, investigates the circumstances of the Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamen's premature death sometime in his late teens. Speculation on the cause of his untimely demise has ranged from an infected mosquito bite to a bash on the head, either intentionally inflicted or the result of a fatal chariot accident. After considering natural causes, accident, and suicide, the authors, who are law enforcement specialists in forensics and the psychology of criminal behaviour, come to the conclusion that Tutankhamen was murdered and identify the most probable suspect.

SPRING 2006

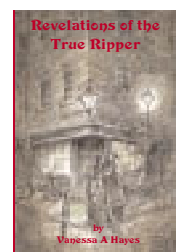
DID THEY REALLY DO IT?: FROM LIZZIE BORDEN TO THE 20TH HIJACKER (Paperback, 256 pages, Thunder's Mouth Press, ISBN: 1560257741, \$14.95), Fred Rosen.



JACK OF JUMPS (Hardcover, 400 pages, Granta Books, ISBN: 1862077703, £18.99), by David Seabrook, is an account of the murders of eight prostitutes in West London between 1959 and 1965 by a serial killer known as Jack the Stripper. In 1970, the detective who had led the enquiry announced that the police had vowed never to reveal the identity of the killer, who had committed suicide as the net closed round him. Seabrook questions the police's assertion and conjures up the disturbing possibility that the killer may still be at large.

JACK THE RIPPER (Paperback, 160 pages, Pocket Essentials, ISBN: 1904048692, £4.99), by Mark Whitehead and Miriam Rivett, is described as the Essential Guide to 'Jack the Ripper', contains an introductory essay and considers many of the Ripper's proposed identities, a summary of his crimes, victims and the ill-fated investigation, plus a guide to the Ripper's many fictional outings, from Hitchcock's *The Lodger* to Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's *From Hell*.

REVELATIONS OF THE TRUE RIPPER (Ivory Moon), by Vanessa A Hayes, presents a new suspect who, according to the publishers: is 'a fully plausible suspect, non-related to the Author or Royalty'. They add: 'As with all NEW suspects you will ask when, where and how does Vanessa believe that this person committed these crimes. Her "Jack the Ripper" had motive, causation, drive and passion. So who was he?'

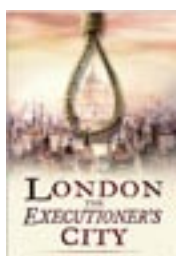


SUMMER 2006

ASSASSINS IN THE PARK: MURDER, BETRAYAL AND RETRIBUTION (Paperback, 192 pages, Mercier Press, ISBN: 185635511X), by Senan Molony, deals with the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Thomas Burke in Phoenix Park in May 1882 by men wielding surgical knives, the police investigation and the attempts to infiltrate the Fenians.

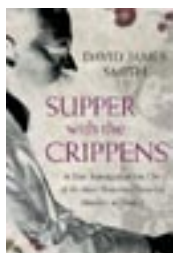
BLACK DAHLIA AVENGER: A GENIUS FOR MURDER (Revised edition) (Paperback, 624 pages, Harper Paperbacks, ISBN: 0061139610, \$15.95), by Steve Hodel, identifies the mysterious killer of Elizabeth Short, the Black Dahlia, as the author's own father, Dr George Hodel.

JACK THE RIPPER: THE FACTS (Paperback, 560 pages, Robson Books Ltd, ISBN: 1861058705, £8.99) by *Ripperologist's* Executive Editor Paul Begg, is simply one of the most complete and authoritative books on the subject. A must-have.



LONDON: THE EXECUTIONER'S CITY (Hardcover 256 pages Sutton Publishing, ISBN: 0750940239 £18.99), by David Brandon and Alan Brooke, is described by its publishers as 'a vivid picture of capital punishment in a capital that seems to have thrived on executions.' The book 'reveals the capital as a place where the bodies of criminals defined the boundaries of the city and heads on poles greeted patrons on London Bridge.'

SOJOURN (Dragon Moon Press), by Jana G Oliver, combines science fiction (time travel), fantasy (shapeshifters) and history (the Whitechapel murders), as time rover Jacynnda Lassiter struggles against time to find an overdue 'tourist' and return him to 2057 before he alters history. She arrives in Victorian London in perilous times, as the Whitechapel murders have the city in an uproar. The Transitives (shape shifters) are fretting the hard-to-catch killer might be one of their own. To prevail, Jacynnda and Dr Alastair Montrose, a shape shifter who is denying his heritage, must outwit a madman whose legacy will endure for centuries.



SUPPER WITH THE CRIPPENS (Paperback, 352 pages, Orion (an Imprint of The Orion Publishing Group Ltd) ISBN: 0752877720, £7.99), by David James Smith, looks again into the case of American Dr Hawley Harvey Crippen, his wife, a music-hall artiste who called herself Belle Elmore, and his mistress, Ethel le Neve, against the background of Edwardian England. Crippen murdered his wife, buried her remains in the cellar and escaped to Canada in an ocean liner with Ethel disguised as a boy. They were arrested on arrival by Inspector Walter Dew, of Whitechapel fame, thanks to the wireless telegraph newly installed on the ship. The lovers went on trial for murder. Ethel was acquitted but Crippen was convicted and hanged.

THE A-Z ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SERIAL KILLERS (Paperback, 341 pages, Pocket Books, ISBN: 0671537911), by Harold Schechter, consists of brief articles examining serial killers, their crimes and victims, and the methods they used to kill people and dispose of their bodies.



THE CAMDEN TOWN MURDER: WALTER RICHARD SICKERT, ROBERT WOOD, EMILY DIMMOCK: ARTISTS, MURDERER AND VICTIM IN ANOTHER NOTORIOUS 'RIPPER' CRIME (Paperback, 250 pages, Mandrake of Oxford, ISBN: 1869928148), John Barber. 'I know the book will be of interest.' Karyo Magellan, *Ripperologist*.

THE FATHER OF FORENSICS: THE GROUNDBREAKING CASES OF SIR BERNARD SPILSBURY, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN CSI (Paperback 336 pages Berkley Publishing Group, ISBN: 0425210073, \$14), Colin Evans.

SEPTEMBER 2006

PORTRAIT OF A KILLER: JACK THE RIPPER - CASE CLOSED (Paperback, 416 pages, Time Warner Paperbacks, ISBN: 0751537225, £8.99), by Patricia Cornwell, will be the British edition of her revised book.

OCTOBER 2006

JACK THE RIPPER: THE COMPLETE INVESTIGATION (Hardback, 320pp, Stewart P Evans and Donald Rumbelow, Sutton Publishing. ISBN 0750942282. £20). Need we say more? Unquestionably, this is one to buy and treasure.

LATE 2006

THE QUEST FOR JACK THE RIPPER: A LITERARY HISTORY 1888-2000 by Richard Whittington-Egan, has been eagerly expected for a number of years now. *Ripperologist* has been told that the delay has been partly due to the scrupulous checking of all the facts by Mr Whittington-Egan's editor, Tom Kelly, and the minute attention and meticulous research which he has displayed in the construction of a really comprehensive bibliography, taking in for the first time all manner of obscure American book, magazine and newspaper reference sources. May we have it soon, please?

UNCOVERING JACK THE RIPPER'S LONDON, by Richard Jones, whose documentary, *On the Trail of Jack the Ripper*, was described by *Ripperologist* as 'Perhaps the best documentary to have been produced in recent years.' [Click here for Jones's web site.](#)

STILL UNSCHEDULED

CUATRO MIRADAS SOBRE JACK EL DESTRIPIADOR is a Spanish-language collection of original essays on the Ripper to be published in Buenos Aires. The authors are the late Juan-Jacobo Bajaría, Juan José Delaney, Christopher-Michael DiGrazia and Eduardo Zinna.

SHADOW PASTS, by Professor William D Rubinstein, looks at Ripperologists and other 'amateur' historians.

AND DON'T FORGET...

THE ROYAL LEGACY OF HATE, a further volume of revelations concerning the regal ancestry of Joseph Sickert, who died on 9 January 2003, and journalist Tom Slemen's book on Charles Regnier Conder. No current information is available as to the present status of these books.

Feature Films

BLACK DAHLIA (USA, 2005) Written, produced and directed by Ramzi Abed (who may also have shot and edited the film and designed the sets and the costumes), stars Kristen Kerr as Lisa Small/Beth Short, Lizzy Strain as the Black Dahlia/Elizabeth Short, Khrist Kaneff as Fatty Arbuckle and Ramzi Abed as - who else? - Ramzi. The film has been described as 'a present day re-telling of the Black Dahlia murder [which] unfolds as days in the life of a young woman looking for fame and fortune in the city of dreams.' Indeed. The tagline is more to the point: 'One woman, two lives. One knife, two halves. The eternal murder mystery...' That's what we call cutting-edge copy. According to [Mr Abed's website](#), *Black Dahlia* is still in post-production.



ROHTENBURG (Germany, 2006). Also known as *Butterfly: A Grimm Love Story*. Directed by Martin Weisz, written by T.S. Faull, starring Thomas Kretschmann, Angelika Bartsch and Thomas Huber, is inspired by the real-life story of cannibal killer Armin Meiwes and might, as a result, never come to a screen near you. Check *I Beg to Report* for more information on the banning of this film in Germany.

THE BLACK DAHLIA (USA, Universal Pictures, 2006). Directed by Brian De Palma, based on the novel by James Ellroy, with a screenplay by Josh Friedman, stars Josh Hartnett as Officer Dwight 'Bucky' Bleichert, Scarlett Johansson as Kay Lake, Hilary Swank as Madeleine Sprague, Aaron Eckhart as Sgt. Leland 'Lee' Blanchard and Mia Kirshner as Elizabeth Short. The Black Dahlia is about two L.A. police officers in the 1940s who investigate the brutal murder of aspiring film actress Elizabeth Short. Officer 'Bucky' soon realizes that his girlfriend Kay had ties to the deceased, and soon after that, he begins uncovering corruption and conspiracy within the police department. Universal has announced that The Black Dahlia will open in cinemas in the United States on 13 October 2006 - a Friday. Rumour has it, however, that the film might make its debut at the Cannes Film Festival in May.



V FOR VENDETTA (USA, Warner Brothers, 2005). Directed by James McTeigue, based on the graphic novels by Alan Moore and David Lloyd, written by the Wachowski Brothers, starring Natalie Portman, Hugo Weaving, Stephen Rea, Stephen Fry, John Hurt and Tim Pigott-Smith. Is the world ready for a heroic terrorist in a Guy Fawkes mask blowing up London landmarks? Will *Star Wars* fans recognise Queen Amidala in a closely cropped Natalie Portman? Can a film based on an Alan Moore's graphic novel top *From Hell*? Can the Wachowski Brothers top *Matrix*? Well, if you want to know the answers to all those questions you better go and see the film. The original tagline, 'Remember, remember, the Fifth of November', was quite appropriate when the film was scheduled to open on the 400th anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot in November last year. It finally had its premiere on 10 March on

Leicester Square, London and opened worldwide on 17 March. 'Remember, remember, the Seventeenth of March?' We don't think so. That's St Patrick's Day.

ZODIAC (USA, Paramount, Warner, 2006). Directed by David Fincher, based on the Robert Graysmith books, with a screenplay by James Vanderbilt, stars Robert Downey Jr. as Paul Avery, Jake Gyllenhaal as Robert Graysmith, Mark Ruffalo as Dave Toschi, Anthony Edwards as Armstrong and Gary Oldman as attorney Melvin Belli. The film deals with the real-life serial killer Zodiac, who terrorized San Francisco with a string of seemingly random murders during the 1960s and 1970s. The release of *Zodiac* has been announced for Autumn 2006.

Documentaries

SUMMER 2006

JACK THE RIPPER'S SWEDISH VICTIM is a documentary by Daniel Olsson and Wulvarich shot on location in Store Tumlehed, Gothenburg and other places frequented by young Elisabeth Gustafsdotter, better known as Long Liz Stride. It will consist of the following sections: 1. THE LONDON MURDERS, 1888: General Information on the Whitechapel Murders and Jack the Ripper; 2. LIZ: CHILDHOOD AND TEENAGE YEARS: History of Torslanda and Tumlehed. The God Thor and the Cult of Thor. Liz's Birth. Important Events in Sweden, 1843. Liz's Baptism. Connections between the Torslanda Church and the God Thor. Liz's Upbringing. Her Brothers. Ordinary Daily Life in Sweden. Liz's Confirmation. 3. LIZ'S MOVE TO GOTHENBURG. General Information about Gothenburg . King Gustav II Adolf and the Mystic Events which Led to the Birth of the City. Elizabeth Settles in 'Majorna'. Allmanna Vägen: the Name and the Prostitutes. How Liz Learned English in Majorna. Brothels in Allmanna Vägen. 4. PROSTITUTION AND THE 'REGISTERS OF SHAME.' Liz Settles in Gothenburg. Prostitution. Sillgatan Street. Liz's Registration. Pilgatan Street - Where Liz Probably Learned Yiddish. (This is an exclusive feature only available on the DVD). Kurhuset. How Liz Got struck off the Register. 5. LIZ'S MOVE TO LONDON. The Journey. Weather Conditions. 6. LIZ'S MURDER. 7 THEORIES ABOUT JACK THE RIPPER. The Swedish version of VICTIM is scheduled to be released in DVD in June; the English version, in December. For more information on VICTIM's availability and price, keep checking this column.

Television

APRIL 2006

SEE NO EVIL, ITV1 - Dramatised documentary about the Moors murderers Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. Stars Maxine Peake as Hindley, Sean Harris as Brady and Joanne Froggatt as Hindley's sister Maureen. Airing to mark the 40th anniversary of the 1966 trial of Brady and Hindley for kidnapping and murdering five children and burying their bodies on Saddleworth Moor in Cheshire. Written by Neil McKay, made by Granada.

SUMMER 2006

LONGFORD, Channel 4 - One-off drama starring Jim Broadbent as the title character battling to win parole for Moors murderess Myra Hindley (played by Samantha Morton). With Andy Serkis as Ian Brady and Lindsay Duncan as Elizabeth Longford. *Longford* is an HBO Films presentation in association with Channel 4 produced by Granada. Directed by Tom Hooper (*Prime Suspect 6*, HBO's upcoming miniseries *Elizabeth I*), Written by Peter Morgan (whose credits include *The Deal*, *The Queen*, *Henry VIII*). Andy Harries (*The Queen*, *Prime Suspect 6*) and Peter Morgan produce. The film's original soundtrack will be composed by Rolfe Kent (*About Schmidt*, *Sideways*).

Compact Discs

JACK THE RIPPER'S REIGN OF TERROR is a [London Audio Walk](#) tour of the murder sites recorded on MP3 or Audio CD which sells for £5.99. The 3-mile (4 km) walk covers from Whitechapel Underground Station to Aldgate, visiting the five murder sites with a stop at the Ten Bells in Commercial Street. Sights include Spitalfields Market and Brick Lane. The full audio lasts 50 minutes and the walk usually takes round 1.5-2 hours. Best time to go, anytime, although Spitalfields Market is only open 11am-3pm on Sundays whereas it is open 9am-6pm the rest of the week. The tour may be ordered on CD. MP3-player owners may download it straight away from the Internet. The downloads consist of between 17Mb and 18Mb, which should take around five minutes to download on a broadband connection. Those on a slower connection are advised to order the CD instead.

MILLER'S COURT, a two-person drama by James Jeffrey Paul about the Ripper's encounter with his last victim, is available on CD from [Actors Scene Unseen](#), a Live Internet Radio Theatre company broadcasting live from Charlotte, NC, USA. Reviewed in this issue. Also available is *Saucy Jack*, an original radio drama by James Vita focusing on the Ripper murders, The live program was originally broadcast on 19 June 2004 on Actors Scene Unseen.

JACK THE RIPPER, DIE GESCHICHTE EINES MÖRDERS, (Audio-CD, Luebbe Verlagsgruppe, ISBN: 3785711999), by [Frank Gustavus](#), [Dietmar Mues](#), [Dagmar Puchalla](#) and [Heinz Lieven](#), is a German-language account of the murders.

DVD

ALREADY ISSUED

JACK THE RIPPER'S LONDON (DVD, Castle Home Video, Run Time: 60 minutes, Region 0, PAL, ASIN: B000AXWCYO, Catalogue Number: CHVBB0095, £2.99). No further details currently available.



CHRISTOPHER-
MICHAEL DIGRAZIA

The Last Word

Sumer is icumen in - well, not really, but we're getting as close as dammit, what with the warmer weather finally on the horizon. So it's time to pull out some fresh, lightweight linens and cottons and toss all the smelly, ratty winter clothing in the hamper for another few months. So here in lavish DiGrazia Hall, I've been clearing away the detritus, collecting up old papers and books and, in general, setting myself to spring cleaning.

The main reason for spring cleaning, as Judith Flanders tells us in her wonderful book *The Victorian House*, was to remove the winter dirt caused by the leavings of coal, oil, gas and candles. We tend to forget that the Age of Victoria was also the Age of Soot. *'Kitchen ranges and fires for heating throughout the house, together with London's foggy climate, ensured that the city was filthy, inside and out.'* While our more lascivious imaginations might look at a small plate fitted over a keyhole and imagine it was to provide the randy master and frisky new maid a little privacy from the prying eyes of the missus, the more mundane truth is that the plate was there to keep out dirt. *'Plants were kept on window sills to trap the dust as it flew in; housewives nailed muslin across the windows to stop the soot...[t]ablecloths were laid just before a meal, as otherwise dust settled from the fire and they became dingy in a matter of hours.'*

So there I was, gathering newspapers, odd clippings, memoranda, pictures and books that, for some reason or another, I thought I'd have use for. Within the space of a day, I had half a dozen boxes filled to groaning with ephemera. All I needed to do was bring the boxes to the kerb, and they'd be out of my life forever.

But I couldn't do it. *Can I afford to throw this away?* I thought. *What if tomorrow I really need that forty year old clipping on the Spanish Flu of 1918? What will I do?* And so, with a heavy heart, all of the boxes went back into the house and I shrugged my shoulders, resigning myself to the ranks of the pack rat.

The compulsion to hoard is as old as mankind, from our unknown Neolithic ancestors stocking food up against the harsh cold of the Ice Age down to the eccentric Marjorie Jackson of Indiana who, upon her death in 1977, was found to have secreted fifty loaves of bread, 150 pounds of coffee and 200 dozen biscuits in her poky Indianapolis house. Resources and staples have, throughout most of recorded history, been scarce, leading to the time-honoured wisdom of such proverbs as 'a stitch in time saves nine' and 'mend it up, use it up or go without.' It is only in the wastefully profligate modern age that the offhand comment 'it's cheaper to replace it than fix it', a sentiment that would have horrified our parents, has any meaning.

'Hoarding' and 'collecting' are two sides of the same coin. There's only a degree of difference between Tsar Nicholas II's Fabergé egg collection and the avalanche of household garbage secreted in the home of Connecticut housewife Norma Jean Bryant - a collection so vast it has to be stored in a disused opera house! Both are valuable to their owners, and who is to say that Miss Bryant's collection is any less valuable, in her eyes, than the priceless eggs of the Romanov court? Well... most people would. The jeweled eggs of Carl Fabergé are universally acknowledged as priceless works of art. The worth of Miss Bryant's grocery list from 1956 is understood only by herself.

The same could be said of the collection of the most fabulous pack rats of all, the reclusive, legendary Collyer Brothers. Homer and Langley Collyer were the sons of a wealthy gynecologist from an old New York family. In the early 1900s, the family moved into a handsome three-story brownstone house in Harlem (a swanky address in those days) and, for a while, all seemed normal as Homer went to work in his law office and Langley tinkered with inventions and studied music. But the boys' parents died in the 1920s and, as Harlem over the decades degenerated into a crime-ridden slum, the Langleys withdrew from the world.

They stopped paying their bills. The water, gas, telephone and electricity were cut off, but the Langleys said nothing, fetching water from a nearby park. Fearful of burglars, they built barricades of junk around their doors and windows, and eventually booby-trapped the entire house with a Rube Goldberg conglomeration of tripwires designed to crush any intruder under the massive weight of walls of trash. Homer eventually suffered a stroke, becoming blind and paralyzed, and from that moment on was almost never seen again. Langley became his personal physician, feeding his brother a crackpot diet of 100 oranges a week, black bread and peanut butter.

Finally, on March 21, 1947, there was an anonymous telephone call to the 122nd Precinct police station: 'there is a dead man on the premises at 2078 Fifth Avenue.' The police made their way to the Collyers' house, and, entering

through a second-floor window, fought their way through a junk-filled maze of tunnels to the body of Homer Collyer, dead of starvation. But where was Langley? He was nowhere to be found. He didn't even attend his brother's funeral. Had he, perhaps, wandered off in some demented daze, leaving his brother to die? Had it been Langley, in a fit of grief, who called the police?

No. Eighteen days later, Langley's body was found hidden under a massive pile of newspapers, just a few feet from where Homer died. He had apparently tripped one of his own thief-catchers, and been crushed to death.

The Collyer Brothers' home was eventually torn down - the smell of more than 140 tons of junk made it a health hazard - and during the clean up, it was found that Homer and Langley had gathered to themselves, among other wonders, the jawbone of a horse, 14 pianos, a dismantled Model T Ford, 13 Oriental rugs, pinup girls from a 1905 calendar and, incredibly, thirty years' worth of every New York City newspaper from 1918 to 1947, collected by Langley in anticipation of the day Homer recovered his sight.

Jack the Ripper, too, is commonly considered to be a 'collector,' and the mystery of Annie Chapman's missing uterus and the stolen kidney of Catharine Eddowes usually explained by the pat reasoning that the Ripper wanted souvenirs of his grisly kills. It is a standard trope of true crime books and thriller novels that the killer collects in order to 'possess' his victims or, by touching their clothing or viscera, to relive the unutterable ecstasy of murder. It is why the story of Dr Tumblety's armoire of uteri touched such a deep chord in the minds of Ripperologists - there, we exclaimed, there is the true obsessive! There is a man who would kill!

Tumblety's 'museum' seems tailor-made for the portrait of a serial killer; and yet, I would argue that his reported action - throwing the doors of the cabinet open to reveal row upon row of glistening, preserved organs - is not the action of a killer. An exhibitionist, yes. Someone who wished to shock and titillate, yes. But the action of a collector - a hoarder - an obsessive whose stockpile represents days or weeks of hunting, fevered imagination and frenzied attack? No. Such a collection would be too private, too intimate to be shared with anyone else. If the Tumblety story is true, then the good doctor could hardly have been the Whitechapel Murderer. He's too good to be true. He's just a grisly medical pack rat.

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CATALOGUE OF RIPPER BOOKS

Fantasy Centre is a long-established bookshop specialising in science fiction, fantasy, horror and ghost stories, from rare and out of print books to the latest paperbacks. We issue about six catalogues a year, and have several thousand items listed on our web site.

Ted Ball, a partner in Fantasy Centre, has accumulated a large quantity of duplicate Jack the Ripper material and needs to clear some space, so he is preparing a catalogue of about 100 items for sale which will be issued through Fantasy Centre.

Highlights are *The Curse Upon Mitre Square* by John Francis Brewer (the original 1888 edition), *Jack l'Eventreur* by Jean Dorsenne (1935) and *Jack the Ripper: A New Theory* by William Stewart (1939). The catalogue also includes some scarce modern books, as well as many modestly priced items of all kinds.

The Ripper catalogue will be posted towards the end of April. To receive a copy, write, phone or email with your name and address.



Mark Lester as Oliver Twist,
Jack Wild as The Artful Dodger in *Oliver!*