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RIPPEROLOGIST

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

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Editor's Letter

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Ripperologist Magazine #172. The response to the new editorial team's maiden issue last spring was overwhelmingly positive and we appreciate everyone who reached out both publicly and privately. As nearly always happens when one inherits something old or starts something new, the fresh ideas and perspectives often take a bit of time to form, so there'll be tweaks and alterations to our plans as we grow. As an example, we've decided to no longer run articles in several parts spread across multiple issues for two simple reasons: one - we only publish twice a year and many of us, me included, are very forgetful, and two - being an e-zine we will never have to worry about the cost of paper. So, with the exception of Michael Hawley's research piece into Francis Tumblety in Canada, you'll now be able to read all articles in one edition. Steven Blomer has the honor of being our last split-edition contributor when he picks up from his article in the last issue concerning the many possible knives used by Jack the Ripper.

You will see that the three parts of Keith Lee's research into the 1909 murder of Kate Roman in Millers Court are available to read in this edition. This is a masterful feature which exemplifies what we'd love to see going forward. We've also got another feature article on 'Jack the Ripper in Los Angeles' by James T. Bartlett, an essay on Robert Paul by author Christer Holmgren, and, if that's not enough, there's a massive and potentially significant research article on Morgenstern by Jurriaan Maessen. So we're positively bursting with new research, the life blood of Ripperology.

At the same time, our editorial staff are still exploring which chairs they'd feel most comfortable sitting in. I've taken on 'I Beg to Report' for this issue, Madeleine Keane is handling Fiction reviews on top of copy editing, and Suzanne Huntington will be taking over the reins as co-Managing Editor as Ally Ryder takes a back seat. Suzanne will be dealing with the design and layout as well as the general organisation of each

edition. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Ally for her assistance and support following the transition. As they say, 'change can be hard', but most things with Ripperologist Magazine are staying the same. We're still providing you with the best articles, reviews, news and opinions in the field, and they're brought to your inbox for *free*.

As always, we welcome reader feedback and submissions and look forward to hearing from you again. Until then...enjoy!

Submissions:

We welcome your contributions. To submit an article please contact Ripperologist@casebook.org in the first instance where we can discuss your idea further. Your subject must be relevant to the topics covered here and be roughly 3,000 to 6,000 words in length. Assistance will be given by our editors and staff writers.

Druitt's mother was admitted into the Brooke House Asylum in Clapton, east London in July 1888 and it would appear mental illness ran in the family. Whether this had any bearing on his future life is open to speculation but we next hear from him later that year when he was dismissed from his role as a schoolmaster. The most likely date of his dismissal was on the 30th November although his inquest states the 30th December 1888 but this is likely to be a typo. Why he was dismissed is unclear.



Brooke House Asylum – 1904 (horridhackney.com)

On the 11th December 1888 Druitt's brother William was informed that Montague had been missing since the 3rd December 1888. We don't know who saw him last or where. Obviously concerned at his brother's disappearance, William travelled to Blackheath where he learnt Montague had been dismissed. The

Druitt family had to wait until just past noon on the 31st December 1888 to be told that Montague's body had been found in the River Thames by Thorneycrofts Torpedo Works, Chiswick. There were four large stones in each of his topcoat pockets weighting the body down. Also found were cheques for £16/-/- and £50/-/-, a first-class South Western Railway season ticket from Blackheath, £2/10/- in gold, 7/- in silver, 2d in coins and the return portion of a train ticket from Hammersmith to Charing Cross dated the 1st December 1888.

He was brought ashore and an inquest was arranged at the Lamb and Tap public house nearby. William identified the body as that of his brother, which must have been an unpleasant experience given the length of time the body had been in the water. William disclosed to the inquest jury that he had found a letter at Montague's home which stated:

"since Friday I felt I was going to be like mother, and the best thing for me was to die"

Although the letter was undated, the dates of his disappearance, the rail stub and the fact that the 30th November 1888 was a Friday indicated he'd died at some point in early December. The inquest decided it was the 4th December and ruled it was a suicide whilst of unsound mind.

How then did an upper middle-class cricket enthusiast who'd killed himself after losing his job and being weighed down with the worry of insanity running in his family become one of the leading suspects in the Whitechapel murders? As we know, Druitt was first named as a suspect in the Macnaghten Memorandum of 1894 but hints of a Druitt-esque killer appeared in the newspapers prior to that date. On the 11th February 1891 a story appeared with a claimed source of the London Correspondent of the "Nottingham Guardian" (it is likely it was another Nottinghamshire newspaper as the Nottingham Guardian did not exist until 1905). It stated:

"I give a curious story for what it is worth. There is a West of England member who in private declares he has solved the mystery of "Jack the Ripper". His theory — and he repeats it with so much emphasis that it might also be called his doctrine — is that Jack the Ripper committed suicide on the night of his last murder. I cannot give details, for fear of a libel action, but the story is so circumstantial that a good many people believe it. He states that a man with blood-stained clothes committed suicide on the night of the last murder and that he was the son of a surgeon who suffered from homicidal mania. I do not know what the police think of the story, but I believe that before long a clean breast will be made, and that the accusation will be sifted thoroughly."

On the 26th February 1892 the 'West of England member' was revealed to be the MP for West Dorset, Henry Farquharson. As Farquharson lived around nine miles from the Druitt's family home in Wimborne in

Dorset, where he moved in the same social circles, it has been suggested by some that he was the source of Macnaghten's 'private information'¹.

Another theory was proposed by J J Hainsworth in his book 'Jack the Ripper – Case Solved, 1891'. He suggest the 'private information' was divulged by Colonel Sir Vivian Majendie, who was related to the Druitt's by marriage and was also a friend of Macnaghten. It is also possible the source is neither of these men.



Henry Farquharson, MP

It has been suggested that the Macnaghten Memorandum was motivated by a wish to detract from another theory, namely that a Thomas Hayne Cutbush was the ripper. The suggestion had been published in a series of articles in *The Sun* in 1894 where they claimed the Ripper had been placed in an asylum. It is possible that Macnaghten believed Thomas Cutbush to be related to Superintendent Charles Cutbush who was still a working police officer. Current research however is still attempting to definitively prove this (or otherwise).

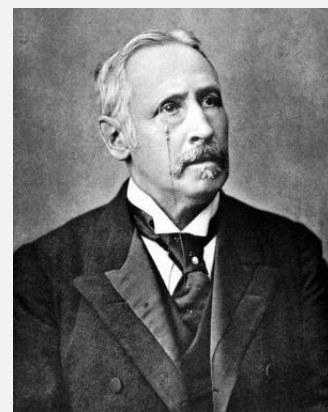
Whatever the origins, the theory gained momentum from 1894 onwards, with a notable account coming in 1922 with H L Fleet's 'My Life and a Few Yarns'. He recalled that many people in the Blackheath area believed the killer came from there, but then that trope was oft-repeated in numerous areas of the capital.

Macnaghten's memorandum is so polarising within Ripperology partly because it is full of blatant mistakes. Druitt for instance is described as a doctor and was aged forty-one when in fact he was thirty-one. Macnaghten also had a habit of inserting himself into various narratives and exaggerating things, some of which can be proven to be untrue, but that doesn't mean it can be completely ruled out as a source of evidence. But *IF* Druitt *IS* to be considered as a serious suspect several factors need to be overcome, most notably:

1. Druitt was playing in a cricket match in Dorset on the 30th August on the day before Mary Ann Nichols was murdered. This would mean he would have needed to be back in Whitechapel in order to kill her that night. Cricket, for anyone unfamiliar with the game, can last until the competitors break for tea. We don't know what time this particular match finished but in a worst-case scenario it may have lasted until around 6pm. He would then have had to change, return to the station, get the train and be in Whitechapel for around 3am. He would also have needed to do something with his cricketing kit, assuming he brought that with him. Research on train times in the last decade has suggest that it was possible for him to return in time however, it would have been tight and no doubt he would have needed to have rushed.

2. Many researchers have concluded that Druitt was gay and in the parlance of the time, his 'sexual insanity' had resulted in him being dismissed from his job as a schoolmaster. If this is the case, the question has to be put forward why an upper-middle-class homosexual male living in Blackheath chose to focus on middle-aged transient women from Whitechapel. Although not unique, it would be highly unusual for a gay male serial killer to target women. The issue is further complicated by the fact that we don't know if Druitt was gay, nor do we know the reason for his dismissal, which renders the entire suspicion moot.

On the plus side of the argument is the location of the murders when we look at Druitt's route to visit his mother at the Brooke House Asylum in Clapton. If he began in Blackheath the likeliest route would have been through Ripperland placing him with a reason to visit there. His chambers at King's Bench Walk were also



Sir Vivian Majendie

¹ Joanna Whatley wrote an interesting account of Farquharson in *Ripperologist* 166 – March 2020 'Henry Farquharson, MP, The Untrustworthy source of Macnaghten's 'Private Information?''

within walking distance of Whitechapel, although, with a thirty-five-minute stroll the nearest murder site of Mitre Square, it cannot be said that the location was in his immediate vicinity.

A few researchers have speculated that Drutt committed the murders after visiting his cousin, Lionel Montague, a doctor working at 142 Minories. The Minories was around a four-minute walk across Aldgate High Street to Mitre Square (Aldgate High Steet becoming Whitechapel High Street a short while afterwards). Minories had been mentioned in several of the Ripper letters which many find intriguing. It has, however, been recently clarified that Lionel had left London to go to Australia in 1886 and as such this line of enquiry has now been abandoned.

As with many suspect theories, Drutt as the Ripper has its strengths and its weaknesses: what had really gone on for him to be dismissed from his job? Why was Macnaghten so keen on him being the murderer? Was there more to the suicide note than what William disclosed? Why had he gone to Hammersmith? Where was he when the rest of the murders occurred? Whilst research is still ongoing, in particular by Jonathan Hainsworth, the strength of the theory has been gradually chipped away but that doesn't mean it's not still got the potential to throw a few spanners in the works in the years to come. Unlike many other theories, Drutt cannot be conclusively discounted.

Suzanne Huntington is a writer and researcher based in Shropshire, England. She is the author of the soon to be published book 'The Thames Torso Murders Fact or Fiction?'

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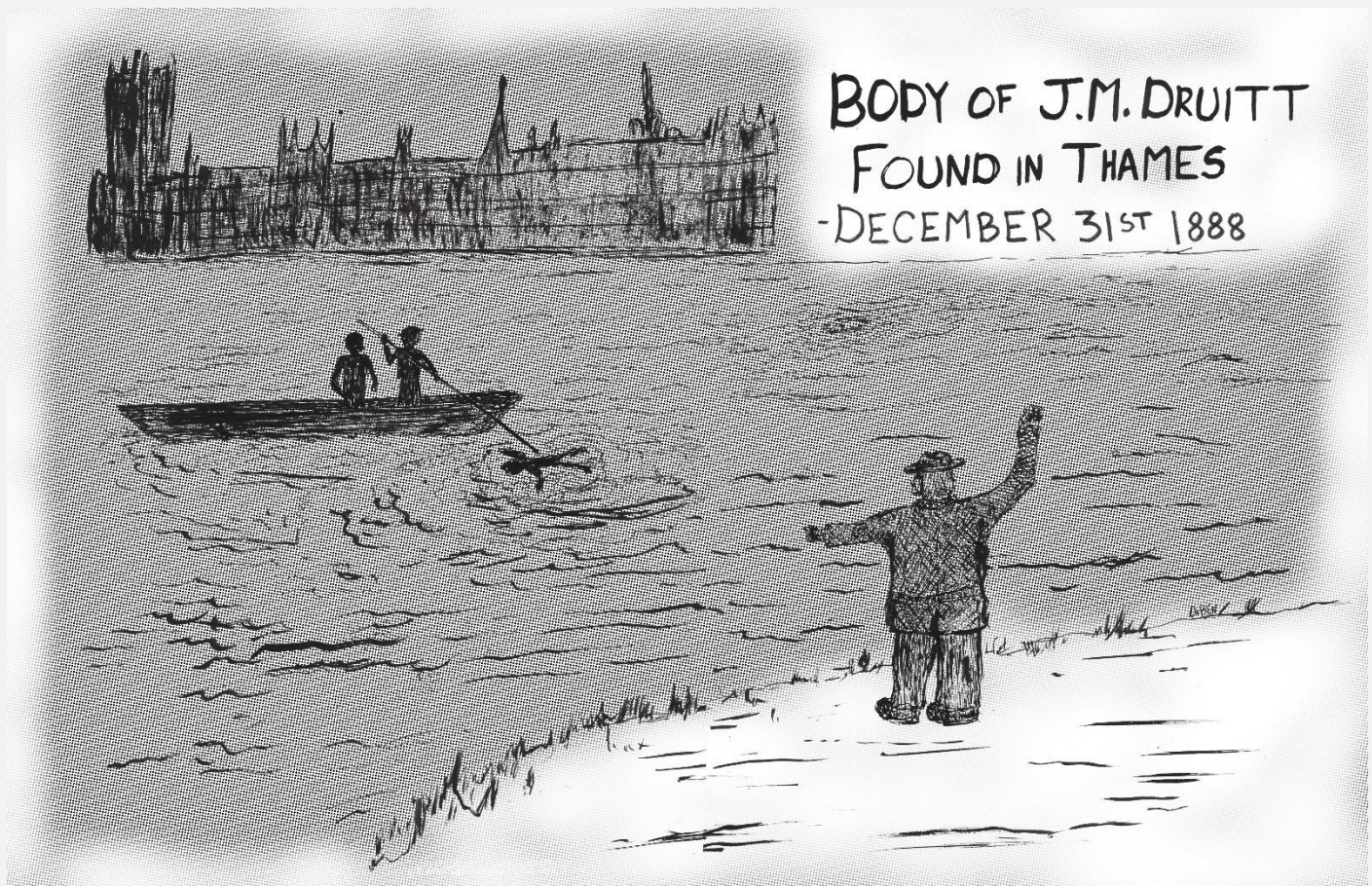
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The Unreliable Mr Paul - or?

By

Christer Holmgren

If not a single source tells the full story about somebody, then how can we hope to get at the truth? In the case of the second carman of Ripper fame, Robert Paul, great controversy has always tainted any effort to join up the dots. But once we take a closer look at the puzzle pieces, there is only one way to put them all together. Once we do so, a new picture of the man who examined Polly Nichols together with Charles Lechmere emerges.

The Corbett's Court carman Robert Paul has always been a figure destined for a background appearance in the Ripper drama, occupying a seat in the second row of the theatre - behind Charles Lechmere. Of course, as seems to be the case for anybody who can be proven to have been at or near any one of the canonical murder spots, Robert Paul has been cast in the role of the Ripper on no grounds at all. Maybe, it has been reasoned, Robert Paul was the one who was really brought to Buck's Row by Polly Nichols, the one who actually killed her and then left the scene, only to reappear minutes later, when Charles Lechmere had made his entrance at the murder site.



Illustrated Police News, 13th October 1888

This suggestion is of course an extremely weak one for a variety of reasons. The main reason is that it would lack any sense of logic to first flee a murder scene with presumably unfinished business, only to then reappear at the same scene minutes later. It also applies that Paul's arrival at the murder scene on the morning of the 31st August 1888 was entirely logical - he came from the direction of his Foster Street lodgings. Being late, he was hurrying along the street, which he would likely not do if he had his heart set on returning to the body without being noticed. Paul also suggested that the woman should be propped up, which would have given away that she had had her throat cut to the bone. And Paul was in all likelihood the person responsible for pulling the dress down so that the wounds to the throat became visible to PC Neil, who arrived at the site some minutes after the two carmen.

Even if Robert Paul was not the Ripper himself however, he may well have played a pivotal role in pointing us in the right direction in our hunt for the killer. We shall see how that works later. But before that, we need to clear away the claim about how Robert Paul would have been contradicting himself, thereby making for a very poor witness. This claim has been part of the debate about Robert Paul for many years.

So why is it that Robert Paul has been described as an unreliable source? It all has to do with how he, on the one hand, seems to have been adamant in his interview in *Lloyds Weekly* from the 2nd August 1888 that Polly Nichols was long dead and very cold as he examined her together with Charles Lechmere in the darkness of the early morning hours. On the other hand, at the inquest he unhesitatingly asserted that Nichols was still breathing as he examined her.

Let's begin by reproducing the snippet in *Lloyd's Weekly* about Paul's part in the discovery of Polly Nichols outside the gates of Browns Stable Yard. The bits that are particularly salient to the case I will make in this article, are given in bold:

"On Friday night Mr. Robert Paul, a carman, on his return from work, made the following statement to our representative. He said:- It was exactly a quarter to four when I passed up Buck's-row to my work as a carman for Covent-garden market. It was dark, and I was hurrying along, when I saw a man standing where the woman was. He came a little towards me, but as I knew the dangerous character of the locality I tried to give him a wide berth. Few people like

*to come up and down here without being on their guard, for there are such terrible gangs about. There have been many knocked down and robbed at that spot. The man, however, came towards me and said, 'Come and look at this woman.' I went and found the woman lying on her back. I laid hold of her wrist and found that she was dead and the hands cold. It was too dark to see the blood about her. I thought that she had been outraged, and had died in the struggle. I was obliged to be punctual at my work, so I went on and told the other man I would send the first policeman I saw. I saw one in Church-row, just at the top of Buck's-row, who was going round calling people up, and I told him what I had seen, and I asked him to come, but he did not say whether he should come or not. He continued calling the people up, which I thought was a great shame, after I had told him the woman was dead. The woman was so cold that she must have been dead some time, and either she had been lying there, left to die, or she must have been murdered somewhere else and carried there. If she had been lying there long enough to get so cold as she was when I saw her, it shows that no policeman on the beat had been down there for a long time. If a policeman had been there he must have seen her, for she was plain enough to see. Her bonnet was lying about two feet from her head."*²

This snippet, under the heading "Remarkable Statement" has often been described as giving away that Robert Paul was no friend of the police. Not only does he imply that PC Mizen, the policeman Paul describes as the officer he found in Church Row (an old name for Bakers Row) was lax and uninterested in his duties, but he also leads on that no policeman could have been down Bucks Row for a long time, going on how cold the woman was.

Both of these claims on Paul's behalf about bad policing seemingly lend themselves to the view that he disliked the police, but they need to be countered with alternative interpretations. To begin with, if, as I suspect and as PC Mizen describes things, it was Charles Lechmere who spoke to the officer and declined to tell him about the potential severity of the errand, then there would have been no reason for PC Mizen to hurry away. PC Mizen told the inquest that he had been informed by Charles Lechmere that there was already a policeman in place in Buck's Row. According to Mizen, Lechmere did not say anything about a grave errand, either; he instead only informed the police constable that there was a woman flat on her back in Buck's Row.



Illustrated Police News, 8th December 1888

If we can trust PC Mizen on these matters and if Paul was not part of the process, then it stands to reason that Robert Paul will have thought that Charles Lechmere told the police constable that Lechmere himself had found the woman and that there was reason to think that she was in a very serious condition. And if this was what Paul believed that Mizen was told then it is no small wonder that he was outraged by how Mizen continued his knocking up errand after the PC had spoken to Lechmere!

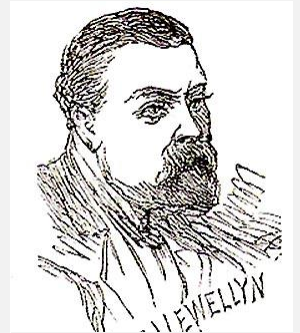
Similarly, the indication on Paul's behalf that the body would have been lying cold and dead for a long time in Buck's Row with no policeman doing the rounds there before he examined it with Lechmere must be looked upon with some scepticism. To begin with, the beat John Neil - the J division officer tasked with walking Buck's Row on his rounds - walked, was not one in which all the streets of the beat were always walked on every round. Instead, an irregularity of how to walk the beats was recommended within the police, the reason being to make it hard for the criminal elements to predict when the beat PC could turn up. Therefore, the beat officer would be entirely entitled to leave out parts of the beat on some rounds if he so desired, prioritizing other parts instead.

It also applies that Robert Paul only touched the hands and face before he concluded that the woman was likely dead. In *Lloyd's*, he only speaks of having felt the hands and wrists, finding them cold. And cold hands

² *Lloyd's Weekly News, Sunday 2nd September 1888*

are quite common in some people, of course, even if they are very much alive. To feel for bodily warmth must always involve other points, where the body heat subsides a lot more slowly, such as armpits and groins, for example. In our case, we know that the doctor who examined the body in situ, Dr Rees Ralph Llewellyn, was able to tell many minutes after Paul made his examination, that apart from the hands and face, the rest of the body was still warm!

Does the claim Robert Paul make about how the body seems to have gone unnoticed by the police for the longest time, indicate a long-standing dislike of the police? Not necessarily. It may well be that Paul's judgment was colored by Mizen's failure to immediately set off for Buck's Row. And Paul's outrage about that may well, as has been shown, have rested on a faulty belief that Charles Lechmere told the PC the truth.



Dr. Rees Ralph Llewellyn

In this particular context, it also needs to be pointed out that the *Lloyd's* interview was given from Paul to the reporter "on Friday night". That means that it was given on the night following the murder day. And at the stage it was given, the evening papers had already trumpeted out that PC John Neil was the finder of the body, having come across it by himself on his beat. And Neil of course made no mentioning of the two carmen, because he had never seen them. Nor had PC Mizen mentioned them to him. But the overall effect for Robert Paul must have been that he had had his thunder stolen from him. He had been snubbed and made out to look like a liar.

Reasonably, Robert Paul must have thought that the policeman who was quoted as saying that he was the finder of the body was the very same policeman that Paul and Lechmere had directed to Buck's Row. And not only had this constable been tardy in going there, he now also had the audacity to claim that the finding of the body was his own doing and his alone: no helpful carmen mentioned. If Robert Paul felt that the constable was a lazy liar and an unreliable and dishonest representative of the Met, it would be very understandable. The fact that the police were, in the upcoming days, to drag him out of his bed to lose two days of meagre income at the inquest would not have enamored Paul with the police either.

There is a further twist to the matter: let's assume that Robert Paul's claims of a totally cold body and a tardy police force were led on by how he mistook Neil for Mizen. If this caused him to want to get even with what he may have considered a very bad PC, then this may in turn have been what led Inspector Helson and the Met to conclude on the evening of the 2nd September that Paul's story was bogus, knowing as they did that the body was far from cold. If this was the case, we can count ourselves lucky that the story did not break in the papers on the 3rd until after Charles Lechmere had gone to the inquest, quite possibly on account of how he felt he had been outed in the *Lloyd's* weekly article. If the second day of the inquest had been held on the 4th instead of the 3rd, it may well be that Lechmere had not come forward at all.

But let us return to Robert Paul's depiction of the events in Buck's Row on the murder morning, more exactly how he described the condition of the woman. And now, we must turn to the inquest, fifteen days after the article in *Lloyd's Weekly* was published. Did Robert Paul confirm the impressions he had given in his newspaper interview? There are a number of publications that seem to indicate that this was so. Let's look at three articles, again with the salient matters in bold:

"John Paul, of 30, Foster-street, Whitechapel, said he was a carman. On Friday, August 31st, he left home at about a quarter to four o'clock to go to his work in Spitalfields. He was passing up Buck's-row and saw a man standing in the road. As he got nearer the man stepped on to the pavement, and as witness was passing he touched him on the shoulder and said, 'Come and look at this woman.' He then saw the body of a woman lying across the gateway, dead. The night being very dark he did not notice any blood. - By the Coroner: The morning was cold.

Witness and the man who had stopped him walked down Buck's-row to find a policeman, which they did in a few minutes."³

*"Robert Paul, Forster-street, Whitechapel. -- I am a carman, and on the morning of the murder I left home just before a quarter to four. As I was passing up Buck's-row I saw a man standing in the roadway. When I got close up to him, he said, 'Come and look at this woman;' and together we went across the road. **There was a woman lying across the gateway, with her clothes disarranged. I felt her hands and face; they were cold.** I sent the other man for a policeman."*⁴

*"Robert Paul, a carman, said that he was passing along Buck's-row at a quarter to four on the morning in question, when a man stopped him and showed him the body of a woman lying in a gateway. Her clothes were disarranged, and she appeared to be dead. Witness felt her hands and arms; they were quite cold."*⁵

Here we have the same sentiments mirrored that were given in the *Lloyd's* interview. The clearest similarity is from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, where death is suggested, and where the hands and arms are described as being "quite cold". Of course, the *Illustrated Police News* is even clearer on how the woman was dead.

This far into our investigation, every bit seems to fit with every other bit in the material; we have a woman who is cold, quite cold even, and apparently dead. And if there had been no more, it would have been an easy enough task to establish a consistency on Paul's behalf, always pointing in the same direction. So why then is it that Paul is often pointed out as a turncoat, a person who contradicts himself? To find out about that, we must turn to three other newspapers, where a very different story is seemingly told. Again, the important parts to keep in mind are given in bold:

*"Robert Paul said he lived at 30 Forster street, Whitechapel. On the Friday he left home just before a quarter to four, and on passing up Buck's row he saw a man in the middle of the road, who drew his attention to the murdered woman. **He and the man examined the body, and he felt sure he detected faint indications of breathing. The body was partly warm, though it was a chilly morning.** He and the man discussed what was best to be done, and they decided that they ought to acquaint the first policeman they met with what they had discovered."*⁶

*"Robert Baul, 30, Forster-street, Whitechapel, carman, said as he was going to work at Cobbett's-court, Spitalfields, he saw in Buck's-row a man standing in the middle of the road. As witness drew closer he walked towards the pavement, and he (Baul) stepped in the roadway to pass him. The man touched witness on the shoulder and asked him to look at the woman, who was lying across the gateway. **He felt her hands and face, and they were cold. The clothes were disarranged, and he helped to pull them down. Before he did so he detected a slight movement as of breathing, but very faint.** The man walked with him to Montague-street, and there they saw a policeman. Not more than four minutes had elapsed from the time he first saw the woman. Before he reached Buck's-row he had seen no one running away."*⁷

*"Robert Paul, a carman, said on the morning of the crime he left home just before a quarter to 4. He was passing up Buck's Row and saw a man standing in the middle of the road. The man touched him upon the shoulder, and said, 'Come and look at this woman here.' He went and saw the woman lying right across a gateway. **He felt her hands and face. They were both cold.** The morning was very dark. The other man and he agreed that the best thing to be done was to tell the first policeman they met. He arranged the clothes as well as he could. **He put his hand to the woman's breast and felt a slight breath, such a one as might be felt in a child two or***

³ *Illustrated Police News*, Saturday 22nd September

⁴ *Morning Advertiser*, Tuesday 18th September 1888

⁵ *Pall Mall Gazette*, Tuesday 18th September 1888

⁶ *Daily News*, Tuesday 18th September 1888

⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, Tuesday 18th September 1888

three months old. He saw no one running away, nor did he notice anything whatever of a suspicious nature."⁸

Suddenly, a new element is added. Robert Paul speaks of how he is sure that he detected faint breathing in the chest of the woman! But how can that be reconciled with how Paul felt that the woman was long gone and very cold? The simple answer can be given in two words: It cannot. We may also see that there is another discrepancy involved: while Paul in the *East London Advertiser* and the *Daily Telegraph* tells us that the woman was cold, he instead says in the *Daily News* that she was partly warm. What on earth is going on here? I would suggest that it is all about the exact same phenomenon, and it has nothing to do with any inconsistency or unreliability on Paul's behalf. It is instead all about how the reporters failed to cover the whole story. They all involve elements of the story Paul told - but they have chosen to print different elements. At this stage, we must remind ourselves that all of the reporters describing what Paul said heard the exact same story, word for word, coming from the mouth of Robert Paul. No two papers were told different stories - but they nevertheless managed to make it look that way.

Having come this far, we must add a final article from the inquest, this time by the *Times*. In my view, it may well involve an important part of the solution to the riddle:

*"Robert Baul [Paul], a carman, of 30, Foster-street, Whitechapel, stated he went to work at Cobbett's-court, Spitalfields. He left home about a quarter to 4 on the Friday morning and as he was passing up Buck's-row he saw a man standing in the middle of the road. As witness approached him he walked towards the pavement, and witness stepped on to the roadway in order to pass him. He then touched witness on the shoulder, and said, 'Come and look at this woman here.' Witness went with him, and saw a woman lying right across the gateway. Her clothes were raised almost up to her stomach. **Witness felt her hands and face, and they were cold. He knelt down to see if he could hear her breathe, but could not, and he thought she was dead.** It was very dark, and he did not notice any blood. They agreed that the best thing they could do would be to tell the first policeman they met. He could not see whether the clothes were torn, and did not feel any other part of her body except the hands and face. They looked to see if there was a constable, but one was not to be seen. **While he was pulling the clothes down he touched the breast, and then fancied he felt a slight movement.***

*By the CORONER. - The morning was rather a chilly one. Witness and the other man walked on together until they met a policeman at the corner of Old Montagu-street, and told him what they had seen. Up to that time not more than four minutes had elapsed from the time he saw the body. He had not met any one before he reached Buck's-row, and did not see any one running away."*⁹

Here, just like in the article in the *East London Advertiser*, we have both elements involved; the claim of Nichols being cold to the touch and likely dead, plus the claim of having felt a movement within the chest of Polly. However, although the first claim seems to be clear and conclusive, the second claim is less so. Paul is quoted as having said that he "fancied" he felt movement. And that is much in line with how Charles Lechmere worded the matter as he mentioned it a fortnight before, when he took the stand in the Working Lads Institute. It was quoted like this in the *Daily Telegraph* of the 4th September 1888:

"The other man (Robert Paul), placing his hand on her heart, said "I think she is breathing, but very little if she is."

Here we have the same kind of either/or reasoning and my suggestion is that Coroner Baxter had it in mind as he listened to Robert Paul. And I believe that this is where we have a missing piece of information relating to the inquest held on the 17th September 1888.

⁸ *East London Advertiser*, Saturday 22nd September 1888

⁹ *The Times*, Tuesday 18th September 1888

My suggestion is that once Coroner Baxter heard Robert Paul say that he fancied he felt movement within the chest of Nichols, he asked Paul whether or not he was actually sure about it. And that is why we have articles presenting the matter as a certified fact: when Robert Paul got the question, he must have said that he was sure that he felt breathing.

If I am correct on all of this, we have a case of not a single paper giving the full information about how Paul worded himself. In some cases, it is evident that the papers gave only half the picture. We therefore have different parts represented in different papers, but I believe that we can piece things together and come very close to the exact testimony that Robert Paul gave on the 17th September 1888. Below, I am giving my version of what I think was said, and I am doing it in first person singular. It should be kept in mind that although it rarely is clear in the articles from inquests, the coroner normally leads the proceedings by asking questions about what he feels are vital areas of the matter investigated. What would have taken place is therefore a conversation, more or less, guided by the coroner:

The CORONER: State your name, address and working place, please.

Robert Paul: My name is Robert Paul, I live at 30 Foster Street and I am a carman at Corbett's Court.

The CORONER: Can you describe the events of the morning of September the 31st in your own words please?

Robert Paul: On the morning of the murder, I left home just before a quarter to four. As I was passing up Buck's-row I saw a man standing in the middle of the roadway. When I got closer to him, he walked towards the pavement on which I was walking, and I stepped into the road to try and avoid him. He then put his hand on my shoulder and said "Come and look at this woman over here." I went with him, and I then saw that there was a woman lying right across a gateway. Her clothes were raised almost up to her stomach. We then examined the woman. I felt her hands and face, and they were quite cold, so I knelt down to try and see if I could hear any breath, but I could not. I assumed at that stage that she was dead.

The CORONER: Did you notice any blood?

Robert Paul: No, it was very dark and I saw no blood.

The CORONER: Then what happened?

Robert Paul: We agreed that the best thing to do was to go on our way and tell the first policeman we met about what we had seen.

The CORONER: Did you notice if the clothing was torn?

Robert Paul: No, I did not notice anything such.

The CORONER: Did you feel any other part of the body for warmth than the hands and face?

Robert Paul: No, I did not.

The CORONER: Proceed, please!

Robert Paul: Well, we had a look around to see if we could see a policeman, but we could not. It was a very cold night, so we decided to go looking for a policeman. Before we left, I tried to pull the clothing down and when I did, I touched the chest of the woman, and then fancied I felt a slight movement.

The CORONER: Are you sure about this?

Robert Paul: Yes, I am sure that I felt it. It was just like the breathing of a small child. I have since understood that although the hands and face were cold, other parts of the body were warm.

The CORONER: Go on!

Robert Paul: Well, we then went on our way, and when we got to Bakers Row, we found a PC there. We told him what we had seen.

The CORONER: Do you have any idea of how much time had passed at that stage?

Robert Paul: I should say that no more than four minutes had passed since I first saw the body until we reached the policeman in Bakers Row.

The CORONER: Did you see anybody else about in the streets? Anybody running away or suchlike?

Robert Paul: No, the man in Bucks Row was the first person I met on that morning. There was nobody else, and nobody running away.

The CORONER: Thank you, Mr Paul. You may step down.

This is how I believe things went down in the Working Lads Institute on the 17th September 1888. And it puts a very different hue on what Robert Paul was about. It seems he may well have been an honest and well-meaning man who was outraged by what he thought was arrogance, tardiness, and dishonesty on the part of the police.

More importantly, we can rule out the old canard that Robert Paul was contradicting himself when testifying about his role in the Nichols case. Far from doing that, he instead testified about how he initially thought that Polly Nichols was dead, only to then find that this was wrong. She was actually still breathing as Paul felt her chest, he was sure about that. And that information is of course incredibly important forensic evidence, putting Charles Lechmere square in the frame for the Nichols murder.

The common take on things; that Nichols could have been killed anywhere between around 3.15 and 3.45 does not stand up to scrutiny. Not only was the coroner able, in his summary, to say the body was found at a point in time not far off 3.45, but he was also able to add that Nichols in combination with this stage “was only just dead, if life were really extinct. Paul says he felt a slight movement of her breast, and thought she was breathing.”



Essex Wharf, on the northern side of Buck's Row opposite where Mary Ann Nichols was found murdered. Taken in 1988 prior to its demolition.

Here, it must be noted that Coroner Baxter is not being entirely truthful. As we have seen, Robert Paul did not just think that Nichols was breathing. He instead testified to the effect that he was sure about it.

It has taken a long time to lay the old claims of Paul's unreliability to rest. There isn't a lot in his inquest testimony that supports the allegations. What there is, is instead very obvious evidence that numerous papers failed to present the full picture, thereby in combination presenting Paul's testimony in a very doubtful way.

And if the papers at the inquest could leave out half the story, who is to say that the reporter who spoke to Robert Paul on the night after the murder did not fall into the exact same trap?

Christer Holmgren is a journalist and author of Cutting Point - solving the Jack the Ripper and the Thames Torso Murders

GIRL (Respectable), 15 or 16. wanted as general. Apply
Essex Wharf, Buck's-row, Whitechapel.

London Daily Chronicle, 14th March 1887.

AN ARREST IN WHITECHAPEL.

Jonathan Tye's PRESS TRAWL

London Evening Standard - Tuesday, 3rd January 1888

Mansion- House -Alice Graves, 21 described as an unfortunate, was charged before Alderman Sir Andrew Lusk, on her own confession, with the wilful murder of her infant child. - The Prisoner met a policeman on the night of Boxing Day, and gave herself up for having, as she alleged, destroyed her child, 14 months old, by throwing it over London Bridge on the morning of Christmas Day. She repeated the statement at the police-station and signed it when it had been put in writing. - Today Mr. Pollard, from the office of the solicitor to the treasury, stated that the police had made every inquiry, but not found that she ever had an infant child. None of her relations or friends knew anything of the existence of a child, and the whole story was uncorroborated by anything which had transpired. - Sir Andrew Lusk discharged the Prisoner and gave her over into the charge of her father, who had given a very bad account of her.

The troublesome Alice Graves, aged in other press articles in the period as just 18, had carried out this supposed act sometime between midnight and 1:00 am on Christmas morning. Her story or tale was told at 2:00 am, to a patrolling City policeman named Edward Hadden in Lower Thames Street. The infant mentioned was said to be a boy and Alice, a confessed street walker and unfortunate was very drunk. It is possible that to some of you the name Alice Graves rings a distant bell: 'Now where I have come across that name before?' A clue can be found in the articles that provide her locality and some even her address. Alice Graves was said to come from Spitalfields; Wilmott's Lodging House at 18 Thrawl Street, that of Mary Ann Nichols fame and therein lies the clue. The very same Alice Graves was to appear as a witness in a murder of 1888, that of Rose Mylett. Alice claimed to have been the last person to see Rose, or 'Fair Alice Downey' as she was known in Poplar, at around 2:30 am outside the George public house on the Commercial Road, very drunk and with two men. This was very curious as she had previously been seen 40 minutes away in Poplar High Street, the location of her eventual murder.

Pall Mall Gazette - Saturday, 10th November 1888

No-1 - Impaled with an Iron Stake

The first of the so-called Whitechapel Murders took place at Christmas, when an unknown woman was found near Osborne Street, Whitechapel. How she came by her death no one could say, but a certain grim horror distinguished it from ordinary murders by the fact that an iron stake was thrust into her person. It is necessary to mention this, because in the lists that appear in the morning papers she is confused with the victim of Easter Tuesday, Emma Smith, whose death was not caused by an iron stake, but by repeated outrage of the worst kind.

Never the most reliable of the late Victorian Press, the origins of this story are nevertheless intriguing. The story of a prior Whitechapel atrocity which occurred before Emma Smith can be found in much of the Press, especially during the period of when the early victims were killed. What arouses curiosity here is the reference to Osborne Street and the use of the Iron Stake to suggest an attack on parts of the body that were similarly attacked in the known murders. Early Ripper writers, including Tom Cullen, had referred to this unknown

victim as “Fairy Fay” but there is a lack of any evidence to date to support any such a murder ever taking place and one must conclude that the Christmas Bank Holiday or Boxing Day murder of 1887 is one of the first myths of the murders.

London Evening Standard - Friday, 9th November 1888

Thames – Peter Donald, a well-dressed, respectable-looking man, aged 35, an engineer on the steam ship Nepal, lying in the Albert Docks, was charged with being drunk and disorderly and terrorising the public by terming himself Jack the Ripper. At one o'clock that morning David Bostock, 298H, was on duty in Commercial Road, Whitechapel, close to where some of the recent murders were committed, when a hansom cab drove up to him. The Prisoner, who was seated inside, drunk hailed him and said, “I am Jack the Ripper,” the cabman immediately driving off. After proceeding about 100 yards the driver drew up. On the constable coming up the Prisoner again said, “Officer, I am Jack the Ripper”. As he was drunk, and his conduct was likely to create alarm, and might lead to mischievous consequences, at that time of the morning, Bostock took him into custody. On the way to the station the prisoner said, “What a fool I must have been to act like this” – The Prisoner now expressed contrition for his conduct, urging in extenuation, that he had met some friends and had a drop too much to drink. – Mr Lushington said he should advise the Prisoner, at another time not to be so foolish as to identify himself with “Jack the Ripper”. He fined him 2S 6D.

How quick the name had caught on, already embedded in the folklore of the East End and yet at this point the name had been in print less than a fortnight. One must ponder too how many drunken confessions to the murders took place during the period, ultimately to be dismissed. The irony of this particular comic scene is, if it did play out as reported, at 1:00 am in the Commercial Road, at the same time a little further to the north, in a little court in Dorset Street, the woman known to history as Mary Kelly was singing her last song.

Acton Gazette - Saturday, 30th July 1887

A Sham Detective – An Amusing case was heard at the Dover police-court, on Tuesday, a man named Joseph Isaacs, who gave false London addresses, being charged with attempting to obtain admission to the Admiralty Pier by falsely representing himself to be a detective from Scotland Yard. The prisoner presented himself at the entrance to the pier, and said he was going by the boat. He was refused admission, and then he stated he was a detective from Scotland Yard and was sent down to follow a young man who was wanted in connection with the Meux jewel robbery case. Curiously enough, while this prisoner was telling his story, a Scotland yard detective named Foy, who is one of the detectives engaged in watching the continental boats, walked up and, having heard the man's story, made himself known to him, and demanded his warrant card. This he was unable to produce, and he was taken into custody. When searched, the prisoner was found to be wearing a sham medal on his breast and an imitation gold chain, but no watch. It is supposed that he belongs to the light-fingered fraternity, a number of whom have been infesting the continental traffic from Dover and Folkestone for some time and have given the officials a great deal of trouble.

Leicester Daily Post - Monday, 10th December 1888

The Whitechapel Murders -Arrest of a Polish Jew. The Police are continuing their inquiries into the antecedents of Joseph Isaacs, said to be a Polish Jew, who is now in custody on a charge of watch stealing. Mary Cousins, the deputy of a lodging house in Paternoster – Row near Dorset Street, and Cornelius Oakes, a lodger, state the conduct of the prisoner was frequently strange. Although he had a violin, and four or five musical instruments, he was never known to play any of them. Oakes says the prisoner used often to change his dress. he heard him threaten violence to all women above 17 years of age.

Where does one begin with Joseph Isaacs? A cigar maker, thief and pickpocket with a strange fetish for musical instruments who always seems to have been around in the wrong place at the right time. He was a
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criminal operator on a national level, from Barnsley to Dover, and bore an uncanny resemblance to the man described by George Hutchinson. Indeed was that small package in his hands an empty violin case? On the night of the Bank Holiday murder of Emma Elizabeth Smith, Isaacs (said to be living in the City Road) was arrested for entering the female waiting room in Bishopsgate Station and assaulting the station porters. After the 9th November 1888 he disappeared from his lodgings at Paternoster Row, Dorset Street where had paced the floor late at night, an early suspect in the Kelly murder. In many ways the Whitechapel murders in part open and close with Joseph Isaacs. Within his strange story perhaps, just perhaps, we can see some of the origins of the 'Polish - Jewish Suspect', the man sought out after the Kelly murder and watched in the City Road.

Morning Post - Saturday, 29th September 1888

Charge of Child Stealing - Henry Franklin, 58, but looking much older, described as a tramp of no fixed abode, was charged at the Worship police court yesterday with having stolen a child, named Louise Rosenthal, aged three years with intent – to deprive its parents of the care and guardianship - The parents of the child are Jews, living in Paternoster Court, Spitalfields, and the child was put out to play in front of the door by the mother at about midday on Thursday, and was subsequently missed. The child could walk. The mother received information that it had been taken away by a man. At about one o'clock two girls, named Minnie Egan and Clara Kelly, only about 10 and 12 years of age, were in the high-street, Aldgate, and saw Franklin leading the child in the direction of Leadenhall Market. The girls knew the child, though not its name, and tried to get it from the prisoner, but he would not let it go to them. They followed him to Leadenhall Market, a distance of half a mile, and saw him carry the child into a coffee shop there. "Then", said Kelly, "I got a crowd around and told them, and when the man came out I gave him in charge, because I thought he wanted to steal the child" – The magistrate told her she had behaved very well - A police constable of the City force said that when he heard the girls story he questioned the prisoner, who said he knew the child's parents and often took it for a walk. This was denied by the parents. Franklin in answer to other questions, said that he had been a gold and silver miner, and had been all over the world. He would have taken the child back. - The magistrate said it was a strange affair, because it was not clear what the prisoner could have done with such an infant. A jury however would have to determine the matter, and he committed the accused for a trial at the Middlesex sessions.

London Evening Standard – Friday, 4th May 1888

Missing Girls – The description of no fewer than ten girls, between the ages of nine and 19, were circulated in the Metropolitan Official Police Informations yesterday as missing. The ages given are as follows: - Nine years, two; 14 years, three; 15 years, one; 17 years, one; 18 years, two; 19 years, one. The total number of persons reported as missing for the same day was 34.

Evening News - Saturday, 1st May 1886

Strange charge of child stealing – Eliza Harrison 23, described as an unfortunate and living at a common lodging house in Whites Row, Spitalfields, was charged at Worship Street Police court yesterday, with feloniously taking away Annette Holliwell, aged 2 ½ years, thereby depriving the parents of their lawful custody thereof. The little girl in question is the daughter of James Holliwell, a carman of Collingwood Street, Bethnal Green, and it appeared that she was playing at the doorway of the house on the afternoon of Tuesday last, when suddenly she was missed. As nothing more was seen of her that day, information was given to the police, and Inspector Holmes of K Division, caused inquiries to be made, but with no immediate result. On Thursday afternoon however, the prisoner went up to the constable of the division, and showing him the child, whom the officer did not recognise as the missing girl, asked him what she had better do with it, as she had found her in the street. In answer to questions, the prisoner altered her account of the possession of the child by saying that a strange woman with whom she had been drinking, gave her the child in a public house. In consequence of the differing stories, the prisoner was taken to Bethnal Green

Police Station, where the inspector recognised the child as being Annette Holliwell; and the prisoner was detained and charge of stealing it. The prisoner made a statement to the inspector to the effect that she was an unfortunate that having had a child of her own and lost it, she thought she would like another child, and took a fancy to the little girl, whom she took away from the doorway; but that she had to give it up because she had not sufficient food to give it. The prisoner now, in answer to the charges, said she took the child for love, and was very sorry for what she had done. It may be stated there was no suggestion that the child had been subjected to any improper treatment. The prisoner was committed for trial.

St James's Gazette - Friday 16th May 1884

Mysterious Disappearance of a Girl – At Thames Police Court this morning, Mrs Murphy of 5 Sage Street, St Georges in the East, told the magistrate that on the 7th inst. she went with her daughter to Whitechapel Church to see a wedding. After the ceremony they were standing outside to see the wedding party come out, when all of a sudden, she missed her daughter from her side, and although she had since made every possible enquiry, she had been unable to get any tidings of her. The missing girl is seventeen years of age, and of good appearance. Mr Lushington said that probably the press would notice the matter.

Our last four articles indicate a dark and sinister underside to the area around Whitechapel. Children of all ages were going missing and it's open to interpretation whether these were organised abductions; 'abducted to order' or if they were of a more ad hoc nature. It's interesting that the date of the Morning Post article leads into the 'double event' murder of Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes, and that, in turn leads us to the Goulston Street Graffito, which was antisemitic in nature. Should we consider alternate options for the motivation of the writing, given the large Jewish population in the area at that time? The naivety and ignorance of the magistrates is also apparent, with our readers, from a modern-day perspective, understanding fully the likely horrifying consequences of the children going missing. There is, however, some light to be found in this darkest of subject matters, with the two young girls from the Irish East End ensuring the safety and rescue of a young child from another East End community, perhaps indicating racial and religious divisions are always secondary when it came to ensuring the most vulnerable in our society are protected.

**TOWLE'S PENNYROYAL AND STEEL PILLS
FOR FEMALES.**

QUICKLY correct all irregularities and relieve the distressing symptoms so prevalent with the sex.

Boxes' 1s 1½d. and 2s. 9d., of all Chemists. Sent anywhere for 15 or 32 stamps, by the Lincoln and Midland Counties Drug Co., Lincoln.

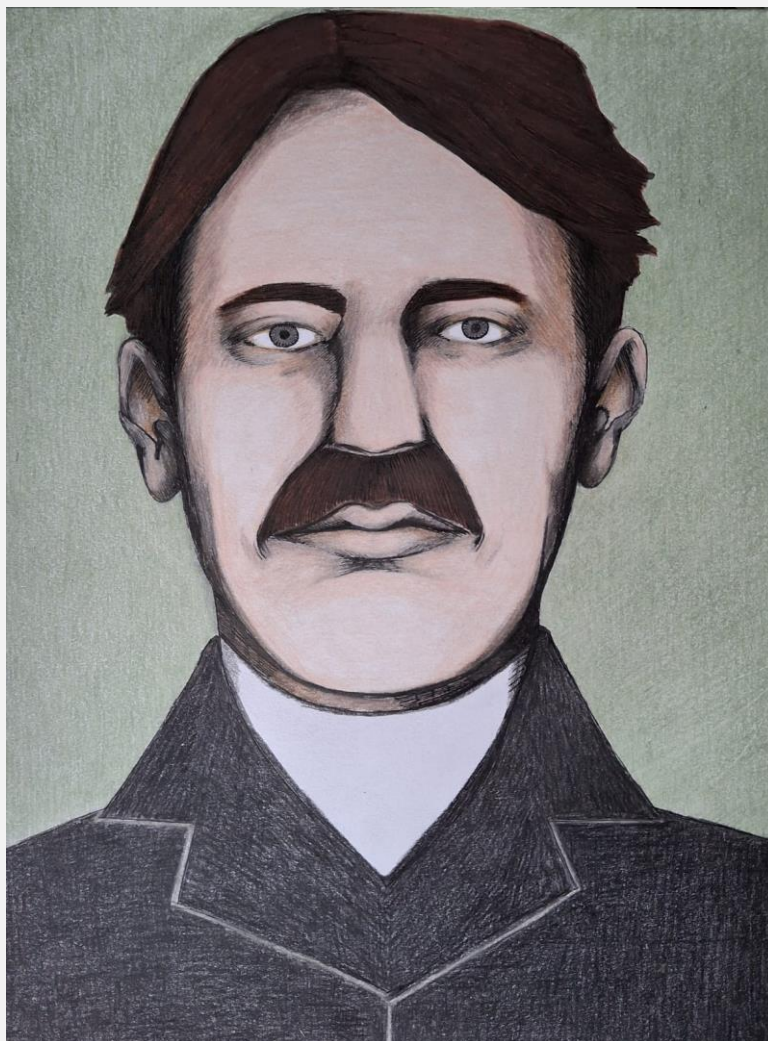
BEWARE OF IMITATIONS.

A thinly veiled advert for abortion pills. Newspapers were inundated with these euphemistically worded promotions – South London Press, 24th March 1888



Concerning "Morganstone"

challenges, opportunities, recommendations



By

Jurriaan Maessen

Introduction

It is a rather remarkable thing that a single throw away sentence can inspire a dedicated research effort over several decades involving a multitude of researchers; I really can think of no illustration of this more apt than Joseph Barnett's mention of a man named "Morganstone" with whom Mary Jane Kelly purportedly lived near a gasworks for some undetermined period of time after her alleged return from France and the West End brothel. That said it must also be pointed out that the Morganstone question, especially in light of other details embedded within the Barnett account, does not traditionally rank too prominently on the priority list of those intent on learning more about her antecedents. And understandably so. One would, for example, expect more results from researching Barnett's recollections of Kelly's pre-London whereabouts, especially the Welsh miner Davi(e)s-connection which has for obvious reasons commanded the bulk of attention of researchers attempting to track her down in the historical record. Similar walls have been run up against when researchers attempted to find some validation for the alleged brother in the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards who, according to Barnett, used to visit the deceased on occasion.

I am fully aware that the Morgenstern question is not exactly paramount to the majority of students of the Whitechapel case, or even a minority of them, but for those of us more interested in identifying the historical Mary Jane Kelly than that of her assailant, the hope exists that any answers may well serve to increase our understanding of Kelly's movements in the English capital and, by extension, open up promising avenues moving forward.

In this article I will attempt to provide a rough overview of past research as well as present some recent findings that challenge, and in some cases even overturn previously held beliefs. As we will learn, some new facts have been uncovered that not only force us to re-evaluate some of these assumptions, but also open up new lines of inquiry worthy of further pursuit.

In the beginning

To my knowledge it was Stewart Evans and Nick Connell who first proposed a positive identification for Mary Jane Kelly's elusive "Morganstone" in their 2000 publication¹ *The Man Who Hunted Jack the Ripper*, connecting one of three Dutch Morgenstern brothers (Adrianus Lucas) to a plausible candidacy for the role. Subsequent research by Neal and Jennifer Shelden impressively expanded on the research² as they proceeded to uncover additional records that appeared to confirm Evans' and Connell's identification. After all, it was Adrian Morgenstern who in subsequent censuses was consistently connected to the gas stoker trade, whilst the remaining two brothers, John and Marin, were only sporadically associated with it. Even though it was the same Shelden's that had subsequently found Adrian's brother John Morgenstern and a woman named "Elizabeth Boeku" at 79 Pennington Street from October 1885 to September of the following year (obliquely corroborating the existence of the "Mrs Buki" who had allegedly helped Mary Kelly to reclaim her box of dresses at the "French lady's residence" in Knightsbridge), the idea of Adrian-equals-Morganstone nevertheless stuck firmly in their minds.

As we will learn, it is only in the last five years or so that some relevant findings caused the balance of probabilities to convincingly tilt towards John Morgenstern as the man with whom Mary Kelly cohabited before she took up with the Joseph's (Fleming and Barnett, respectively). Before we explore the reasons behind our recalibrations, let me hasten to add that these adjustments in no way reflect negatively on the Sheldens' research capabilities by any stretch of the imagination. It's easy to forget that they had significantly less access to archives than we do in this day and age, significantly limiting the scope and scale of their research and the conclusions based on it. With this in mind it's doubly impressive that they managed to turn up what they did. In fact, had it not been for their pioneering endeavors in those maiden years, we would not even have known where to begin.

¹ Connell, N., & Evans, Stewart. P. (2000). *The Man Who Hunted Jack the Ripper: Edmund Reid and the Police Perspective*. Rupert Books.

² Shelden, Neal (2013), *Mary Jane Kelly and the Victims of Jack the Ripper: The 125th Anniversary*.

It is no coincidence that research into the elusive "Morganstone" of Mary Kelly-fame really kicked into gear at the start of this century, just around the time when increased technological innovations and informational access happily converged to expand the scope of historical research previously beyond the reach of most researchers. Parallel to this sudden surge of archival availability, a more research-driven branch of researchers emerged no longer bothered with good old armchair Ripperology, moving instead towards a more dispassionate practice of inquiry, and by extension raising the entire game into something more akin to a scholarly pursuit. For the first time newcomers to the case were free to escape the gravitational pull of perpetual suspect-musing that had dominated the field since its inception. For the time being however they still had to share the ripperological theater with members of the old crowd, perpetually playing the would-have could-have game on repeat. In terms of sheer numbers, the research-minded newcomers found themselves at a disadvantage. The resulting field of tension predictably gave rise to its own dynamic, tensions that exist to this day, including irritations on both sides towards each other's respective approaches; methodologists accusing suspectologists of excessive credulity, suspectologists indicting methodologists for unadulterated elitism or conceit.

Technological opportunities notwithstanding, the allure of suspectology was hardly subject to decline at this stage, and to make matters worse the non-suspectologists had to overcome some apparent deficiencies on their own part without being subjected to the scrutiny of knowledgeable peers. Anything resembling interdisciplinary review was mostly done by way of message boards, and more often than not by fellow-researchers just as untrained as they were. So by and large they found themselves tailoring their own suits, so to speak, as they attempted to responsibly navigate this promising but hazardous new landscape.

Although my own initial contributions consisted mainly of translating Dutch judicial and military transcripts, I soon tried my hand at researching the Morgensterns' post-emigration period as well, and before long I found myself recklessly stumbling into (and desperately attempting to wrestle free from) archival repositories I was not at all equipped to navigate. Even my attempts at transcribing the Dutch material compelled me to enlist the help of 'proper historians' in order to decode handwritings so illegible it might just as well have been proto-cuneiform Sumerian. To them (the historians, not the Sumerians) and the helpful researchers on the forums I am eternally indebted. Without the collaborative and dedicated efforts of Debra Arif, Chris Philips, Robert Linford, Gary Barnett, Anna Morris, Libby Isted, Howard Brown, Gareth Williams, Jose Oranto, "Markus Aurelius Franzoi", Leo Wels and others I would certainly still be stumbling around blindfolded, arms stretched, like some 21st century version of blind man's buff. One must never underestimate what can be accomplished when some of Ripperology's most qualified researchers dedicate their time and talent to a case. Their assistance over the years in patiently explaining to me the finer points of historical research (and its many pitfalls) has been instrumental in anything I may have contributed along the way. If for nothing else, it goes to show collaboration is key to any individual find. The ones that matter, anyway.

Joseph Barnett's "Morganstone": problems & opportunities

When Debra Arif started her thread *The Morgenstern brothers, Felix Family & 79 Pennington Street*³ in March of 2017, consisting of several relevant catholic baptisms and marriage records, she may not have foreseen the surge of contributions it would inspire in years to come. Looking back it is evident that the thread initiated by Arif is largely responsible for not only keeping the Morgenstern question in focus as a subject worthy of attention, but also for moving it up the ladder of priorities. And with stunning results. So, by the time I felt confident enough to join in the effort, the investigation was already well underway. Not only did many of Ripperology's "who's who" contribute whatever they were able to contribute, several descendants of the Morgenstern family jumped on board as well, resulting in a significant expansion of our understanding in the last decade or so, including some early 20th century photographs of John Morgenstern's surviving daughter Louisa. Even a cursory glance at the Morganstone angle has turned out more leads than one would have ever

³ Debra Arif, March 3, 2017, *The Morgenstern brothers, Felix Family & 79 Pennington Street*, JTR Forums, <https://www.jtrforums.com/forum/the-victims/mary-kelly/27698-the-morgenstern-brothers-felix-family-79-pennington-street>

expected beforehand, at least giving us a fighting chance to illuminate some parts of Mary Kelly's London whereabouts previously obscured by lack of available documentation.

Before we proceed, however, a cautionary note is in order. As anyone who has dabbled in Mary Kelly studies for more than three days knows, it's sensible to distrust overly confident proclamations about the victim and her associates. All in all we are wise to temper our enthusiasm before the floodgates of imagination are irrevocably breached. Despite all of our past excitements, it's obvious that the decade-long search has thus far not been able to produce the actual historical Mary Jane Kelly, and we may therefore not reasonably expect the Morgenstern connection, however intriguing, to constitute a breakthrough in this regard.

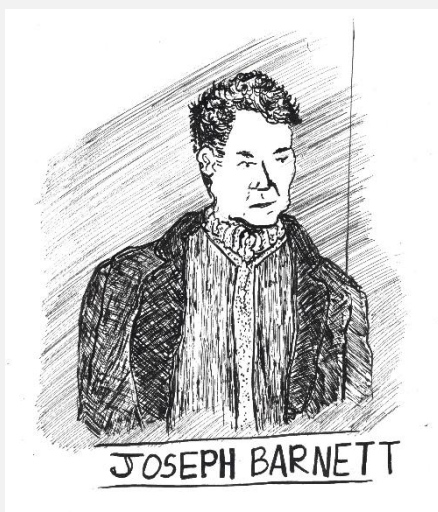
Conflicting accounts

If we take the original notes⁴ of the 12th November 1888 inquest as a baseline for later transcriptions, we are immediately presented with an adequate illustration of our dilemma:

"(...) she came back and lived in Ratcliffe Highway for some time, she did not tell me how long, then she was living near Stepney Gas Works. Morganstone was the man she lived with there, she did not tell me how long she lived there. She told me that in Pennington Street she lived at one time with a Marginstone, and with Joseph Flemming."

Two geographical propositions in the space of as many sentences, which gives you an idea of the difficulties we are forced to contend with when attempting to unthread this particular knot. The problem is further compounded by the many stunningly divergent and often self-conflicting interpretations of the many press reports covering the inquest. I would be amiss to not put some special emphasis on the warning against interpretational overindulgence issued by Chris Philips⁵ when he explained that *"we're trying to reconstruct a lot from a few sentences, delivered by a man in very stressful circumstances"*. And even then, I might add, it's worthwhile to consider that even if Barnett somehow possessed superhuman memory capabilities, delivering his account in a state of buddha-like calm, one must never underestimate the ability of news reporters to screw up an otherwise perfectly coherent witness statement.

For example, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Advertiser*, *Standard*, *The Scotsman* and *Daily News* of November 13th all agree on the Ratcliffe Highway-Morganstone Gasworks-Pennington Street sequence of events, but then diverge on the gasworks referred to; some mentioning "Stepney gasworks", others insisting on "Commercial gasworks" instead, which doesn't exactly help us with our determinations. Additional reports in the *Star* and *Daily Advertiser* appear to roughly confirm the latter chronology, only to be abandoned by the *Times*, also of the 13th, rudely violating our sense of chronological consistency when it describes Kelly *"(...) living in Ratcliff-highway, near the gasworks, with a man named Morganstone"*, effectively compressing Ratcliffe Highway and her stay with Morganstone near the gasworks into a single event description. The *Evening News* of November 12th concurs but adds that the man Morganstone actually *worked* at the gas works, and to make matters worse, the various inquest interpretations appear to be equally divided between "near the gas works" and "opposite the gasworks". An apparent trifle on the face of it, but as we will learn it may have some relevance in answering the question which gasworks we should be inclined to settle on.



Joseph Barnett appears at first glance to constitute a single source impediment to the furthering of our understanding. Furthermore, the apparent mess created by the press in accurately relaying his account has forced many researchers to throw up their hands in despair as they argue the case that the whole thing should

forced many researchers to throw up their hands in despair as they argue the case that the whole thing should

⁴ Notes: Kelly Inquest November 12, 1888 (Dave O'Flaherty) - Jack The Ripper Forums - Ripperology For The 21st Century (jtrforums.com)

⁵ Chris Philips, May 29, 2022, Re: The Morgenstern brothers, Felix Family & 79 Pennington Street, <https://www.jtrforums.com/forum/the-victims/mary-kelly/27698-the-morgenstern-brothers-felix-family-79-pennington-street?p=591689#post591689>

be viewed with suspicion, even going as far as suggesting the account of her association with “Morganstone” is likely the result of some grand confabulation on the part of Mary Kelly. Or Joseph Barnett. Or both. There are, however, some independent accounts available that make it plausible she entrusted Barnett with an authentic memory of actual events.

Before we proceed with exploring these additional accounts, I should first provide a brief recapitulation of our current state of knowledge on the Morgenstern brothers as it stands and preface it by noting that it's not an exaggeration to say that one cannot fully contextualize John without also acquiring some understanding of his brothers. In fact, retracing their footsteps from the moment they permanently settled in the English capital reveals some common threads crucial to understanding how John Morgenstern's path converged with Mary Jane Kelly's somewhere in or shortly before 1885.

Misadventures of the Morgenstern kind

Jan Francis (1839)⁶, Adriaan Lucas (1848), and Marijn Antonius (1854) were born to civil servant Pieter Morgenstern and Anna Cornelia van der Minnen in the province of Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands. For reasons of grammatical consistency I will henceforth refer to them by their chosen anglicisms (John, Adrian, and Marin). Although the full number of Morgenstern children totals eight, I will for the purpose of this particular inquiry limit myself to the three brothers who in the course of the mid to late 1870s made their way to England and eventually settled there. For anyone interested in learning more about their siblings, I would happily refer to Debra's thread which commands a comprehensive view of the family background (and makes for fascinating reading).

Wherever we look the Morgenstern name it appears to be spelled in some kind of phonetically inspired variance of it: Morgenstein, Muganstein, Morjenstine, Morsten, Morgenstin, to list just a few obvious examples, the most illustrious of course being the “Morganstone” used by Joseph Barnett. Even though the name was often misspelled, we have had little difficulty in picking up their respective trails, mostly thanks to the somewhat neurotic zest of continental record keepers logging for posterity's sake as much information as they were able to stockpile. What also helps is the fact all three brothers at some point or another enlisted into militia regiments with all the paperwork benefits that went along with it, prompting one to add to Napoleon's famous claim that “armies march on their stomachs” by stating they also run on paperwork. This has for obvious reasons proved most helpful in reconstructing their steps up to and including the moment their service was terminated.

Even more helpful than the military documentation was the available judicial paperwork detailing the many altercations and larceny cases the brothers got themselves involved in within the decade preceding their migration. Long before Adrian and Marin had their own little run-ins with the authorities, John Morgenstern was involved in several violent offenses when he was still enlisted in the regiments of the Dutch national militia. The first documented one was a case of attempted manslaughter from 1859, just before he turned 21. Although John was ultimately acquitted from the charge, the authorities did manage to get him convicted for “willful abuse” instead, for which offense he was sentenced to a term of no less than six months, possibly due to the victim being unable to work for a total of twenty days as a result. In another case not two years later, a 21-year-old Johannes Francis Morgenstern was checked into the provost prison of Middelburg⁷ for breaking ranks and wandering about. His rank at the time of his incarceration for this 19th century equivalent of jaywalking was “corporal in the 3rd battalion, 2nd regiment, infantry”. As far as the documentation is concerned, the rest of the decade passed without incident.

The next documented instance of John Morgenstern's misadventures dates from November 1870⁸ and testifies of a rather ordinary pub fight he and a man named Simon Valks were involved in during which some mean punches were thrown back and forth. This Simon Valks and his family would prove instrumental for

⁶ *Geboorteregister Roosendaal 1839, archiefnummer roo - 0004, Archief van het plaatselijk bestuur Roosendaal en Nispen, 1813-1851, inventarisnummer 1013, aktenummer 115*

⁷ *Provoosthuis te Middelburg, inschrijvingsregister, 254 Strafinrichtingen Zeeland, 1809-1973, Inventarisnummer 371-123*

⁸ *25 Rechtbank in Eindhoven, 1838 - 1877 N.B. Stukken van 1820 - 1877, 53, Nrs 6495 - 6594, 1871*

John emigrating to the English capital some five years later, John even going so far as to marry Valks' daughter. In the transcript of the court case held in early 1871, John is, again, described as a military man, Simon Valks as a boot maker; the earliest documented confirmation of their mutual association, to my knowledge, establishing beyond question that both men knew each other long before they both re-emerged in London.

Although the altercation resulted in some injuries, the case was ultimately dismissed and the defendants acquitted. Interestingly, the only participant in the fight to draw steel at the occasion was John, the others limited themselves to fists and knuckles only. As we will see, the Valks family would in later years change or anglicize the surname to 'Felix' and on various occasions throughout the following two decades both John and Adrian adopted and dropped the name at their leisure.

From the early 1870s onward John's youngest brother Marin appeared to have followed in John's footsteps, both career wise and in respect to his brother's criminal inclinations. In February of 1872 Marin was found guilty on the charge of petty theft of 150 booklets of minted gold, for which he was sentenced to solitary confinement for the duration of six months. In the detailed transcript of the court case Marin claimed to have purchased the gold-minted booklets from an 'Israelite' in Antwerp during the previous Christmas. Although Marin's claim of having purchased the booklets fair and square wasn't taken seriously by the prosecuting authorities, we do find indications that he was regularly commuting between Roosendaal and Antwerp. We also find him in a Brussels-based archive where Marin (as "Moris Adrien Morgenstern") and his sister resided before traveling back to Roosendaal at the beginning of 1872. Another charge of theft was made in March of the following year.

Meanwhile, Adrian made his own contributions to the criminal fraternity. On the 20th February 1874 Adrian was sentenced with another man for seriously beating someone up outside of a Roosendaal inn for which offense he served six days in a Breda prison. During this time Adrian continued his habit of moving between Antwerp and Noord-Brabant, as did Marin, which suggests this was the default hideaway whenever they got themselves in trouble with the authorities back home. Like clockwork we see them appearing in the Belgian immigration records shortly after a charge was made or summons issued. In October 1874 the Roosendaal archives had Adrian returning from Antwerp yet again, presumably to be present for the birth of his first daughter Johanna Cornelia. Shortly after he married Antoinetta Smits, he followed his brothers to the English capital.

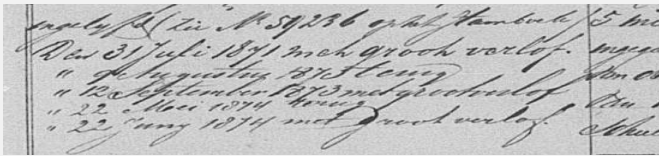
It is of some interest to note that throughout this litany of charges and summons, John appears to be entirely absent from the Belgian records. Myself and others have conducted exhaustive searches in the hopes of finding a single entry for John anywhere in the Belgian immigration records, but to no avail.

Migrating Morgensterns

Two days prior to the start of Adrian's most recent imprisonment in Holland, John's presence in London was recorded⁹ for the first time, on 20th April 1874, when he married Simon Valks' daughter at St Mary and Michael's Catholic Church in Commercial Road. On the same day when "Joannem Franciscum Morgenstern" (of 6 Well's Place) married Adriana Valks, one "Maruns Antonio Morgenstern" (also of 6 Well's Place) acted as a witness to the union of Simon Valks himself.

Based on the existing records recording the presence of John and Marin at these and subsequent ceremonies at St Mary and Michael's Catholic Church, the assumption for the longest time was that John had by that time pretty much permanently settled in the English capital after he married Simon's daughter. However, in November of 2022 I managed to find a Dutch regimental record¹⁰ for John Morgenstern listing all dates of his furloughs and subsequent returns to the regiment from 1870 up to 1875, convincingly contradicting the notion of an uninterrupted residency for John in the English capital.

⁹ *England & Wales Marriages, 1837-2005, 1874, quarter 2, vol. 1C, p. 879, St. George In The East, London, England, General Register Office, Southport, England*
¹⁰ 2.13.09 *Inventaris van het archief van het Ministerie van Oorlog: Stamboeken van Onderofficieren en Minderen van de Landmacht, 1813-1924, 819 stamboeknummers 64946-65989, 1875-1876*



- 31 July 1871 on extended leave
- Returned August 1873
- 12 September 1873 on extended leave
- Returned [to the Dutch regiment] 22 May 1874
- 22 June 1874 extended leave

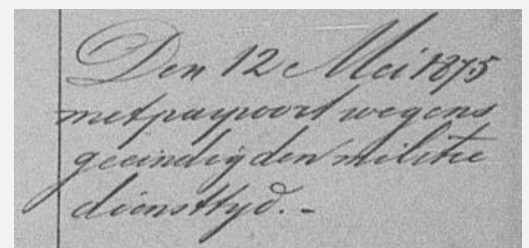
It must be noted that without Debra's church records, the regimental records and the departure dates embedded within them would constitute nothing more than just that: dates and circumstances, but when we allowed for these two data sets to align, cross connecting them enabled us to construct a decent timeline of John Morgenstern's movements, sometimes on a month to month basis, from which a picture of intense commuting between London and the Netherlands emerges in the period from 1873 to 1875. This leave followed the aforementioned trial involving Simon Valks and Johannes Morgenstern, at which incident John drew his sabre but was acquitted from charges.

This extended leave from his regiment, by the way, covered a period of no less than two whole years. What John was engaged in during this extensive intermission is unknown, but my guess is that within this general timeframe his buddy Simon migrated to London. As we have learned, John married Simon's daughter at St Mary and Michael's Catholic Church in Commercial Road in April of 1874, just a month before his return to the regiment.

Not only did this archival overlaying reveal John's movements to and from London, it also involved Marin into the affair. For example, the date of Marin's conscription into the 3rd regiment¹¹ (11th May 1874) occurs almost simultaneously with John returning to his own regiment on 22nd of May of that year. Some two months after his 22nd of June leave, John pops up again as godfather of Simon's son at the baptism of John Fals/Felix.

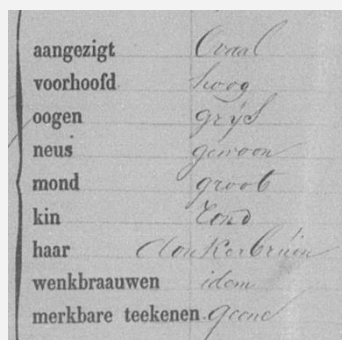
Although we find Marinus in these church records as often as we do John, some special emphasis should be given to the fact that he, Marinus, went back to the Netherlands to voluntarily commit service to the 3rd regiment on 29th December 1874, indicative perhaps that Marin, other than John, had at that time not planned on settling on the Island for any extended period of time. In fact, we find him conducting his usual mischief¹² in the Low Countries up to 1879.

The final entry on John's regimental papers gives the ending date of his military service as 12th May 1875, stating he departed with passport as a result of the ending of his militia service:



In my estimation the likelihood is great that sometime following this final discharge in May of 1875 also put a stop to his commuting and finalized his migration.

In an added bonus, the regimental records afforded us with a general description of John Morgenstern's facial features:



Countenance: *oval shaped*

Hair: *dark brown*

Forehead: *high*

Chin: *round*

Eyes: *grey*

Noticeable features: *none*

Nose: *normal*

Mouth: *large*

Eyebrows: *same*

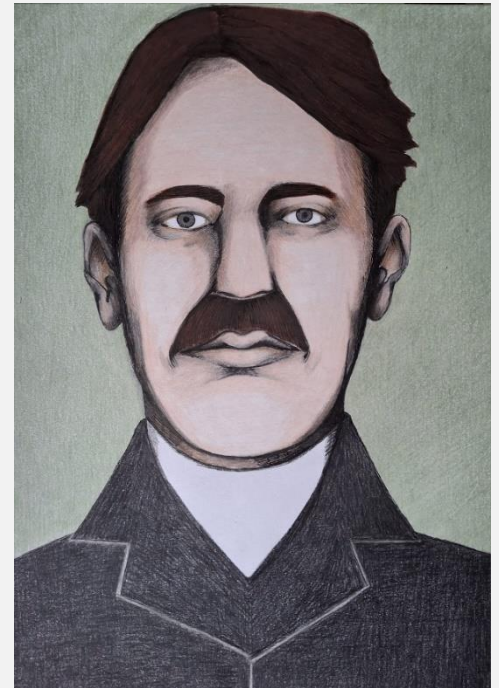
¹¹ Lotingsregister dienstplichtige mannen. 1874-1879, archiefnummer roo - 0005, Gemeentebestuur Roosendaal en Nispen 1851 - 1916, inventarisnummer 1891, Gemeente: Roosendaal, Periode: 1874-1879.

¹² 60 Krijgsraden van de Landmacht, Plaatsingslijst 6. Krijgsraden in de 4e militaire afdeling (1873-1913); 125-174 Door het Hoog Militair Gerechtshof bekrachtigde vonnissen, met bijlagen, 1874-1913, 126- 1874, nov. - 1875, sept.

This, I guess, was the next best thing to an actual photograph of the man, allowing us to put a face to the name for the first time since the start of the Morgenstern investigation. Using the above description and combining it with an early 20th century photo portrait of his only surviving daughter, Dutch graphic artist Angela van Rosmalen was so kind as to attempt an approximate reconstruction of John's facial features:

Amidst all this industrious commuting by John and Marin, Adrian Morgenstern meanwhile was notably absent from these church records, although his presence in Dutch judicial documents during this time was all the more prominent. In March of 1875 Adrian registered his second daughter Maria Petronella Morgenstern, in Roosendaal. On the 23rd of the following month a writ was issued by the Dutch police, stating that Adrianus Morgenstern, a worker employed by the Grand Central Railway of Rosendaal, was wanted for the crime of theft, adding that the suspect had taken refuge in Antwerp. An order was issued to take the defendant into custody immediately upon his return.

On the very same day the young family applied for yet another residency in Antwerp, but within three months Adrian apparently found himself in trouble with the Dutch authorities yet again, when in June he was charged¹³ with illegally staying at an inn in Roosendaal.



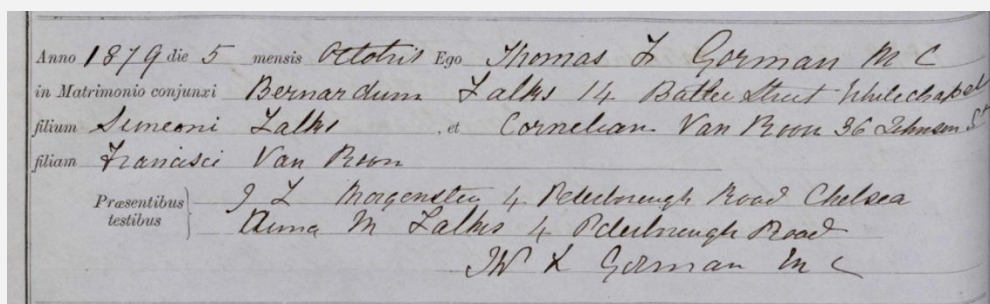
Courtesy of Angela van Rosmalen

I quickly learned that I had been spoiled where record keeping is concerned. How different our predicament when we're forced to depend strictly on English church records and the occasional news report to pick up the trail. Although we're able to trace the likely movements of the Morgenstern brothers fairly accurately throughout subsequent decades, from the moment of arrival in London onward we largely depend on Church records to pick up any trail, although at times we would have to resort to retroactively extrapolating migration dates from available census data. For example, the date of arrival for Adrian and his wife has been deduced from the 1881 census¹⁴, mentioning their first England-born daughter Wilhelmina (age 4) born in Fulham in 1877. Because the census data correctly locates Roosendaal (the Netherlands) as the places of birth for the couple's two older daughters, the likely migrating timeframe would be somewhere around 1876/1877.

All of our research troubles notwithstanding, some intriguing gems have been unearthed during the Morgenstern research endeavor. One of those finds, discovered by researcher Gary Barnett in 2019, might be of more significance than a first glance reveals.

This is the first sign of life for John after the November 1875 baptism of one of the Valks offspring, this

time witnessing the marriage of another Bernard Valks and Cornelia van Roon in October of 1879. Its significance lies in the address given for John and his wife: Peterborough Road, Chelsea. Not only does it



establish John's whereabouts just two years before turning up in Bromley-by-Bow (as "John Felix"), it places him in close proximity to both Adrian and Marin who had by that time permanently set up shop in Fulham. It also places John in relative proximity to Knightsbridge, which might be of some unexpected significance when

¹³ Lotingregister dienstplichtige mannen. 1874-1879, archiefnummer roo - 0005, Gemeentebestuur Roosendaal en Nispen 1851 - 1916, inventarisnummer 1891, Gemeente: Roosendaal, Periode: 1874-1879

¹⁴ England and Wales Census, 1881, Entry for Adrienus L Morgestern and Jeanette S Morgestern, 1881

we consider that one of Adrian's other daughters, Mary, worked as a servant in 57 King's Road, Chelsea in 1891. Something to keep in mind for future research endeavors.

Morgenstern, Boeckee & The Carthy Conundrum

By 1880 all three brothers had permanently settled in the English capital, most notably in Fulham and immediate surroundings. The only Dutch documentation referencing the brothers after this time was the will¹⁵ drawn up by a Breda-based solicitor after their father's passing in April of 1880. The inheritance does not appear to have amounted to very much, word of their father's death would have reached them not too long after. Whether any of them actually attended the funeral is not known.

In any case, by the time of the 1881 census all brothers were accounted for: Adrian Morgenstern was living at 43 Victoria Road, Fulham, as "Adrianus L. Magestern" (gas stoker) with his wife Jeanette (don't ask) and four daughters, including a four year old Wilhelmina. Also living with him at the address is his brother Marin, recorded as a 26-year-old "Maria A. Magestern", 26, also a gas stoker. Meanwhile, John Morgenstern as "John Felix" (skin dresser) was recorded as living very much further eastward at 21 Portree Street, Bromley-by-Bow, with a gas fitter named "Louis Bouquet" and his wife Elizabeth. Although the record has him as married, it

376	21	do	1	Louis Bouquet	Head	Mar	32	John Felix	Amsterdam 13 August
				Elizabeth	Wife	Mar	36		Fulham
				Louisa	do	Mar	12	Schooler	do do
				Louisa	do	Mar	6	do	do do
377	do			John Felix	Head	Mar	40	John Pinner	do do
478	do			Elizabeth Pinner	Wife	Mar	33	Ref. maker	do do
379	23	Portree St	1	Henry Homan	Head	Mar	32	Leopoldus Homan	Head Schalkham
				do	Wife	Mar	49	Ref. maker	do do

seems John by that time had separated from his wife.

A word about Portree Street. As it turns out the address

was located immediately adjacent to the Poplar Gasworks and probably literally in its shadow. In fact, after the death of Louis Boeckee in 1882, Elizabeth was documented as having resided at two subsequent addresses in immediate proximity to these gasworks up to the end of 1884.

The most famous association between John Morgenstern and Elizabeth Boeckee, however, is in relation to 79 Pennington Street, at which location their twin daughters Louisa and Elizabeth were born in October of 1885. When one of the twins (Elizabeth) sadly passed away in September of the following year, the death certificate¹⁶ records her mother in attendance at the address, John being described as a "journeyman skin dresser".

The space between birth and death of the unfortunate child has understandably been filled with an assumed continuous cohabitation of John and Elizabeth at the address, conforming nicely to our sense of chronological

Superintendent Registrar's District: <u>Saint George in the East</u>								
Registrar's Sub-District: <u>Saint Georges North</u>								
18. 86. DEATHS in the Sub-District of <u>Saint Georges North</u> in the County of <u>Middlesex</u>								
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.
417	Sept. 1886 79 Pennington Street	Elizabeth Morgenstern	female	11 months	daughter of Johann Morgenstern journeyman skin dresser	Marasmus 5 months Certified by J. Child M.D.C.S. - Lond.	Elizabeth Morgenstern mother-in-attendance 79 Pennington Street	Eleventh Septem-ber 1886 William Henry Registrar

consistency, especially since the intermediate eleven months may at some point have intersected with Mary Jane Kelly's involvement with the couple. As the record will show, the truth may not be as clearcut.

Whatever the source of their mutual relationships, the Boeckees had nestled in the East End long before any of the Morgensterns did, but before we proceed I should clarify the choice of spelling of the name. Although the name is recorded in just about a hundred different ways wherever we look, I will for purposes of consistency be using "Boeckee".

In 1873 Louis Boeckee (gas fitter) was already stomping about in the East End. In a clear-cut case of administrative overlap, subsequent electoral registers¹⁷ have Louis (as Ludwig Bockee) associated with 79

¹⁵ Bewijzen, akten of verklaringen van erfrecht, 1817-1928

¹⁶ England & Wales Deaths, 1837-2006, St. George In The East, London, England, General Register Office, Southport, England

¹⁷ London, England, Electoral Registers, 1832-1965, 1879/1880

Pennington Street as early as 1879 and 1880, forcing us to deal with the split-mind circumstance of the couple associated with two entirely different East End areas at around roughly the same time.

In May of 1880 the Metropolitan Board of Works received a complaint¹⁸ issued by Louis decrying the drainage conditions of 79 Pennington Street:

“(...) during a storm, which occurred on the afternoon of the 3rd instant, flooding was caused to the complainant's premises through straw and rubbish having been washed over the gully-grating, so that the water could not flow down the gully drain; that this was a circumstance not within the power of the Board to prevent, and recommending that Mr. Bockee be so informed.”

All quite some ways away, obviously, from Bromley-by-Bow which now forces us to confront yet another apparent geographical discrepancy that so rudely intrudes upon our chronology. Or, more accurately. on our *sense* of chronological consistency, both geographically and in terms of the smooth flowing of continuous time, inevitably giving rise to the question how much stock we should really take in the significance of any one abode provided at any given time.

The confusion becomes even greater when we consider some statements left to us by several of Kelly's purported contemporaries from the Ratcliffe Highway period, all of whom must be considered when we attempt to reconstruct anything resembling a plausible timeline for Mary Jane Kelly from the time she arrived in London to that fateful night in November of 1888.

On November 12th several newspapers disseminated some additional accounts delivered independent from Barnett's statements published the same day. These accounts allow us to compare notes in order to see which parts agree with Barnett's and which parts do not, enabling us to at least make an approximate determination in regards to their plausibility. As to be expected these accounts, especially when considered in isolation, are subject to a similar confusion, forcing us to judge them with the same veracity with which we scrutinize the Barnett account. As noted, the first statement is one published in several newspapers alongside Barnett's inquest statements, but clearly independently obtained. As the *Star* and other newspapers reported on November 12th:

“(...) she (Mary) appears to have lived with a woman named Buki. The two women shortly afterwards went to the house of the lady at Knightsbridge, and demanded her trunk, containing dresses of a costly description. At this time Kelly is stated to have indulged very freely in intoxicants.”

The source goes on to demarcate Kelly's time with Buki from her time at Breezer's Hill:

“She next resided with a Mrs M'Carthy, Pennington-street, which place she left about eighteen months ago, for her last residence in Dorset-square. Mrs M'Carthy believes that Kelly, when she left her, went to live with a man in the building trade, who Mrs Carthy believes, would have married her.”

A more complete report purportedly provided by the *Press Association* gives a bit more geographical information for Mrs. Buki, also differentiating between Mary's association with Buki and subsequent stay with Mrs. Carthy in Breezer's Hill:

“Her first experience of the East-end appear[s] to have commenced with Mrs Buki, who resided in one of the thoroughfares off Ratcliffe-highway, now known as St Georges-street. This woman appears to have received Kelly direct from her West-end home, for she had not been very long with Mrs Buki, when it is stated that both women went to the French lady's residence and demanded a box, which contained dresses of a costly description. (...) From Mrs Buki's place she went to live with Mrs McCarthy at Breezer's Hill, Pennington Street.”

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

Because the name "Buki" didn't exist in the public domain until the box retrieval-story was first reported upon, any plausible ground for association with the name of "Morganstone" published on the very same day would at that point not have existed, in effect reinforcing its status as an uncontaminated statement. Even though Barnett had been explicitly non-insistent on who came last, Morganstone or Fleming, the Mrs Carthy version of events tilts the balance of probability in favor of Fleming as Barnett's most immediate predecessor, in effect pushing Morganstone back in time towards a late 1885 to late 1886 residency of Breezer's Hill and/or Pennington Street, either with her, Elizabeth Boeckee and/or John Morgenstern. It must also be remarked that although we tend to differentiate between the Mrs Carthy of Breezer's Hill statement and the unattributed Mrs. Buki reference, it's not entirely unthinkable the latter in fact originated with the former.

Complicating matters even further is the proximity of 79 Pennington Street to 1 Breezer's Hill, the two addresses at one time having actually consisted of one physical house, formerly the Red Lion. From the 1870s onward London surveyors and census takers have listed 1, Breezer's Hill and 79, Pennington Street as separate premises; the Goad Map describes the first as having been a dwelling and the latter as a public house, the 1881 and 1891 censuses list them both as distinctly separate dwellings. In a transcript of the Old Bailey Joseph Brescher trial¹⁹ in 1891 the witness (Rose McCarthy) stated that she lived at 1, Breezer's Hill "*that is next to 79, Pennington Street*", and in a press report of the incident (source) she is quoted as saying 1, Breezer's Hill "*almost adjoined*" 79 Pennington Street. Counterintuitively neither census mentions either dwelling as a brothel, although the 1887 Booth survey²⁰ begs to differ when it describes 79, Pennington street as a brothel and 1 Breezer's Hill as "*really a brothel*".

As mentioned earlier, it was only when archival availability had dramatically increased in the first couple of decades of the 21st century, that the Morganstone identification emphasis shifted to John as the most likely candidate for the man Barnett was referring to when he described the man living with Kelly near a gasworks.

Elizabeth Phoenix

Another report we tend to utilize as cross-referential to Barnett's inquest testimony is a statement made by a woman named Elizabeth Phoenix of 157, Bow-common-lane, Burdett-road, Bow, who according to the *Morning Advertiser* of November 12th had called at Leman Street police station the evening prior to make some statements about the victim. The relevant passage reads as follows:

"(...) She stated that about three years ago a woman, apparently the deceased from the description given of her; resided at her brother-in-law's house, at Breezers-hill, Pennington-street, near the London Docks. (...) About two years ago she left Breezers-hill and removed to Commercial-road, from which quarter she had been reported to Mrs. Phœnix as leading an immoral life in the vicinity of Aldgate."

In order to identify the brother-in-law referenced, much depended on an accurate identification of Elizabeth Phoenix. Although the name Morganstone is distinctly absent from her testimony, subsequent research by the pioneering Shelden's has turned up an interesting 1891 census entry²¹ recording an Adrianus Felix living with

Adrianus Felix	Head	M	48	Gal Stoker	X	Holland Rotterdam
Elizabeth Do	Wife	M	27	Tailoress	X	London Cripplegate
Ana Do	Serv	F	14	Milliner dress	X	Holland Rotterdam
Harry Palmer	Head	M	40	Labourer General	X	London Lambeth

his wife Elizabeth Felix (27, tailoress) at 20 Cordelia Street, Bromley-by-Bow.

Unfortunately no age is given for Elizabeth Phoenix, so no direct correlation with the 27-year-old tailoress Elizabeth Felix, 'wife' of Adrian, can be established age-wise. If Elizabeth Phoenix does equal Adrian's partner on the 1891 census (effectively making her John Morgenstern's sister-in-law) the Elizabeth Felix identification does appear to make sense.

¹⁹ Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 9.0) October 1891. Trial of JOSEPH BRESCHER (26) (t18911019-791). Available at: <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/record/t18911019-791>

²⁰ Notebook: St George's-in-the-East. School Board Visitors, Miss Martin (District F) Mr Golding (District E), Mr Dwane (District E), BOOTH/B/36, 1888-1889

²¹ England and Wales Census, 1891, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QH6P-V3Z> : Fri Mar 08 22:17:56 UTC 2024), Entry for Adrianus Felix and Elizabeth Felix, 1891.

The Elizabeth Phoenix statement holds some additional significance in the fact it could at that point not have been contaminated either by Barnett's as of yet unpublished inquest testimony or the other peripheral reports published on the day of the inquest. Assuming for the sake of argument Elizabeth Phoenix does equal Adrian Morgenstern's common law wife, it seems that the Sheldens' favoring Adrian over John as Mary Kelly's Morganstone was largely based on the assumption that Phoenix coming forward with information shortly after the murder may have represented an alleged underhanded attempt at deflecting attention away from her and her gas stoker husband Adrian. A bit too convoluted for comfort, I would suggest. After all, if Phoenix attempted to pre-empt suspicions by coming forward shortly after the murder, the more obvious outcome would be that in doing so, she would have drawn more unwanted attention to herself and her husband instead. The more realistic estimation by all accounts is that Elizabeth Felix provided a factual account of her brother-in-law's past association with Mary Kelly.

Jamaica Passage

The gasworks association wasn't the sole consideration that prompted the Shelden's to declare²² that "*there can now be no doubt that Adrianus Morgenstern was the man mentioned as 'Morganstone' by Joseph Barnett in connection with Mary Jane Kelly*". In 2005 Grant Fenwick, a direct descendent of Adrian's daughter Wilhemina, came forward on Casebook to reference²³ a family story about her having been brought up in a Limehouse brothel when she was a child. A claim that has always been the source of some confusion, as Adrian was never charged with either managing or keeping a disorderly house. But then as far as we knew neither was John. The general unreliability of family lore notwithstanding, it's understandable that this statement by Wilhelmina's descendent seemed to settle matters in favor of a Morganstone candidacy for Adrian. Commenting on the Grant Fenwick statement in their 2010 article for *Casebook Examiner* titled "Morganstone, Elizabeth Phoenix and Mrs. Carthy", Neal Shelden speculated on the timeframe most likely for Wilhelmina to have been brought up in said brothel:

"Taking Wilhemina Morgenstern's birth date as 1877 and that she was aged 7 when her mother died in 1884, her childhood experiences being brought up in a brothel were likely to have been between the age of 7 and 14, in date terms 1884 to 1891".

Assuming for the sake of argument Fenwick's claim was substantially accurate, and there's really no reason to doubt it, there were still two counter arguments to contend with: the first being that there is no known association of Adrian to Limehouse in the period when Wilhelmina was a child, except for his presence in 1892 at St Peter's Church in Limehouse where he witnessed his daughter (Anna Cornelia) joining in holy matrimony, as well as the marriage proceedings of Wilhelmina herself in 1897 in the same church. The second and more convincing point arguing against Adrian and Elizabeth managing the brothel where Wilhelmina was purportedly brought up in, was her absence from the Felix household in the 1891 census, when her father resided at Cordelia Street in Bromley-by-Bow. Two subsequent discoveries, respectively made by Howard Brown and yours truly, I think convincingly cleared up the confusion.

On 19th March 2018 Howard Brown posted a rather depressing report from the *London Evening Standard*²⁴ published on 11th November 1889 on a brutal assault perpetrated upon several women by a 40-year-old "John Morgenstren" just outside of 9 Jamaica Passage, Limehouse. According to the article the attack took place just two days prior to publication - a year to the day after the Miller's Court atrocity, incidentally - and describes him brutally beating up a young unfortunate named Annie Walker. The *East London Observer* carried an expanded version²⁵ of the incident, published on Saturday the 16th November, preserving the name (and age) error of the perpetrator (John was actually fifty in 1889) but significantly expanding on the sordid details, the most disconcerting of which consisted of the mention of two more women under attack from the brute as well as the use of a poker and knife by Morgenstern. I will spare you the complete transcript but just summarize

²² Shelden, Neal (with Jennifer Shelden). (2010, April). "Morganstone, Elizabeth Phoenix and Mrs. Carthy", *Casebook Examiner*, 62-72.

²³ <https://www.casebook.org/forum/messages/4921/8806.html>, March 23, 2005

²⁴ (1889) No title, *London Evening Standard*, 11 November

²⁵ (1889) "Brutal assaults on women", *East End Observer*, 16 November

that Annie Walker was struck in the mouth and back of the head before being knocked to the ground after which he proceeded to hit the poor girl with said poker; Norah McCarthy, the other victim, was kicked in the leg and stabbed in the head by John with the knife; yet another woman (Emma Bean) was kicked in the 'lower part of the stomach'. If nothing else, these articles illustrate the level of violence John was willing to exert as well as the class of women upon whom he was willing to exert it.

Although the articles explicitly refer to John's victims as "unfortunates", he himself is not in any way being identified as a brothel keeper or bully. There's also the 1891 census²⁶ to keep in mind, fixing skin dresser John (as John Morganstein), Elizabeth and their surviving daughter Louisa on the West India Dock Road-side of Limehouse parish, quite near to Jamaica Passage.

ROUTING OUT LIMEHOUSE PEST HOUSES.
—On Thursday night the police, at the instance of the Limehouse Vestry, made a raid on a number of disorderly houses in Jamaica-passage and Jamaica-place, Limehouse, and arrested the keepers, who were prosecuted by Mr. Birchall, Solicitor and Clerk to the Vestry. Emma Smith, 11 Jamaica-passage, was fined £5 and £5 costs, or one month; Maria Foxhall, 10 Jamaica-place, £5 and £5 costs, or one month; Alleir and Jane Hassan, 12 Jamaica-passage, each £15 and £5 costs, or three months; John Muganstein and Elizabeth Boquay each £15 and £5 costs, or the man three months and the woman nine weeks; Nicholas Glanges was also fined £15 and £5 costs, or three months' imprisonment. Mr. Dickinson observed that the prosecution was very properly undertaken, because the places mentioned had long been a blot on that part of London. He also expressed sur-

A very recent find however enabled us to confirm for the first time that which we were already pretty confident about, namely that John Morgenstern and Elizabeth Boeckee were definitely brothel-keepers in the relevant period, conducting their business in Limehouse from at least the late 1880s onward, making it reasonable to assume they were already engaged in such a capacity when they were associated with 79 Pennington Street a couple of years prior.

In February of this year I found a 1895 report²⁷ from the *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle* titled "Routing out Limehouse Pest Houses", listing several people charged with managing a disorderly

house in the passage where John committed his assaults upon the unfortunates in 1889. Amongst those charged were a "John Muganstein" and "Elizabeth Boquay".

Never would it have occurred to me to search the British Newspaper Archive via either one or the other variant spelling, but a search of the passage did the trick. Another aggregation of two separate pieces of historical documentation converging to confirm long held suspicions. Unexpectedly these converging data points also lend credence to Grant Fenwick's reference to the Limehouse brothel at which Wilhelmina Morgenstern was said to have been brought up, even though 1895 is still quite some time after the 1884-1891 timeframe proposed by Neal and Jennifer Shelden.

I should not neglect to mention a find²⁸ by Debra Arif of a John Felix who in July of 1892 was charged for assaulting his wife "Mary"²⁹ at Jamaica Place, Limehouse. Although a Mary is not an Elizabeth, and a place not a passage, I would be negligent to not take note of the assault. If this in fact should turn out to be John Morgenstern, he continued to make use of the Felix surname, just like Adrian did in the census a year prior.

The Fulham affair

Before I provide an illustration of the ambiguous nature of fixed abodes versus flexible premises, it's worth observing that the matter should always be approached with proper caution: fixing Johannes Morgenstern (or anyone else for that matter) to any one address is often problematic and, as the following case adequately illustrates, quite ambiguous. In 2022, during one of my many scouring campaigns in the British Newspaper Archives, something made me sit up and take notice³⁰. On 4th

THE CHARGE OF BITING A MAN'S FINGER.—George Zecker, a stoker, living in Schelfield Place, Fulham, was re-examined on the charge of assaulting George Morgenstein by biting his finger, in Factory Lane.—Mr. Claydon now appeared for the prisoner, and called the attention of the magistrate to two summonses in the same case, and wished all to be taken together. He (Mr. Claydon) also said that the injury to the man's finger was caused in a fall. It was not bitten.—The complainant was cross-examined. He said he did not fight with the prisoner, but he protected himself and struck him.—Mr. Claydon: It was something like a fight. (Laughter.)—The complainant said the prisoner first struck him.—The case was adjourned for the attendance of the doctor who dressed the finger.

²⁶ England and Wales Census, 1891, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:31BQ-NPZ> : Fri Mar 08 15:00:37 UTC 2024), Entry for John Morganstein and Elizabeth Morganstein, 1891.

²⁷ (1895) "Routing out Limehouse Pest Houses", *East End News and London Shipping Chronicle*, 2 October

²⁸ (1892) "A Brute sent to Prison", *Eastern Post*, 23 July.

²⁹ (1892) "Truncheons not Ornaments", *Illustrated Police News*, 30 July

³⁰ (1886) "The Charge of Biting a Man's Finger", *West London Observer*, 17 April

April 1886 one "George Morgenstein" had his finger bitten in Fulham by a gas stoker named George Zecher at his premises on Gas Factory Lane, Fulham.

A separate snippet published a little further along followed up on the proceedings after the magistrate finished his deliberations, this time adding that Zecher had countered the charge by stating he had simply come to the defense of his wife after she had been assaulted by Morgenstein. Furthermore, a second scuffle appears to have taken place at the scene, involving the brother of the complainant, and whose name immediately made an alarm bell go off:

THE ALLEGED BITING.—Mr. Bennett resumed the hearing of this case, and said provocation would not justify the prisoner biting the complainant's finger. He committed him for one month with hard labour.—The summons against the complainant for assaulting the prisoner's wife was dismissed.—*Mayran Morgenstine*, brother to the complainant, was summoned for assaulting Frederick Stonnick, and was committed to prison for one month.

Not only did the aforementioned "Mayran Morgenstine" bring to mind the "Meroyne Morgensterne" scribbled into Marin's 1891 census record³¹, it also reminded me of the spelling used in Marin's 24th December 1881 marriage record³² which had him as "Maran Morgenstein" living at 57 Victoria Road, Fulham. Furthermore, Gary Barnett found an article published in the same newspaper of the week prior³³ which appeared to settle the matter, both in regard to the identity of said "George Morgenstein" and the assault he allegedly committed on Zecher's wife:

ALLEGED BITING.—*George Zecher*, a stoker, of Schofield Terrace, Fulham, was charged with violently assaulting John Morsten, another stoker, of Victoria Road.—The complainant said on Sunday the prisoner came up and struck him; he also kicked him, and nearly bit his finger off.—The prisoner said the complainant struck his wife. When he spoke to him the complainant caught him by the throat.—Mr. Bennett remanded the prisoner.

So, adding the 10th April 1886 snippet mentioning "John Morsten, another stoker, of Victoria Road" to the equation, I think there can be little room for doubt that we were dealing with none other than John Morgenstern himself, raising hell in Fulham with his younger brother Marin as muscle to help him enforce whatever he needed to enforce.

And that's within the presumed timeframe of Mary Kelly's residency with the Morgenstern's at 79 Pennington Street, right smack in the middle of the period we always assumed our "journeyman skin dresser" having uninterruptedly resided at 79 Pennington Street with Elizabeth Boeckee and their twin daughters. Journeyman indeed!

Considering both of John's brothers residing at 57 Victoria Road (Marin) and 43 Victoria Road (Adrian), at least in the 1881 census records, some associative credence is given to "John Morsten" having used the Fulham address (as well as his purported occupation) as a convenient cover to obscure his true intentions when he assaulted Zecher's wife. Whatever the case it appears John was living where he said he was living, depending on who was asking, significantly complicating any attempt to build even a half-decent reconstruction. But we should not allow ourselves to be discouraged when some contrasting piece of information invades our sense of geographical consistency; it may also widen the scope of the search area and open up fresh (and possibly fruitful) angles previously not taken into consideration. Besides, subsequent research has provided for an interesting and possibly significant appendix to the story: apparently Zecher's wife had at one point been charged with managing a disorderly house, raising the suspicion that the finger biting incident and the preceding assault on Zecher's wife were in some way related to a dispute as a result of the latter's brotheling ventures.

Although the charge upon Ellen Zecher was made many years after the finger biting incident³⁴, you can imagine the temptation to connect this later reference to Ellen Zecher and the disorderly house she was charged with managing, to the purported voyage undertaken by Mary Kelly and Mrs Buki to retrieve the box of dresses held by the *"French woman in Knightsbridge."* If we swap *"French woman in Knightsbridge"* with

³¹ England and Wales Census, 1891, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:3PYJ-C2M : Sun Mar 10 23:54:28 UTC 2024>), Entry for Meroyne Morgenstern and Florence Morgenstern, 1891.

³² England & Wales Marriages, 1837-2005; 1881, quarter 4, vol. 1A, p. 395, Fulham, London, England, General Register Office, Southport, England

³³ (1886) "Alleged Biting", West London Observer, 10 April

³⁴ (1908) "The name but not the character changed", West London Observer, 8 May

"Gasstoker's wife running a Fulham brothel", it does lend a more plausible ring to the Mrs Buki story, especially if she had some Morgenstern muscle behind her to enforce the claim.

The Zecher affair of April 1886 may have been an example of John having some axe to grind with a competitor. Either that or he was plying his paper-profession as a "journeyman skin dresser" for real, which is doubtful. Although as far as we know Elizabeth Boeckie, hardly a Knightsbridge based French "Madam" herself, did not appear to be connected to any highbrow West-End brothel in the documentation, that shouldn't keep us from contemplating the previously unexplored possibility of John commuting between St George in the East and other areas of London, including Fulham, Limehouse, Bromley-by-Bow and, possibly, Knightsbridge.

Moving forward

In the course of Debra Arif's ever-expanding Morgenstern thread the subject of gas works has come up once or twice, with knowledgeable researchers pointing to several candidates for gasworks in the vicinity of which Mary Jane Kelly at one time is supposed to have "lived" with the subject of this dissertation. Without going into every well-developed argument that has been put forward for either one or the other or attempting to resolve the debate as it ensued amongst researchers introducing their arguments in defense of their respective conclusions (if conclusions they are), I should refer those readers interested in the particulars of this debate to Debra's thread.

To my knowledge Chris Philips was the first to point out that the gasworks referred to by Joseph Barnett may have actually been located in the vicinity of Elizabeth Boeckie's last known three addresses before she popped up at 79 Pennington Street in October of 1885. As Chris Philips has pointed out, some versions of Barnett's statements at the inquest give the impression that Mary may have lived near the gasworks *before* going to Pennington Street, in effect reconciling seemingly irreconcilable testimonies without doing too much damage to the timeline. As Philips also pointed out, this could potentially throw a whole new light upon the sequence of events and open up promising new research angles.

In 1881, 1882 and 1884 we have it documented that Elizabeth Boeckie resided at respectively 21 Portree Street, 50 Athol Street and 25 Ettrick Street. *"All three of those addresses (...) "*, Philips proceeded to explain:

"were in the shadow (probably literally at some times of the day) of the gasometers of Poplar Gas Works (...)".

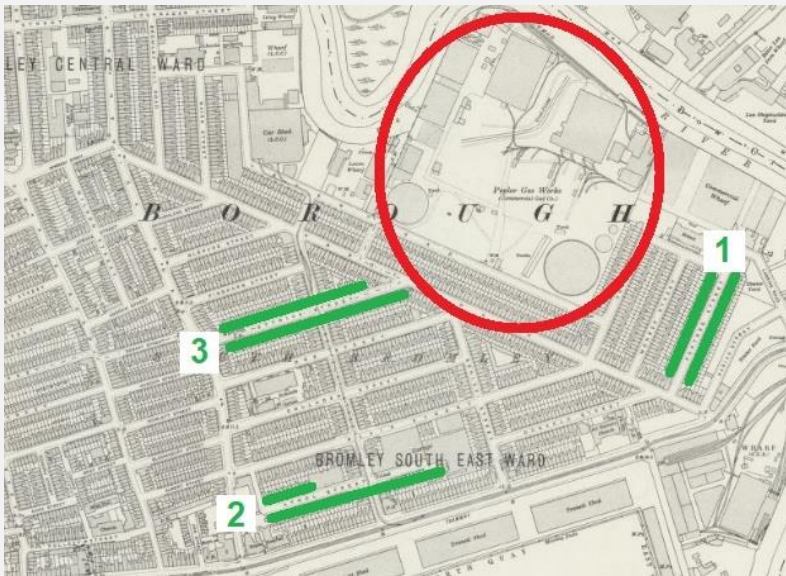
We know that Mrs Bockie moved from Bromley to Pennington Street at some point between September 1884 and October 1885, when her twins were born. That is quite consistent with the period - late 1884 or thereabouts - when Mary Kelly arrived in London, according to Barnett. Philips ends by drawing these facts to their logical and inevitable conclusion, stating for the record:

"I think the Poplar Gas Works is probably the one Mary had told Barnett about."

I'm very much inclined to agree, especially considering that the chronology is supplemented by peripheral statements with a large degree of consistency, namely an association with Morganstone near the gasworks, followed by a time spent with Mrs Carthy of Breezer's Hill, until at some point she hooks up with Joseph Fleming, leaving the bad house in Pennington Street for good.

As pointed out earlier, the only census record where we have John and Elizabeth congregating in the household of her husband Louis was the 1881 one, firmly fixing them at 21 Portree Street. Given that he later appeared in Pennington Street as Elizabeth's husband, we can guess that John may have still resided with the family at 50 Athol Street around the time of Louis Boeckie's death, as well as in 25 Ettrick Street, where Louis' and Elizabeth's daughter Louisa had died in September of 1884.

As the following map illustrates, all three of the addresses associated with Elizabeth both before and after Louis Boeckee's passing (marked green) are located quite close to the Commercial Gas Company-owned



1. Portree Street. 1881 census: Louis and Elizabeth Bouquet and John Felix [Morgenstern]
2. Athol Street. August 1882. Death of Louwve Bockie
3. Ettrick Street. September 1884. Death of Louisa Boeckee

Poplar Gas Works (encircled in red) in the parish of All Hallows, Bromley-by-Bow. Unfortunately we have thus far not been able to locate John there between the census taking of 1881 and the Morgenstern twins birth record of October 1885, but considering Joseph Barnett's insistence that she, Mary, at some point lived with Morganstone near the gas works, it's reasonable to further pursue Chris' thought experiment as a valid line of inquiry. For me, this pursuit naturally coincided with my own Morgenstern-related explorations, gradually growing into sort of a spin off project which I ostensibly titled 'The Aberfeldy Estate MJK Exploration Project'. Although my research is still in its preliminary stages, it's slowly but surely growing into something large enough to

merit a research project of its own, the results of which will undoubtedly be the subject of another article in the foreseeable future.

As with the other material presented here for your inspection, further research may either serve to prove or dispel any supposition we may formulate as we proceed, but until such time we are wise to quickly kill the urge for speculative overindulgence. Whatever the outcome (if any), I'm reasonably confident that any viable conclusions will be a result of a gradual process across a significant timespan involving many dedicated researchers.

In Closing

After the 1895 police raid of Jamaica Passage, the trail of John Morgenstern pretty much runs cold. We do know that he lived on for another five years, moving off even further eastward into West Ham. Just as John was the first of the Morgenstern brothers to cross over from the Netherlands to England in the mid-1870s, the others following in his wake, so he was also the first to pass on. According to his death certificate, John

No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
401	Twenty Third June 1900 at Barking Road Barking Road in the street West Ham to b.	John Morgenstern	Male	58 years	Skinner of 33a Barking Road Plaistow	Rupture of an aortic aneurysm	Certificate received from George E. Hillary Barman for West Ham Magistrate held 26th June 1900	Twenty Seventh June 1900	T. Threlford Registrar

Morgenstern died on 23rd June 1900 as a result of a ruptured aortic aneurysm on the corner of Barking Road and Croydon Road,

West Ham, before being buried at St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cemetery in Leytonstone. If you want to learn more about what happened to his brothers, his daughter and his wife, I once again refer to Debra's thread, which contains a lot more detail than would fit into this article.

Interestingly characteristic for both John and Elizabeth, I recently found another reference³⁵ to the brothel-keeping activities of the couple dated just three months following John's death. The report notes that Elizabeth Boeckee (as Elizabeth Morgenstein) was prosecuted at the West Ham police court for keeping a disorderly

³⁵ (1900) "Traders in Vice", West Ham and South Essex Mail, 22 September

house at 29 Granville-Road, Canning Town, which suggests John had continued in the business up to the moment of his death, leaving Elizabeth to keep an eye on things. Sounds just like him, to be sure.

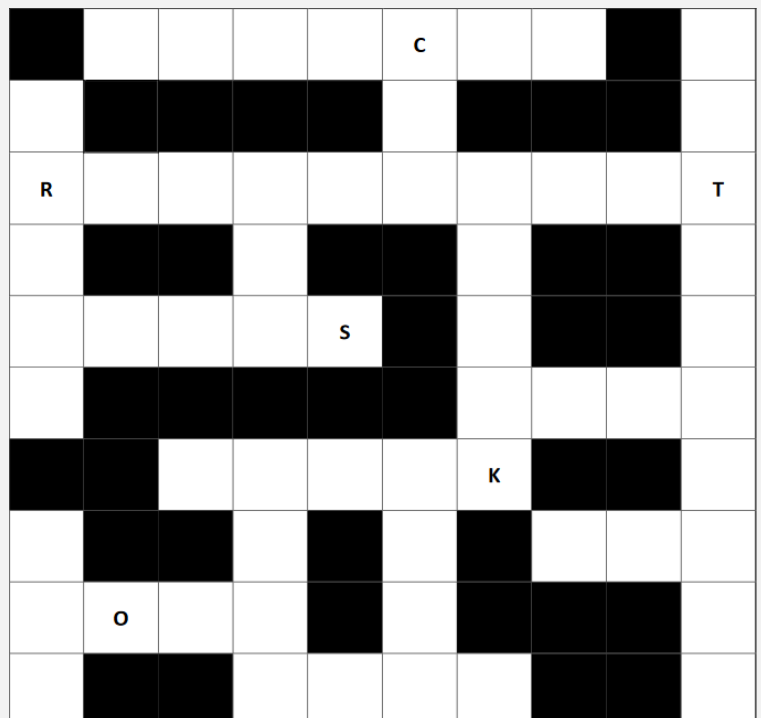
I have no doubt more documentation will be unearthed in the years to come. It will all depend on how much time and talent we are willing to invest in getting to the bottom of things. Hopefully this article will encourage more researchers to join the effort of researching all things Morgenstern, in the hopes perhaps of finding out more about the historical Mary Jane Kelly. You never know, perhaps one day we'll strike gold.

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

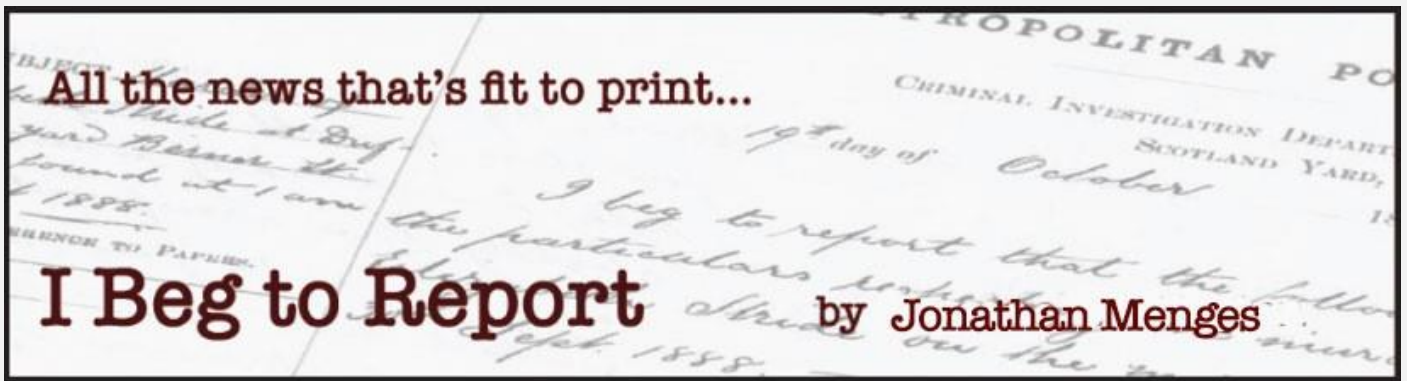
THE RIPPEROLOGIST-LECHMERE CROSS WORD

Clues:

- Audio media presentation by Jonathan Menges (10)
- Description of vehicle in Charles Cross/Lechmere's job title (3)
- Surname of Police Constable who arrested 'Leather Apron' (5)
- Name of the public house which is the current location for the East End Conference (10)
- Frances _____ potential Ripper victim (5)
- Surname of first head of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee (4)
- Surname of new suspect in the Thames Torso book by Sarah Bax Horton (5)
- Ancient lane in Whitechapel, now better known for its curry restaurants (5)
- What was found off the Thames Bank Wharf in Pimlico in 1888? (3)
- Identifying facial feature of ginger-haired man seen in Dorset Street before the murder of Mary Jane Kelly (7)
- Animals who ate poor quality meat sold on the streets of Whitechapel (4)
- From _____ film with Johnny Depp (4)
- Author of an 1841 novel whose similarities have been much commented upon with regard to the murders of Jack the Ripper, excepting they were based in Paris, France (3)
- What was a 'joey' that allowed you to have a bed for the night? (4)
- Thomas Miller Beach was a _____ under the control of Sir Robert Anderson (3)
- Pearly _____ (4)



Answers at the end of this edition



The Journal of Forensic Science Files ‘Expression of Concern’ over ‘Eddowes’ Shawl’ Paper

Citing “concerns raised by third parties after publication”, the esteemed journal that in 2019 originally published Jari Louhelainen and David Miller’s paper on their testing of ‘Eddowes’ Shawl’, an artifact claimed by author Russell Edwards to have belonged to Aaron Kozminski and found at the scene of the murder of Catherine Eddowes, has issued an ‘Expression of Concern’, which is described as “a warning that [the paper] may contain errors or be otherwise untrustworthy”.

Credit to Roger Palmer for bringing this to light on JtRForums and Chris Phillips for providing further insight. The full text of the Expression of Concern reads as follows:



“EXPRESSION OF CONCERN: J. Louhelainen, and D. Miller, “Forensic Investigation of a Shawl Linked to the “Jack the Ripper” Murders.” Journal of Forensic Sciences 65 no. 1 (2020): 295–303, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1556-4029.14038>.

This Expression of Concern is for the above article, published online on 12 March 2019 in Wiley On- line Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com), and has been published by agreement between the journal Editor-in-Chief, Michael Peat; and the Publisher, Wiley Periodicals LLC, on behalf of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. Following an investigation by the publisher, the Expression of Concern has been agreed due to concerns raised by third parties after publication regarding the conclusions drawn from the mtDNA analysis performed by the authors. Related concerns were also summarized in two Letters to the Editor [1, 2] published by the journal, to which the authors responded with their own Letters to the Editor [3, 4]. During the investigation, the publisher and Editor-in-Chief made every effort to obtain from the authors the original raw data from the mtDNA analysis. However, the authors stated that the data were no longer available, due to instrument data failure and other complications. Through further investigation it was concluded that, because it was not possible to examine the original data, no determination could be made regarding the third-party complaints. The journal is issuing this Expression of Concern because the concerns regarding the data and the results presented cannot be resolved. The authors have been informed about this Expression of Concern and agree to its publication.”

Since publishing *Naming Jack the Ripper* in 2014, Russell Edwards has managed to keep himself in the news. In 2022 he infamously, and falsely, claimed to have discovered the grave of 12-year-old Keith Bennett, who was murdered by Ian Brady and Myra Hindley and buried on Saddleworth Moor. This announcement caused much distress to the surviving family of Keith, who have been searching for their beloved boy since he vanished 60 years ago.

This year, Edwards has republished *Naming Jack the Ripper* with three additional chapters detailing what he claims is a Masonic connection to the Whitechapel Murders. Our review by Steven Blomer, is in this edition.

The Darkness at the Top of the Stairs

The Murder of Kitty Roman – Part 1

By Keith Lee

After a period of humidity and thunder showers in London during the last week of June 1909, the first day of July saw pleasantly warm weather and blue skies¹. In the East End district of Spitalfields, Kate Roman and her partner, Henry Benstead, locally known as Kitty and Harry, slept in late at their flat, designated number 12, Miller's Court.

There were about half-a-dozen whitewashed houses in the court and the opposite houses are only a few feet apart. Two doors away on the right-hand side near the entrance to the court is the house in which one of the last "Jack the Ripper" murders was committed, the victim being Marianne [sic] Kelly². Miller's Court is approached by a narrow passage scarcely three feet wide. The houses of the court are two roomed, one above the other. There is not only wretchedness and dirt everywhere, but there is a terrible atmosphere that suggests tragedy and crime³. A narrow passage from Miller's Court led onto Duval Street, the new name for the notorious Dorset Street.

Kate Roman had arranged rental of the furnished first-floor room five weeks earlier with Andrew Stevens, the brother-in-law of grocer and lodging house keeper John McCarthy⁴. The rent of 5 shillings a week was due every Friday⁵. Although she'd told her parents she was a domestic servant, Kate Roman had no steady source of income. She sometimes ironed linens for one of the nearby lodging houses⁶, but she was generally believed to be an "unfortunate" or, more bluntly, a prostitute. Her partner, Henry Benstead, was unconcerned with how she made a living:

"She was an unfortunate and I believe she occasionally went out soliciting prostitution, but I have never seen her [soliciting] and it was not with my consent."⁷

Most nights until closing time, Roman stood outside the Britannia Beer House, known locally as Ringers, at the corner of Duval Street and Commercial Street. She was sometimes seen taking customers back to Miller's Court⁸. Benstead moved in with Kate Roman two days after she first arranged to rent number 12. He'd met her through a mutual friend, his previous partner Lily Cook, another prostitute. Like Roman, Benstead lived a hand-to-mouth existence:

"During the time I have been living with her, I have only been casually employed selling newspapers, and I have occasionally assisted her to pay the rent."⁹

The room they lived in contained a fireplace with a mantelpiece, a bed, two small tables and two chairs. Mounted on the wall above the bed was an oil lamp. In the flat's south wall was a window that overlooked the four street level toilet cubicles recently installed for the tenants' use. Another window, fitted with curtains, was in the west wall and faced room number 4 across the court. Number 12 was reached through an outside door on the ground floor, where room number 11 was located, and up a narrow staircase with a sharp turn at the top¹⁰.



¹ The Daily Mirror, June 26th through July 1st, 1909, page 3

² The Illustrated Police News, July 10th, 1909, page 3

³ Reynolds's Newspaper, July 4th, 1909, page 7

⁴ McCarthy's wife and Stevens's sister, Elizabeth, was one of the witnesses at Stevens's wedding in 1899. LMA Archives: London Church of England Parish Registers, ref. P93/MRY2/008

⁵ Stepney: Andrew Stevens, page 6

⁶ The Evening Standard, July 2nd, 1909, page 15

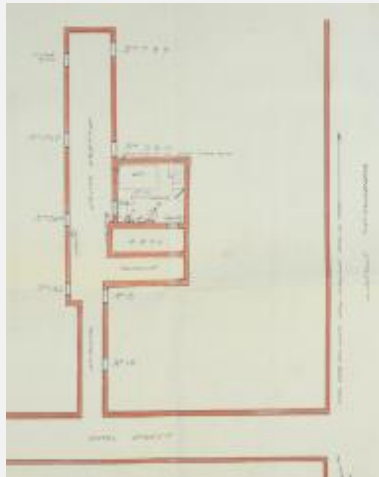
⁷ Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 9

⁸ Stepney: P.C. Herbert Burstled, 234H, page 15

⁹ Stepney: Henry Benstead, pages 8 and 10

¹⁰ Old Street: Exhibit no. 2: Rough plan of Miller's Court, drawn by P.C. Harry Woodley, 343H

Miller's Court is an area where the outer door is left open at night and homeless derelicts sleep on the steps or the staircase. Kitty, before entering her room late at night would give them a few coppers instead of turning them away and – what they remembered best – speak a kind word to them¹¹.



Millers Court crime scene plan, July 1909

Henry Benstead eventually roused himself around noon on July 1st. Perhaps Kate Roman reminded him they needed money for the rent which was due the following evening. In any event, he left the flat around one o'clock, but instead of trying to raise the five shillings needed by selling newspapers, he went to his father's Bethnal Green home to ask for money. When his father turned out to be away from home, Benstead went looking for him¹². Between one and two o'clock Kate Roman also went out, as noticed by her downstairs neighbour in room number 11, a charwoman named Alice Smith¹³. No record has been found showing exactly how Roman spent her afternoon that day.

Meanwhile, in the early afternoon at the Salvation Army Elevator at 122 Spa Road in Bermondsey, a man who called himself William Johnson was bidding farewell to his co-worker John Cunningham¹⁴. William Johnson's birth name was Harold Hall¹⁵. 'Elevators' like the one on Spa Road combined a factory with dormitories for its workers. A Salvation Army innovation, they were intended to teach unemployed and destitute men skills that could help them find gainful employment whilst also housing and feeding them until they could earn a living. The Spa Road facility housed up to fifty men at a time. It specialized in paper salvaging. Once a worker achieved some competence in the salvaging process, he could receive a modest wage as well as board and lodging¹⁶.

Hall, using the name William Johnson, had started work at the Elevator in May. He was 'shown the ropes' by John Cunningham, an existing worker. One day, amongst the books and newspapers they were sorting, Hall found a penknife. It had two blades, the smaller of which was broken. They began using the larger blade to cut the string that tied books into bundles.

On July 1st, telling Cunningham he wouldn't be coming back, Hall left with another Elevator worker, Michael Maloney. Cunningham didn't say how Johnson was dressed when he left, nor whether he was carrying a valise or suitcase. After the departure of his co-worker, Cunningham was unable to find the knife; Harold Hall had taken it with him¹⁷.

Henry Benstead eventually located his father at about 4 pm, in the Crown and Anchor public house on Buxton Street, Mile End New Town. He succeeded in extracting two shillings from him¹⁸. Harold Hall meanwhile made his way from Bermondsey to Poplar. In the late afternoon he booked two beds for that night at the Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest on East India Dock Road in the names of Johnson and Maloney¹⁹. Again, no records mention whether he had a valise or suitcase and, if so, whether he left it at the Seamen's Rest after booking his bed.

Benstead stated he was in the habit of spending many of his evenings at the Bee Hive lodging house on Brick Lane, Spitalfields. Apparently, he enjoyed conversing with the people staying there. On the evening of July 1st, Benstead said he arrived at the Bee Hive about 7 pm and stayed for a couple of hours, then left "shortly after 9 pm" with the intention of going home²⁰. However, no witness corroborated this early evening visit. On the contrary, the night porter at the Bee Hive, Thomas Stanton, deposed:

¹¹ Reynolds's Newspaper, July 4th, 1909, page 7

¹² Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 9

¹³ Stepney: Alice Smith, page 11

¹⁴ Old Street: John Cunningham, page 23

¹⁵ Hall: page 1

¹⁶ Salvation Army Establishments (workhouses.org.uk)

¹⁷ Old Street: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, page 5; CCC: John Cunningham, page 603

¹⁸ Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 9

¹⁹ Hall: page 1; Old Street: John Arthur Thompson, page 24; CCC: John Arthur Thompson, page 605

²⁰ Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 9

"The first time I saw him that night was about quarter to one. I had been in the kitchen that night ever since about eight o'clock. I had not left it at all²¹."

Harold Hall and Michael Maloney must have had different ideas about how they'd like to spend their first night away from the Salvation Army as they went their separate ways. Hall decided to go to a music hall and chose the Shoreditch Empire to entertain himself²². Coming from the Seamen's Rest in Poplar, he must have been too late for the early evening show so he went to the late show that started at ten minutes past nine. Top of the bill were the Otto Brothers, who were advertised as offering *"a new style of creating laughs."*²³ Also attending the late performance was a 20-year-old flower seller and self-described unfortunate called Rose Buckwell²⁴.



Henry Benstead

Shortly after 9 pm, supposedly on his way home from the Bee Hive, Henry Benstead turned off Fournier Street onto Commercial Street and walked south towards Duval Street. Ahead of him and also walking south, he spotted Kate Roman and one of her friends, Suey (or perhaps Sue) Smith. He caught up with them where Commercial Street intersects with Flower and Dean Street. Roman told him they were going to a chemist shop on Wentworth Street to buy some ointment for Smith. Benstead asked Roman if she'd eaten, and she replied that she hadn't. He gave her a shilling and some tobacco he'd just bought. She asked about the rent money²⁵, his response, if any, hasn't been recorded.

The night was closing in, so around this time the lamplighters would have begun appearing in the streets to ignite the gas-fueled street lamps²⁶, supplementing the light of the almost-full-moon that had risen in the cloudless sky²⁷. Presumably Kate Roman and Suey Smith obtained the ointment they sought from the Wentworth Street chemist. Police Constable Herbert Burstled, number 234H, was patrolling the area around Duval Street that night and about 10:30 pm, noticed Kate Roman standing alone at her customary spot outside the Britannia Beer House²⁸. She may have just had her dinner there, comprising of fish and potatoes²⁹.

After his encounter with Kate and Suey on Commercial Street, Benstead knew his partner wouldn't be back home for some time so he wandered around for a couple of hours and ended up returning to the Bee Hive at about 11:30 pm³⁰. Possibly he was reluctant to go home because he thought Kitty would continue to pressure him for the rent money.

At the Shoreditch Empire the late show ended around 11:30 pm and the audience spilled out onto the High Street. Rose Buckwell, the young flower seller and prostitute, headed south to Commercial Street in Spitalfields, possibly hoping to find some customers. About 11:50 pm as she came to Christ Church (known to the locals as Spitalfields Church) where she saw Kate Roman sitting on a stone ledge. After briefly chatting Rose said: *"Good night, God bless you,"* and continued up Commercial Street to the next intersection at Fournier Street. There, she turned and glanced back at her friend:

"I saw what I believe to be a couple of Yiddish lads with arms around her neck and waist. Kitty got away from them and came towards me, and after about a minute she turned back. They [the lads] had then gone in the direction of Shoreditch³¹."

Around the same time the two lads were pestering Kate Roman, market porter Alfred Wilkins was loitering outside Crossingham's lodging house at 17 Duval Street, opposite the entrance to the passage that led to

²¹ Stepney: Thomas Stanton, page 12

²² Hall: page 1

²³ The Eastern Post, June 26th, 1909, page 4

²⁴ Stepney: Rose Buckwell, page 7

²⁵ Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 9; Old Street, Henry Benstead, page 15; CCC: Henry Benstead, page 604

²⁶ The Daily Mirror, July 1st, 1909, page 3

²⁷ Moonphase Date Time Calculator : World-TimeDate.com

²⁸ Stepney: P.C. Herbert Burstled, 234H, page 15

²⁹ Stepney: Percy John Clark, page 6

³⁰ Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 9; Old Street, Henry Benstead, page 15

³¹ Stepney: Rose Buckwell, page 7

Miller's Court³². He was a tenant in the lodging house³³ but never explained why he was standing outside it at nearly midnight. His intent may have been criminal; he already had at least one conviction for theft and eight weeks later, on August 28th, 1909, he was one of three men who stole a gold watch and chain from a ship's carpenter in Commercial Street³⁴. Wilkins was joined by another tenant of 17 Duval Street, organ grinder Charles Watson. Watson noticed a man standing near the entrance to Miller's Court. *"It's funny to see that man standing there; he looks like a split [a police officer]."* Watson later confirmed the man was a stranger to him and described him as:

"28 years of age, height about 5 feet, 5 inches, complexion dark, thin brown moustache. Military appearance, dressed in dark serge suit."³⁵

Wilkins claimed that he, not Watson, spotted the loiterer first:

"I noticed a man, a stranger to me, standing close to Miller's Court. Age about 28, height 5 feet, 7 inches, complexion dark, moustache dark, dressed in a dark suit, had the appearance of having been in the army. He walked to the corner of Duval Street and stood there for a few moments, and then went towards White's Row."³⁶



Alfred Wilkins

Even though there was virtually a full moon that night and the sky was cloudless, how reliable are these descriptions? According to Wilkins, *"There was a light from a public house at the top and a light just opposite where I was standing"³⁷.* The "public house at the top" was probably the Britannia, located about 50 feet away on the corner of Duval and Commercial streets³⁸. In their inquest testimony, neither witness mentions the stranger's hair colour, whether he was wearing a hat or gloves or whether he had anything in his hands. However, before the inquest, it seems either Wilkins or Watson described the stranger to journalists, and at that time mentioned a dark cloth cap³⁹. Wilkins continued:

"I then saw Kitty Roman, whom I knew by sight, coming towards me from Aldgate. She spoke to the man at the bank door close to Duval Street, and they both walked down Duval Street into Miller's Court..."⁴⁰

Harold Hall picks up the narrative:

"I met this girl in question, who stopped right in front of me and asked me where I was going. I told her to get out of the road. She replied, 'You need not be saucy,' and said, 'Come on, you might as well come on with me.' I went with her to the room at the top of the house"⁴¹.

They ascended the dark, narrow staircase to the unlit room on the first floor. Enough light filtered through the partly-curtained west window from the lamp across the courtyard to show the outlines of the bed and other furniture. Hall continued:

"I asked her to light the gas. She replied there was none. I then took off my coat and waistcoat. She asked me to light the candle. I struck a match and found a candle on the mantelpiece at the side of the bed. I turned my head around sharp and saw her drawing her hand from my inside coat pocket. I said, 'Is that your game?' At the same time I flew at her in a rage and strangled her and thrust the knife in the side of her neck"⁴².

In later conversation with a police officer, Hall more fully described his attack:

³² Casebook: Jack the Ripper - The Whitechapel Dossier: Dorset Street and Miller's Court

³³ Stepney: Alfred Wilkins, page 8; Old Street: Alfred Wilkins, page 13

³⁴ Rex v. Alfred Wilkins, Central Criminal Court, September 7th, 1909

³⁵ Stepney, Charles Watson, page 8

³⁶ Stepney: Alfred Wilkins, page 8

³⁷ CCC: Alfred Wilkins, page 603

³⁸ Stepney: P.C. Herbert Bursted, 234H, page 15

³⁹ The Illustrated Police News, July 10th, 1909, page 3

⁴⁰ Stepney: Alfred Wilkins, page 8

⁴¹ Hall: page 2

⁴² Hall: page 2

“I flew at her in a rage, caught her by her throat, threw her on the bed, held her there. She never spoke. I took out my knife, which I opened with my teeth, and stuck it into the side of her neck, and then threw the knife onto the bed. I was frightened and put on my jacket and waistcoat and came out. There was no one about⁴³. ”

Hall was wrong. Alfred Wilkins was still loitering on Duval Street, and “*saw the man come out of the court alone about twenty minutes after* [going in with Kate Roman].” The stranger walked towards Commercial Street⁴⁴.

As described by Harold Hall, the couple’s arrival at number 12 and the attack on Kate Roman would have taken between five and ten minutes. Either Wilkins was mistaken in his estimate of the length of time Hall and Roman were upstairs or something more happened that Hall didn’t mention.



The murder weapon

A police constable named Charles Mudge, number 65H, was on point duty at Christ Church that night. He periodically walked up and down Commercial Street between Fournier Street and White’s Row.

He later stated that, although he knew Kate Roman, he didn’t see her that night. Also, as he patrolled past Duval Street between 11:45 pm and 12:15 am, he saw no stranger loitering around the entrance to Miller’s Court⁴⁵.

Henry Benstead was still killing time at the Bee Hive lodging house. A labourer called Barnet Sheinisohn, who lodged there, recalled returning from work at 11:45 pm and finding Benstead in the kitchen. They drank tea and talked “*about nothing in particular*” with several other lodgers. Benstead ate a sandwich. At about 1:30 am on Tuesday morning, the lodging house’s night porter, Thomas Stanton, told the group they should go to bed. The group broke up. Stanton saw Benstead leave by the side door. Sheinisohn said Benstead left with a man called Harry⁴⁶.

Benstead and a young Jewish man he’d been talking to at the Bee Hive – presumably Sheinisohn’s Harry – walked together down Brick Lane and onto Fournier Street. They separated when they reached Christ Church. Benstead continued down Commercial Street and turned onto Duval Street. He saw a woman standing at the corner whom he recognized as a denizen of the street. From Duval Street he turned into the passage to Miller’s Court⁴⁷.

On arriving at his building, Benstead found the downstairs door open. He went up the narrow stairs and noted the door to their flat was also open. Entering, he saw Kate Roman lying on the bed. Although there was no light burning in the room, there was some illumination coming through the window from the gas lamp in the courtyard. Benstead noticed that his partner had all her clothes on, including her boots, but no hat. Her top skirt was pulled up to her chest. Thinking she was asleep he spoke her name and touched her on the shoulder to wake her up. She didn’t respond. He noticed blood on her lips and the right side of her neck and realized she’d been killed⁴⁸.

Benstead ran down the stairs so noisily that the “rather deaf” Alice Smith, the charwoman in the flat below, was woken from her drunken sleep⁴⁹. Emerging from the passage onto Duval Street, he went into the grocery shop operated by John McCarthy at number 27. Inside were costermonger John Day and a stableman called Jeremiah O’Callaghan, who worked for McCarthy and lived at 13 Miller’s Court. They estimated Benstead appeared at the shop between 1:30 and 1:40. Benstead stated: “*Someone’s done the old woman in*⁵⁰” and the three of them went together to room 12. O’Callaghan struck a match to better observe Kate Roman’s wound. He saw blood on the woman’s lips and on the right side of her throat. Her eyes were wide open. Day thought

⁴³ *Old Street: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, page 6*

⁴⁴ *Old Street: Alfred Wilkins, page 13; CCC: Alfred Wilkins, page 603*

⁴⁵ *Stepney: P.C. Charles Mudge, 65H, page 14*

⁴⁶ *Stepney: Thomas Stanton, page 12, and Barnet Sheinisohn, pages 12-13*

⁴⁷ *Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 9*

⁴⁸ *Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 9; Old Street: Henry Benstead, pages 15 and 16; CCC: Henry Benstead, page 604*

⁴⁹ *Stepney: Alice Smith, page 11*

⁵⁰ *Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 10; John Day, page 10; Jeremiah O’Callaghan, page 11*

he saw blood still flowing from the wound. Without touching her, O'Callaghan lowered his face close to her lips. He had the impression she might be *"breathing slightly."* Noticing a blood-streaked knife on the bed near the left side of the woman's head, O'Callaghan picked it up and placed it on the nearby table. He noted the blood on the knife was starting to dry. Benstead then left them to report the killing to the Commercial Street police station. After a while, Day also left. O'Callaghan remained in the room⁵¹.



27 and 27 Duval Street with Miller's Court entrance between them

Police Constable Harry Baker, number 211H, was on patrol at the other end of Duval Street, where it intersects with Crispin Street. Like his fellow-policeman Charles Mudge, he saw nothing of Kate Roman or a stranger near Miller's Court that night. About 1:50 am Inspector Thomas Travis visited him. Both of them were based at the Commercial Street Police Station. Together they walked along Duval Street. As they neared the entrance to Miller's Court, an unnamed 'lad' came up to Travis and said: *"There's a young woman up the court with her throat cut"*⁵².

Travis and Baker went up the stairs to number 12. Jeremiah O'Callaghan was still there with the corpse. He had fetched three candles, presumably from McCarthy's store, and lit two of them. Baker noticed blood coming from the dead woman's nose. Travis sent him to bring the local divisional surgeon, Dr. Percy Clark, and alert various other police officers. Travis later described what he saw in the candlelight:

*"There was a wound on the right side of the neck, and a quantity of blood underneath the wound. The dress was turned back over the body, and the right arm was bent, and hand closed under the dress, the left arm under the left side of the body, and the left leg slightly bent with the left foot under the right leg, which was straight. There [were] some blood stains on the bed-clothes and also on the drawers worn by the woman, but no signs of a struggle having taken place. On a dressing table at the side of the bed was laid a towel, on which lay a pocket knife with open blade and bloodstains thereon"*⁵³.

If Harold Hall's description of the killing was accurate, the odd position of her hands is puzzling. When a supine person is being throttled, their usual reaction is to raise their own hands and either grasp the attacker's wrists or try to pry open the attacker's hands. If the person is unsuccessful in repelling the attack, they lose consciousness and their hands drop back to their sides or across their torso. In this case, however, Kate Roman's left hand is beneath her body and her right hand is under her dress. How could that happen? One possibility is that Hall first punched Roman in the face, causing her to lose consciousness. She fell back onto the bed, limp, her nose and mouth bleeding from the punch. Hall then throttled his unresisting victim before slashing her throat.



Illustrated Police News, July 10th, 1909

At Harold Hall's trial, Inspector Thomas Travis, being cross-examined, made the following remarks:

*"I do not think that part of prisoner's statement, 'I flew into a rage, caught her by the throat, threw her on the bed, and took out my knife,' truly represents the murder, as there was no sign of a struggle. She was lying in a position to indicate recent sexual intercourse"*⁵⁴.

Upon arriving, Divisional Surgeon Percy Clark performed an external examination of the dead woman's body. He later reported:

"The woman had apparently been dead for an hour or more. I found an incised wound in the right side of the neck 2 1/2 inches long, commencing opposite the angle of the jaw and extending

⁵¹ Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 10; John Day, page 10; Jeremiah O'Callaghan, page 11; Old Street: Jeremiah O'Callaghan, page 17

⁵² Stepney: Insp. Thomas Travis, page 13; P.C. Harry Baker, 211H, page 14

⁵³ Stepney: Insp. Thomas Travis, page 13; P.C. Harry Baker, 211H, page 14; Old Street: Insp. Thomas Travis, pages 18 and 19

⁵⁴ CCC: Insp. Thomas Travis, page 604

forward parallel to the lower edge of the jaw to the middle line. It was 2 ½ inches deep and had divided the large blood vessels and nerves of that side of the neck and almost completely divided the windpipe. In my opinion it could not have been self-inflicted, it must have caused almost instantaneous death. The blade of the knife was covered with dried blood and there was a bloodstain on the handle. That knife [produced as an exhibit at the inquest and the police court hearing] could have caused the wound; a good deal of force must have been used as it is not a sharp knife. There was no blood on the deceased's hands; the eyes were almost closed, the pupils were dilated, some frothy blood was exuding from the nostrils and the tongue was between the teeth. There was a large quantity of blood beneath the head and neck. There was a blood stain on the left side of the opening of the drawers, also some semen which was not then dry. Also a small bloodstain in front of the left leg of the drawers at the bottom. I found a piece of window curtain on a chair on the left side of the table, on the curtain was semi-dry semen⁵⁵. ”

Comparing this report to the account given of the killing by Harold Hall, three discrepancies are apparent: firstly, Clark makes no mention of marks on the neck suggesting strangulation, whereas Hall said he initially subdued Roman by throttling her; secondly, Hall said he stabbed Kate Roman, whereas Clark describes a horizontal slit sliced into the neck; and thirdly, Hall made no mention of sexual activity, whereas Clark found clear evidence of it.

As regards the first discrepancy, this became an issue at Hall's trial at London's Central Criminal Court in September. During cross-examination, Clark stated:

“I did not detect marks of fingers on the throat. The excessive bleeding would have obliterated them. The tongue was between the teeth and the pupils [were] dilated, and at the post-mortem examination I found both lungs engorged with blood. That might be caused by blood going into the windpipe on the throat being cut. Strangulation was the more likely cause. If blood went into the windpipe it might cause certain signs of suffocation, but hardly such marked signs as I found... The signs were consistent with the woman having been strangled with the hand first and then cutting her throat⁵⁶. ”

As regards the second discrepancy, the act of stabbing might be seen as sudden and impulsive, whilst slicing indicates more deliberation, particularly when inflicted on someone who is in a supine position. It suggests that Hall, rather than being in the throes of an uncontrollable rage, was quite purposeful and knew what he was doing. As regards sexual activity, the semen may have come from Hall becoming sexually aroused and exposing his penis either before, during or after killing Kate Roman. At Hall's trial, the detective inspector in charge of the investigation said:

“I reported to the effect that she had been murdered practically in the act or immediately after connection⁵⁷. ”

Another possibility is that Jeremiah O'Callaghan, while alone in the flat with the dead woman before the arrival of Inspector Travis, masturbated onto her body. A third scenario is that, after Hall left and before Benstead returned home, the loitering Alfred Wilkins became overwhelmed with curiosity, went into number 12, found a dead woman there and fulfilled a sexual fantasy. What we know of his medical history suggests Wilkins was promiscuous⁵⁸. Whoever was responsible, after ejaculating, they wiped themselves with the piece of curtain.

⁵⁵ Old Street: Dr. Percy John Clark, pages 20 and 21

⁵⁶ CCC: Dr. Percy John Clark, page 605

⁵⁷ CCC: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, page 607

⁵⁸ Alfred Wilkins was a frequent patient at the Whitechapel Infirmary: Oct 25th, 1906, venereal disease; Dec 24th, 1906, syphilis; Feb 16th, 1907, ulcerated throat; April 17th, 1907, ulcerated penis; Oct 24th, 1907, ulcerated tongue; May 16th, 1908, venereal disease; Nov 9th, 1908, ulcerated leg; Nov 20th, 1908, scabies. LMA: London Workhouse Admission and Discharge Records, 1764-1921, ref. Stbg/Wh/123/42, Stbg/Wh/123/043 and Stbg/Wh/123/044

After the divisional surgeon, the next person to arrive at number 12 was Detective Inspector Frederick Wensley, who had been informed of the murder by telegram. Wensley noted his first impressions:



Frederick Wensley

"In the top room I saw the body of a girl whom I now know as Kate Roman [sic], lying on the bed fully dressed except her hat. The front part of her dress and her skirt were pulled up towards her chin, exposing her private parts. There was an incised wound on the right side of her neck, and a patch of blood on the sheet under the wound. The left hand was under the left hip, partially closed. On her hand being removed, a penny dropped out on to the bed. The body was searched in my presence, and a purse was taken from the pocket. It contained 2 photo coupons, 3/6 [that is, 3 shillings and 6 pence] silver [coins], 8 ¼ d [that is, eight and a quarter pennies] bronze [coins], a brooch and a photograph of a girl. In the fireplace was an empty cardboard cigarette box, with "Black Cat" brand thereon. A cigarette of the same brand, partly smoked, was on a ledge at the head of the bed. The room was in good order and there was no sign of any struggle. Inspector Travis handed me this pocket knife [an exhibit at the Police Court hearing], open, the long blade was stained apparently with blood. The short blade was broken and apparently had been for a long time⁵⁹."

The body having its "private parts" exposed is mentioned by no other person who saw the corpse while it was lying on the bed, including the divisional surgeon. Wensley may simply have meant that her underwear was visible. Alternatively, before Wensley's arrival, Dr. Clark may have pulled the underwear to one side while performing his examination and inadvertently left the body's genitals on view.

The presence of the penny grasped in Kate Roman's left hand could be considered confirmation of Hall catching her with her hand in his jacket pocket. However, there may be room for doubt. According to Hall's account: *"I ... saw her drawing her hand from my inside coat pocket⁶⁰,"* but men who are wearing three-piece suits, as Hall was that night, don't usually keep their loose change in their inside jacket pocket, so it's unlikely the penny came from there.

The contents of Kate Roman's purse are interesting.

- Photograph coupons were popular in the late 19th and early 20th century; they were often sold by charities to raise money and entitled the holder to have a posed portrait taken at a designated photographic studio for a reduced cost or no cost⁶¹. Perhaps Roman intended to have herself or someone she knew photographed in the near future.
- The presence of coins totaling just over four shillings indicates Roman was already close to having enough money for the rent. She may not yet have charged Hall for her services before she was killed, since Hall never mentions having paid her, so she may have been expecting his payment to increase her funds to the five shillings she needed.
- Keeping a piece of jewellery, like the brooch, in her purse, rather than wearing it, might indicate it had a strong sentimental value to her, so she wanted to safeguard it. Perhaps it had been given to her by a close relative or lover.
- The most intriguing item in the purse is the *"photograph of a girl."* Because Frederick Wensley also uses the term 'girl' when describing the victim, who was in her twenties, he doesn't necessarily mean the photo showed a child; it may have depicted a young woman. Depending on the age of the picture, it may have represented Kate's American mother (who was in her twenties when she died), Kate's older sister Gertrude, or maybe a child Kate had given birth to during the period she was supposedly 'in service.'

⁵⁹ *Old Street: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, pages 2 and 3*

⁶⁰ *Hall: page 2*

⁶¹ *See, for example, the advertisement by Messrs. Langfrier in connection with the Charing Cross Hospital Bazaar; The Evening Standard, July 28th 1899, page 1*

The present location of the purse and its contents is unknown⁶². There's no mention of the tobacco that Henry Benstead said he'd given Kate Roman when he last saw her shortly after 9 pm on Commercial Street. The cigarette evidence described by Wensley didn't lead anywhere. None of the witnesses mentioned seeing the suspect smoking, so there was nothing to connect the cigarettes to him. Anybody who had been in the flat previously might have left the empty package and partly-smoked cigarette stub there. A Russian émigré tobacconist in nearby Brick Lane, Louis Grodinski (or Gorodinsky), recalled selling a packet of Black Cat cigarettes on the evening of July 1st to a man of similar appearance to the suspect, but the sale was made between 5 and 6 pm, more than six hours before the murder, and Grodinski was unsure whether he would recognize the man⁶³.

Following the visits of Dr. Clark and Detective Inspector Wensley, the police began looking for potential witnesses, even though it was very early in the morning and still dark⁶⁴. Alfred Wilkins said he was questioned by a detective at 1:30 or 1:45 am; he also completed a formal statement at 5:15 am⁶⁵. Henry Benstead was taken by Constable Bursted to Commercial Street Police Station at about 2:30 am so that he could formally account for his movements during the previous twenty-four hours⁶⁶. Constable Baker was stationed at the entrance to Miller's Court to keep out unauthorized visitors⁶⁷. The police also scoured the crime scene.

The body was not removed from the house for several hours as, owing to the absence of more direct clues, the police were desirous of taking photographs of the exact position of the body and the furniture of the room and to make a thorough search for fingerprints or anything that might be of assistance before the room was disturbed⁶⁸. What became of the crime scene photographs is unknown. As regards fingerprints, presumably particular attention was paid to the murder weapon and the Black Cat cigarette package.

Word of the killing soon spread around the neighbourhood. Large crowds morbidly interested in the affair thronged the thoroughfare throughout the morning⁶⁹. Another thing that spread quickly was rumours. There were no signs of the murderer having either washed or wiped his hands in the room, and yet the door handle is said to have borne no sign of blood. Did the murderer wear gloves and take them off after the crime? This theory has found favour with some of those engaged in the investigation⁷⁰.

And strangers to the neighbourhood were treated like suspects. For example, a Swedish seaman who had arrived in London on July 1st, and who spent his first night ashore in Duval Street, was questioned about his possible involvement in the killing at Limehouse police station the next day⁷¹.

The Friday evening newspapers were the first to report the murder. Most gave the victim's name as Kitty Norman and stated she *"was found with her head almost severed from her body"*⁷². Some of the reports published the next morning, Saturday, added the detail: *"her mouth was stuffed with a pocket handkerchief"*⁷³. All three of these statements were wrong.

The uncertainty about the victim's identity was compounded when a labourer's wife called Ellen Dresch misidentified the body as that of her daughter, Edith, who she hadn't seen for two years⁷⁴. In reality,



⁶² UK National Archives: Record copying team's email to the author, February 20th, 2024

⁶³ Stepney: Louis Grodinski, pages 11 and 12

⁶⁴ Stepney: Insp. Thomas Travis, page 13

⁶⁵ Old Street: Alfred Wilkins, page 14; CCC: Alfred Wilkins, page 603

⁶⁶ Stepney: P.C. Herbert Bursted, 234H, page 15

⁶⁷ Stepney: P.C. Harry Baker, 211H, page 14

⁶⁸ The Manchester Courier, July 3rd, 1909, page 3. The Scotland Yard Fingerprint Bureau had been set up in 1901.

⁶⁹ The Leicester Daily Post, July 4th, 1909, page 5

⁷⁰ Lloyd's Weekly News, July 4th, 1909, page 2

⁷¹ Lloyd's Weekly News, July 4th, 1909, page 2

⁷² The Evening Despatch, July 2nd, 1909, page 5

⁷³ The Manchester Courier, July 3rd, 1909, page 3

⁷⁴ The Sevenoaks Chronicle, July 9th, 1909, page 6

the daughter had changed her name to Hetty Manser and was living in Southwark, Surrey with a reformed thief called Septimus Harry Manser⁷⁵.

At least some of the victim's acquaintances knew where Kate's actual family lived. On the same day Kate Roman's body was discovered, two of her friends went to her family home in Fulham and told her stepmother what had happened⁷⁶. Also that day, at 5 pm, Dr. Clark conducted a post mortem examination of the victim at Stepney Mortuary. His findings were:

- Head – Normal
- Brain – Healthy
- Chest – The left lung was adherent; at the back the larynx contained a quantity of blood Lungs – Both were engorged with blood in the lower part
- Heart – Quite healthy, both sides empty
- Liver, spleen and kidneys – Healthy
- Stomach – Contained a considerable quantity of partially digested food, which appeared to be fish and potatoes; there was no smell of alcohol
- Intestines – Normal; the right ovary was cystic
- No other signs of injuries

In Dr. Clark's opinion, the cause of death was haemorrhage from division of the large vessels on the right side of the neck, the result of an incised wound. The injury, in his opinion, was done whilst the deceased was on the bed by some person who was on the bed also and on the left side of the body or on the body. The injury had been inflicted at least an hour before he saw the deceased⁷⁷.

Kate Roman's official death record describes the cause of death in the same way⁷⁸.

Wasting no time, the Stepney Coroner's Office arranged to begin the inquest into

50	Second July 1909 12 Miller's Court Dunelm Street	Kate Roman	Female	24 years	unmarried & a Domestic Servant	Found Dead Haemorrhage from Division of the large blood vessels on the right side of the neck - result of an incised wound inflicted against some person or persons unknown	Certificate received from James Godding Deputy Coroner for County of London Inquest held 3rd & 15th July 1909	Whitechapel July 1909	J. T. Brady Registrar
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Kate Roman's death on Saturday, July 3rd. It was presided over by the deputy coroner, James Godding, who was himself a physician and surgeon. He had been appointed to the position by Wynne E. Baxter only two years earlier⁷⁹. The police were represented at the inquest by Detective Inspector Wensley.

Dr. Percy Clark reported the findings of both his initial examination at Miller's Court and the post mortem. None of the newspaper accounts of his testimony mentioned the presence of semen on the dead body, so perhaps this detail was omitted from his oral deposition⁸⁰. The only other deposition that day was from Andrew Roman, whom one newspaper described as "a most respectably-dressed man"⁸¹. He said:

"I reside at 36, Ancill Street, Fulham. I am a painter. I have this morning seen the body lying in the mortuary. I identify it as that of my daughter. Her name was Kate Roman, her age was 24 years. She was unmarried as far as I know. She was a domestic servant. I did not know where she worked. I did not know where she lived. I last saw her alive about 12 months ago. She then came to visit me. She was then in good health. I heard no more of her till Friday, 2nd July, when my wife told me she had been informed by the police that a young girl supposed to be my daughter had been murdered that morning. I came to the mortuary this morning and

⁷⁵ The Hampshire Telegraph, July 21st, 1894, page 5. National Archive UK: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911, ref. RG14PN1774 RG78PN63 RD23 SD3 ED2 SN177

⁷⁶ Lloyd's Weekly News, July 4th, 1909, page 2

⁷⁷ Stepney: Dr. Percy John Clark, page 6

⁷⁸ GRO: Civil death record, number 50 – Kate Roman, Whitechapel, 1909, quarter 3, vol. 1C, page 115

⁷⁹ Lloyd's List, March 23rd, 1907, page 15

⁸⁰ Stepney: Dr. Percy John Clark, pages 5 and 6

⁸¹ The East End News, July 6th, 1909, page 1

*identified her body. Her life is not insured. It is six or seven years since my daughter left home*⁸²."

After Andrew Roman's deposition, the inquest was adjourned for nine days. At 5 pm that evening, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Edward Henry, accompanied by Detective Inspector Wensley and several other officers, visited 12 Miller's Court and talked with some of the witnesses⁸³.

During the next nine days, weekly newspapers like the Illustrated Police News belatedly covered the murder. Although the victim had been positively identified by her father on July 3rd, many of these stories referred to her as Kate Ronan⁸⁴. Despite a determined and well-resourced investigation, the police made no discernible progress. On Monday, July 13th, the inquest was resumed at the Stepney Coroner's Court, again presided over by James Godding. A total of seventeen witnesses appeared, often quite briefly. At the end of the day, Wensley had to admit that *"up to the present, no one has been charged."* The jury's verdict was: *"Murder against some person or persons unknown"*⁸⁵.

Whatever became of...?

Henry Benstead may not have spent most of his time at the Bee Hive on the night of July 1st. Thomas Stanton, the night porter, claimed in his deposition that he [Stanton] *"had been in the kitchen that night ever since about eight o'clock,"* but *"the first time I saw him [Benstead] that night was about quarter to one"*⁸⁶. However, a labourer who was staying at the Bee Hive, Barnet Sheinisohn, did confirm seeing Benstead in the kitchen from about 11:45 pm until about 1:30 am the following morning⁸⁷, which gives Benstead an alibi for the time of Kate's murder. But probably Benstead wasn't at the Bee Hive between 7 pm and 9 pm, despite claiming he was⁸⁸. Even before Kate Roman's death, perhaps Benstead was playing the field. Two years after the murder, the 1911 England Census finds Benstead living at 6 Hemming Street, Bethnal Green. His occupation is described as costermonger. The only other person in the house is Dorothy Hall, an unmarried 21-year-old fur waste sorter who's classed as a boarder⁸⁹. On December 31st, 1909, an unmarried 19-year-old 'shop girl' called Dorothy Hall was admitted to the Whitechapel Infirmary. While there she gave birth to a son⁹⁰, who, bizarrely, she named William Harold Hall⁹¹. Harold Hall had been convicted of Kate Roman's murder only four months earlier. The boy was presumably conceived in late April, just before Benstead moved in with Kate. On June 10, 1910, Dorothy returned to Whitechapel Infirmary, complaining of vertigo⁹². She also requested treatment for her infant son's stomach pains. Eight days later the boy died, due to kidney cancer and fatty liver disease⁹³. Neither the boy's birth record nor death record disclosed the father's name. Incidentally, Dorothy Hall wasn't related in any way to Harold Hall.

In 1917, Henry Benstead joined the British Army Service Corps as a driver⁹⁴. His service record was one of millions destroyed when a German incendiary bomb was dropped on the War Office Record Store in 1940 during the London blitz⁹⁵. After being discharged from the army, Benstead returned to Bethnal Green, working as a carman. He and a woman named June (birth name unknown) lived together for the remainder of their lives⁹⁶. Henry died at Bethnal Green in the summer of 1944, age about 57⁹⁷.

⁸² Stepney: Andrew Roman, page 6

⁸³ Lloyd's Weekly News, July 4th, 1909, page 2

⁸⁴ i.e. The East End News, July 6th, 1909, page 1; The Eastern Post, July 10th, 1909, page 3; and The Illustrated Police News, July 10th, 1909, page 3

⁸⁵ Stepney: page 16

⁸⁶ Stepney: Thomas Stanton, page 12

⁸⁷ Stepney: Barnet Sheinisohn, page 12

⁸⁸ Stepney: Henry Benstead, page 9

⁸⁹ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911, ref. RG14PN1435 RG78PN50 RD17 SD2 ED18 SN437

⁹⁰ LMA: London Workhouse Admission and Discharge Registers, 1764-1921, ref. Stbg/Wh/130/001

⁹¹ GRO: Civil birth record, Whitechapel, 1910 quarter 1, vol. 1C, page 250

⁹² LMA: London Workhouse Admission and Discharge Registers, 1764-1921, ref. Stbg/Wh/123/045

⁹³ GRO: Civil death record, Whitechapel, 1910 quarter 3, vol. 1C, page 119

⁹⁴ UK National Archives: British Army Service Records, Henry Benstead, service no. T/292059

⁹⁵ UK National Archives: First World War Burnt Documents WO363, Custodial history

⁹⁶ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1921, series RG15, enumeration district 1, piece 01438, schedule 29; UK National Archives: 1939 England and Wales Register, ref. RG101/61f

⁹⁷ GRO: Civil death record, Bethnal Green, 1944 quarter 3, vol. 1C, page 71

In 1910, physician and surgeon Percy John Clark gave a newspaper interview based on his personal experience with the Jack the Ripper murders; he had assisted George Bagster Phillips with the post mortems of the victims. He seemed to be uncertain as to whether the same person perpetrated all the killings. He felt the person must be “*a homicidal maniac*” and “*probably a man of the lowest class.*” In his view, the killings “*were perpetrated by a butcher, or someone acquainted with the killing or cleaning of animals.*” He was dismissive of the then-recent claims by journalist George R. Sims that the murderer had committed suicide:

“That is really supposition. As far as I heard – and I think I heard most about the cases – there was never the slightest clue to anybody. The whole thing was theory⁹⁸.”

After retirement, in 1925, he purchased a fruit farm on the Yosemite Highway in southern California and lived there for a number of years with his wife and daughter⁹⁹. He and his wife returned to England in the late 1930s¹⁰⁰. He died at Chertsey, Surrey, age 77, on January 3rd, 1942¹⁰¹.

Alfred Henry Wilkins was convicted of robbery with violence at the Central Criminal Court in London shortly after Harold Hall was sentenced to death for the murder of Kate Roman, also at the Central Criminal Court¹⁰². Wilkins received a more lenient sentence: 4 months at Wormwood Scrubs Prison¹⁰³. Soon after his release, Wilkins was arrested again and charged at Tower Bridge Police Court with stealing a man’s gold jewellery. He pled guilty, perhaps hoping to lessen his sentence, but because it was his third offence, he was sentenced to 9 months with hard labour at Pentonville Prison¹⁰⁴.

After serving his second prison sentence, Wilkins returned to Duval Street, found work as a docker, and began living with Florence Jones, a charwoman¹⁰⁵. His past sexual activity continued to haunt him: on February 6th, 1913, he returned to the Whitechapel Infirmary with another chancre¹⁰⁶. Despite this, the following year he persuaded Florence Jones to marry him¹⁰⁷. The most recent record known for the couple is the 1921 England Census, at which time they were living in Shoreditch, London¹⁰⁸. Harold Hall, the man convicted of Kate Roman’s murder, is the subject of Part 3, but for now let us move on to Part 2.

Notes

Abbreviations:

CCC = Central Criminal Court, London

Rex v Harold Hall, September 14th, 1909, a transcript is available at t19090907-77 | *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey* (oldbaileyonline.org). In the on-line trial transcript, the trial date is incorrectly indexed and shown in the heading as September 7th, which was the date on which the judicial session began. Within that session, the trial of Harold Hall took place on September 14th, as is clearly stated in the official printed hard-copy record of the trial.

Hall = Harold Hall’s statement to the police in Bristol, Gloucestershire, July 18th, 1909

Old Street = Old Street Police Court, London, re the remand hearing for Harold Hall, July 20th, 1909

Stepney = Stepney Coroner’s Court Inquest on the body of Kate Roman. Depositions, July 3rd and 12th, 1909

The last three of the above documents are in the UK National Archives, file CRIM 1/115/1.

WHY DIDN'T THE POLICE CATCH JACK THE RIPPER?

BECAUSE THEY'RE A BAND AND NOT

DETECTIVES...D'OH

⁹⁸ *The East London Observer*, May 14th, 1910, page 7

⁹⁹ U.S. National Archives: 1930 United States Federal Census, Township 2, Merced, California, page 2A, enumeration district 0010, FHL microfilm 2339913

¹⁰⁰ UK National Archives: 1939 England and Wales Register, ref. Rg101/900g

¹⁰¹ GRO: Civil death record, Surrey North Western, 1942 quarter 1, vol. 2A, page 673

¹⁰² Central Criminal Court, London: Rex v. Harold Hall, September 14th, 1909

¹⁰³ UK National Archives: Metropolitan Police, Criminal Record Office, Habitual Criminals Registers, ref. MEPO 6/20

¹⁰⁴ UK National Archives: Home Office, Calendar of Prisoners, ref. HO 140/282; Metropolitan Police, Criminal Record Office, Habitual Criminals Registers, ref. MEPO 6/22. His first offence was stealing a lettuce in 1906

¹⁰⁵ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911, ref. RG14PN1464 RG78PN51 RD18 SD1 ED12 SN174

¹⁰⁶ LMA: London Workhouse Admission and Discharge Records, ref. Stbg/Wh/123/048

¹⁰⁷ GRO: Civil marriage record, Whitechapel, 1914 quarter 4, vol. 1C, page 395

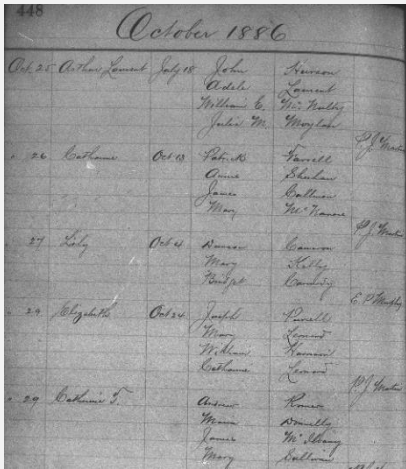
¹⁰⁸ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1921, series RG 15, piece 01354, schedule 118, district RD 16 RS 1 ED 18

The Darkness at the Top of the Stairs

Kate Roman – Part 2

By Keith Lee

Some mystery is attached to Kate Roman's origins. She was born about 1884¹ in New York, but no civil birth record has been found for her. Her earliest known record is her baptism on October 29th, 1886, at St. Columba Roman Catholic Church, 343 West 25th Street, Manhattan². Hers is the only baptism on the register's page that doesn't show a date of birth.



Catherine Roman's baptism record

It appears the church's curate was not particularly diligent in recording names accurately that day. Catherine T. Romer is shown as the name with which Kate Roman was baptized and her parents are named as Andrew Romer and Maria Donnelly. The parents' correct names were Andrew Roman and Mary O'Donnell. Her sponsors were identified as James McIlvany and Mary Sullivan.

At the time Kate was baptized, Andrew Martin Roman was an umbrella maker working from 63 Hamilton Avenue in Brooklyn³. His father, cabinet-maker Ferenc Roman, had emigrated to the United States from Hungary about 1849 and anglicized his given name to Francis. Andrew's mother came from Ireland as a teenager. Andrew was the youngest of three children, his brothers were John, born 1851, and Alexander, born 1852⁴. Based on his age showing as 8 months in the 1854 census, Andrew himself was born in 1854⁵. All were born where Francis senior also had a business at 56 Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn⁶.

Kate's mother was another Irishwoman who'd moved to New York. Whether Mary and Andrew went through the formality of a marriage is uncertain because no record of it has yet come to light. Mary was 17 years old when she gave birth to her first child, Gertrude Francis, on December 9th, 1877, at 549 West 26th Street⁷. Two sons followed the daughter: Francis, on April 24th, 1879⁸, and Byron, on April 13th, 1882⁹. Francis may have died when he was around two years of age before Kate was born, but the record is inconclusive¹⁰.

25	Ms	1897	79	342	Roman Andrew	W. M. 27		1	Umbrella Maker			New York	German	England
26					Maria	47	Wife		Ku ping House			Indiana	German	England
27					Estelle	W. M. 3	Daughter					New York	Indiana	N. Y.
28					Frank	W. M. 1	Son					New York	N. Y.	N. Y.
29					Cover James	W. M. 67	Brother		Laborer			Indiana	Indiana	Indiana

1880 U.S. Census

Even though registration of births with the city's Metropolitan Board of Health had been mandatory since 1866, about 25% of all births before 1909 weren't reported according to the New York Department of Records & Information Services¹¹. It is therefore possible Kate's birth simply went unreported by Andrew and Mary. However, they did register the birth of each of their other children with the Board of Health within a week of delivery. Why was Kate different?

When Gertrude Francis was registered, the parents evidently hadn't yet decided what to call her, so the space in the birth record for the child's name was left blank. However, the date of birth and the parents' names are shown on the entry. These match Gertrude's baptism record¹² which provides us with the given names

¹Based on the date of birth shown in her school enrolment records, which will be discussed later in this article.

² Archdiocese of New York, Archives and Records: St Columba, Manhattan, baptism register, 1886, page 448.

³ *Ancestry.com, United States City Directories, 1822-1995, Lain's Brooklyn Directory, 1883, page 1494*

⁴ New York State Archives: Census of the state of New York, 1855, electoral district 1, ward 6

⁵ New York State Archives: Census of the state of New York, 1855, electoral district 1, ward 6 (the birth records for people, like Andrew, who were born in Brooklyn in 1854 have not yet been digitized or indexed and are therefore not accessible on-line)

⁶ Familysearch.org, *United States City and Business Directories, 1749-1990, Leslie's Brooklyn Directory, 1841-1842*

⁷New York City Health Dept.: Return of a Birth no. 222025, registered December 11th, 1877

⁹ New York City Health Dept.: Certificate of Birth, Brooklyn, no. 3244, registered April 16th, 1882

¹⁰ Findmygrave.com Index: Frank H. Roman, born 1879, died April 18th, 1881, interred at All Faiths Cemetery, Queens County, New York

¹¹ Search - Historical Vital Records of NYC

¹² Archdiocese of New York, Archives and Records: St Columba, Manhattan, baptism register, June 23rd, 1878

Andrew and Mary finally settled for her. It's possible something similar happened with Catherine's registration; it just hasn't been identified yet.

Another possibility is that Catherine wasn't the biological child of Andrew and Mary, but they had agreed to raise her. If Catherine was a foundling left in a Roman Catholic church for example, the parish priest might have sought out a couple from amongst his parishioners who were willing to become the infant's adoptive parents. This would explain why the date of birth field was left empty in Kate's baptism register entry: Andrew and Mary didn't know when she was born. However, the Archdiocese of New York states it has no records of adoption¹³.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH
 IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
 1924
 580594
 1. Full Name of Deceased, Marie Roman
 2. Age, 25 years, 10 months, 27 days, Color (fair)
 3. Single, Married, Widowed or Unmarried, (Married) 4. Occupation, Housewife
 5. Birthplace (Poland) 6. How long Resident in this City, 16 years
 7. Father's Birthplace, (Poland) Father's Name, Joseph Roman
 8. Mother's Birthplace, (Poland) Mother's Name, Elizabeth Roman
 9. Place of Death, (Home) No. 540 Street 27 Ward 10
 10. If a Dwelling, by how many families, living separately, occupied, 10 Floor 4
 11. I hereby certify, that I attended deceased from Oct 29 1886 to Oct 30 1886
 that I last saw her alive on the 30 day of October 1886, that she died on the 30 day of October 1886, about 12 o'clock, A.M. or P.M. and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the Cause of her death was as hereunder written:
 Chief and Determining Cause: Phthisis
 Contributing Cause: Phthisis
 Witness my hand this 30 day of Oct 1886
 (Signature) A. L. Jewell M.D.
 Residence, 1364 W. 27 St
 License for attending Burial Purposes, No. 46, Expires from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. on each day from N.Y.C. to N.Y.C. on Sundays.

Marie Roman's death record

solution was for him to remarry.

It's not certain that remarriage was the course Andrew chose but there is an 1889 marriage record that may apply to him¹⁶. The groom's name is shown as Andrew M. Roman, age 32, born in Brooklyn and a peddler by occupation. His parents' names are Francis Roman and Catherine Ebers and this is his second marriage. As regards his trade, it's conceivable that, as a single parent, he found he couldn't continue operating an umbrella repair store with fixed business hours, becoming a peddler would have allowed him a more flexible schedule. The other inconsistencies are the groom's age, the groom's mother's birth name and the denomination of the church. Kate's father was about 36 in 1889¹⁷, not 32; his mother's birth name was McGann or McGary, not Ebers¹⁸ and the marriage ceremony took place at the Holy Apostles Church, which is an Episcopal church, not a Catholic one.

The bride's name was Margaret Mulligan, age 26 and born in New York City. This was her second marriage also. Her birth name was Margaret Hart. Her first husband, Thomas Mulligan, died on December 17th, 1888¹⁹. The ceremony for the marriage to Andrew M. Roman took place on June 18th the following year, just six months after her first husband's death. If it was Kate's father who married Margaret Mulligan the marriage must have gone awry very quickly. By 1890, just seven months later, Andrew Roman had left his new wife and moved to England with Gertrude, Byron and Kate, never to return. Why the marriage fell apart is unknown. No record has been found of a divorce petition. The couple seems to have simply separated.

After Kate's murder, it was reported that her mother had died "when she was only eight years old"¹⁴, but Kate was even younger – about two years old – when Mary Roman died. Her death occurred at 540 West 27th Street on October 30th, 1886, due to asthenia (physical weakness) and phthisis (tuberculosis)¹⁵.

Mary's death at the age of 25 was undoubtedly a great shock and a devastating loss to her husband and children. Two-year-old Kate probably didn't fully understand what had happened; all she knew was that her mother had apparently deserted her.

As the widowed father of three young children, Andrew must have begun thinking, soon after his wife's death, about how best to take care of them. Initially his mother, Catherine, might be some help, but she was now in her sixties and coping with three young and bereaved children would have been challenging. Sending the children to different foster homes was an option, but it would have caused further anguish to both the children and their father. Andrew may have decided the best

¹³ Archdiocese of New York, Archives & Records Management: Email to the author, February 13th, 2024

¹⁴ Lloyd's Weekly News, July 4th, 1909, page 2

¹⁵ New York City Health Dept.: Municipal Death Record Index, certificate no. 580594, registered November 1st, 1886

¹⁶ New York City Health Dept.: Certificate of Marriage no. 7358, registered June 18th, 1889

¹⁷ United States National Archives: U.S. Federal Census 1880, enumeration district 348, roll 884, page 144B. Andrew's age, as of June 1st, 1880, was shown as 27

¹⁸ According to the baptism register entries for Andrew's siblings, Francis and Alexander. Archdiocese of New York, Archives and Records: St. Peter, Manhattan, baptism register, May 25th, 1851 (Francis), and January 23rd, 1853 (Alexander)

¹⁹ Billiongraves.com: United States Billion Graves Index, December 18th, 1888

Andrew's decision to leave the United States and emigrate to England may have been guided by two considerations. One was that, if he remained in America after the separation, his new wife could demand support payments and possibly contest custody of the children. Moving to a different jurisdiction put him out of the reach of his wife's attorneys. The second consideration may have been that Andrew's older brother Francis was already living in England and could help Andrew and his children make a fresh start.



Andrew Roman's 1889 marriage record

Milley Fennesy and had found work as a commercial clerk²⁰. Francis and Milley were legally married at the Lambeth Register Office in 1886²¹, six weeks before the birth of their first child, Mabel Victoria, on December 10th 22. By 1889, Francis and his family were living at 5 Chesson Road in Fulham, London. Their second child, Catherine Elizabeth, arrived on August 20th the same year²³.

Within a few months Francis's brother Andrew also arrived along with his three children. No record has been found of the voyage that brought them to England. They took up residence at 28 Brookville Road in Fulham, a 15-minute walk away from brother Francis's home.

In their new country, Andrew wasted no time in making arrangements to keep his children occupied. Twelve-year-old Gertrude was enrolled in a Roman Catholic convent-run residential school at Carlisle Place on Victoria Street in London²⁴, and probably remained there for several years. Seven-year-old Byron was briefly enrolled in the Caledonia Road School in Fulham but switched to the Sherbrooke Road School in March 1890²⁵. When Byron's family moved during the summer to 37 Greyhound Road, Fulham, Byron switched schools again, this time going to Everington Street²⁶ where he stayed for less than a year. By April 1891, like Gertrude, he was attending a Roman Catholic convent-run residential school. In his case it was St. Dominic's Priory in West Grinstead, Sussex. His census entry reads: Thomas Byron Roman, age 10, birthplace: America²⁷.

In 1891, Kate was enrolled in the newly opened Lillie Road Primary School in Fulham. She was aged about six²⁸. After less than a year, because her family moved to 77 Hartismere Road, Fulham, she switched to a school on Halford Road²⁹.

As for himself, Andrew found work as a trunk-maker. He also found companionship – a young carpenter's daughter named Annie Monk³⁰. When Andrew and Kate moved again, this time to 12 Rylston Road, Fulham, Annie moved in with them and adopted the Roman surname³¹.

19	1	Andrew Roman	Ad	M	36	Trunk Maker	X	Brooklyn
		Annie	Wife	M	24			Brooklyn
		Katie	Daughter		4			New York

UK 1881 Census

²⁰ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1881, class RG11, piece 551, folio 18, page 27, GSU roll 1341125

²¹ GRO: Civil marriage record, Lambeth, 1886 quarter 4, vol. 1D, page 913. The couple are recorded as Francis Henry Roman, age 35, book-keeper, and Esther Marion Fennesey, age 24

²² GRO: Civil birth record, Islington, 1887 quarter 1, vol. 1B, page 212. The mother's name is recorded as Hester Maria Roman, formerly Finnisey

²³ GRO: Civil birth record, Fulham, 1889 quarter 3, vol. 1A, page 322. The mother's name is recorded as Esther Marion Roman, formerly Fennesey

²⁴ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891, class RG12, piece 83, folio 41, page 36, GSU roll 6095193. Ancestry.com transcribes Gertrude's surname as Romas, whilst Findmypast.com transcribes it correctly

²⁵ LMA: London School Admission and Discharge Registers, 1840-1911, ref. LCC/EO/DIV01/SHE/AD/001

²⁶ LMA: London School Admission and Discharge Registers, 1840-1911, ref. LCC/EO/DIV01/EVE/AD/001

²⁷ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891, class RG12, piece 826, folio 99, page 6

²⁸ Sir John Lillie Primary School: No admission records before 1938 can be found, according to March 5th, 2024 email from the school to the author, but Roman's attendance there is stated in her next school's admission register

²⁹ LMA: London School Admission and Discharge Registers, 1840-1911, ref. LCC/EO/DIV01/HAL/AD/006

³⁰ GRO: Civil birth record, Witney, 1864 quarter 4, vol. 3A, page 586

³¹ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891, class RG12, piece 48, folio 107, page 30, GSU roll 6095158

Kate's various school admission records not only make it possible to track her family's frequent address changes, but they also suggest how uncertain her father was about her date of birth. The dates he gave the schools were:

Halford Road	June 4 th , 1884
Munster Road	June 6 th , 1884
North End Road	June 6 th , 1885

When providing information for the England and Wales Census on April 5th, 1891, Andrew gave Kate's age as 7. To have been that age, she would need to have been born between April 6th, 1883 and April 5th, 1884, a time frame that doesn't include any of the dates given to her schools. When Andrew appeared at Kate's inquest, on July 3rd, 1909, he deposed that her age was 24⁴⁵. To have been that age, she would need to have been born between July 4th, 1885 and July 3rd, 1886. Again, the time frame doesn't include any of the school dates.

It's tempting to interpret Andrew's uncertainty about Kate's exact date of birth as evidence that she wasn't his biological child. However, Andrew was also confused about Byron's birthdates. The dates he gave the schools for Byron were:

Sherbrooke Road	April 23 rd , 1882
Everington Street	April 19 th , 1882

In Byron's case, we have his New York City birth registration⁴⁶ where his baptism register entry also shows his date of birth⁴⁷. On both records, the birth date is April 13th, 1882. We can only conclude that Andrew had a poor memory for his children's birthdays.

Between 1894 and 1901, Ann and Andrew produced five more children. Through the children's birth records, it's possible to track the family's changes of address in Fulham during the same period.

Child's name	Date of birth	Address
Andrew Francis	December 6 th , 1894	64 Mendora Road ⁴⁸
Mabel Maria	March 10 th , 1896	34 Mendora Road ⁴⁹
Annie Louisa	November 20 th , 1898	64 Protheroe Road ⁵⁰
Rose	December 25 th , 1899 – 3am	67 Protheroe Road ⁵¹
Lily	December 25 th , 1899 – 5 am	67 Protheroe Road ⁵²

No school records have been found for Kate during this period. It's likely she remained at home and helped Ann with the care of the newborns.

Kate's older sister Gertrude would have left the Carlisle Place Convent School after her sixteenth birthday, which was on December 9th, 1893⁵³. Perhaps she wasn't on good terms with her father's new partner, perhaps there wasn't space for her in the family's Fulham home, perhaps she wanted to spread her wings after three years of confinement in the convent school. Whatever the reason, she decided to 'go into service.' No record has been found of exactly where she lived or worked after leaving school but in 1898, she became pregnant and on February 2nd, 1899, in the Paddington area, she gave birth to a son, whom she named William Joseph

⁴⁵ Stepney: Andrew Roman, page 6

⁴⁶ New York City Health Dept.: Certificate of Birth, Brooklyn, no. 3244, registered April 16th, 1882

⁴⁷ Archdiocese of New York, Archives and Records: St Columba, Manhattan, baptism register, April 30th, 1882. Byron was baptised in the name Bernard Joseph Roman

⁴⁸ GRO: Civil birth record, Fulham, 1895 quarter 1, vol. 1A, page 270

⁴⁹ GRO: Civil birth record, Fulham, 1896 quarter 2, vol. 1A, page 271

⁵⁰ GRO: Civil birth record, Fulham, 1898 quarter 4, vol. 1A, page 334

⁵¹ GRO: Civil birth record, Fulham, 1900 quarter 1, vol. 1A, page 294

⁵² GRO: Civil birth record, Fulham, 1900 quarter 1, vol. 1A, page 294

⁵³ New York City Health Dept.: Return of a Birth no. 222025, registered December 11th, 1877

Roman⁵⁴. The following year Gertrude married carman Edward George Lovelidge in Marylebone⁵⁵. The 1901 census shows them living at 30 Huntsworth Terrace, Marylebone, with their children Willie, age 2 and Maria, age five months⁵⁶.

The 1901 England Census also shows the growth of the Roman household. In 1891 there were only Andrew, Ann and Katie (evidently Andrew's pet name for her)⁵⁷. By 1901, squeezed into the Romans' half of the house at 67 Prothero Road, Fulham⁵⁸, were nine people:

- Andrew Roman, head, married, 47, house painter, birthplace: New York, U.S.A., B.S.
- Annie Roman, wife, married, 36, Clanfield, Oxfordshire
- Katie Roman, daughter, single, 17, New York, U.S.A., B.S.
- Albert Roman, son, 8, Fulham, London
- Andrew Roman, son, 6, Fulham, London
- Mable [sic] Roman, daughter, 5, Fulham, London
- Annie Roman, daughter, 2, Fulham, London
- Rose Roman, daughter, 1, Fulham, London
- Lillie Roman, daughter, 1, Fulham, London

Presumably, the initials "B.S." at the end of the entries for Andrew and Katie mean "British subject."

Because of the frequency of Annie's pregnancies, it's probable that Katie was kept very busy, helping care for the younger children. It's unlikely she had her own bedroom, so she enjoyed no privacy. Also, she probably had few if any opportunities for a social life of her own. She may have come to resent the demands made on her and dreamed of a life where she could spend time with people her own age.

Another new arrival the following year can only have added to Katie's workload: one more girl, Violet Mary, was born on April 19th, 1902, within the increasingly narrow confines of 67 Prothero Road⁵⁹. Katie must have begun to wonder whether the stream of newborns would ever end.

Kate was now about eighteen. As she looked back on her adolescent years, her main memories would have been of drudgery. As she considered the future, there was little reason to hope for much improvement. If she were to have any life at all, she must force a change. Accordingly, she told her father and stepmother she would be leaving them to go into service, just as her older sister Gertrude had done. Given his poor memory of dates, it's unsurprising that Andrew was vague about precisely when Kate left; after her death in July 1909, he said: "*It is six or seven years since my daughter left home*"⁶⁰. It was probably sometime between the summer of 1902 and the summer of 1903. Some later newspaper reports were unsympathetic to her decision. But she was always of a restless and wayward disposition and although her father and stepmother tried to keep her at home, she insisted on going out to service⁶¹.

What did the twenty-something Kate Roman look like? So far, no photographs of her have been made public. Her appearance, as depicted in the drawing of the police discovering her body that was published in the Illustrated Police News⁶², can't be relied on, considering that almost every detail it shows of the crime scene is wrong.



Sketch depicting Kate Roman –
Illustrated Police News, July 10th,

⁵⁴ GRO: Civil birth record, Paddington, vol. 1A, page 48

⁵⁵ GRO: Civil marriage record, Marylebone, 1900 quarter 1, vol. 1A, page 919

⁵⁶ UK National Archives: Census Returns for England and Wales, 1901, RG13, piece 113, folio 62, page 30

⁵⁷ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891, class RG12, piece 48, folio 107, page 30, GSU roll 6095158

⁵⁸ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891, class RG13, piece 54, folio 148, page 48

⁵⁹ GRO: Civil birth record, Fulham, 1902 quarter 2, vol. 1A, page 269

⁶⁰ Stepney: Andrew Roman, page 6

⁶¹ The Fulham and Hammersmith Chronicle, July 9th, 1909, page 5

⁶² The Illustrated Police News, July 10th, 1909, page 5

in an Anglican ceremony⁷³. Andrew died at Bethnal Green Hospital on October 17th, 1922, due to osteitis deformans, a bone disease, and thyroid degeneration. He is buried at Chingford Mount Cemetery, Waltham Forest⁷⁴. Annie survived him by more than thirty years. She was still at 6 Hague Street when she died, age 88, on January 25th, 1953⁷⁵.

Notes

Abbreviations:

GRO General Register Office, London, England

LMA London Metropolitan Archives

Stepney Stepney Coroner's Court Inquest on the Body of Kate Roman, Depositions, July 3rd and 12th, 1909

In Memoriam

David Andersen

28th August 1944 – 21st October 2024

We were saddened to learn of the passing of veteran author and researcher David Andersen. David's interest in Ripperology began as a child in the 1960s after reading Leonard Matter's *The Mystery of Jack the Ripper* and as a young adult, his curiosity led him to frequently visit and photograph the murder locations, thereby documenting for us their state in the early 1970s.

As a researcher he was inspired by author Tom Cullen to focus on Ripper suspect Montague John Drutt. David was the discoverer of Drutt's inquest report and collaborated with Dan Farson on Farson's 1972 book *'Jack the Ripper'*. He also helped to organize the first ever gathering of Ripperologists in 1988, on the 100th anniversary of the death of Mary Jane Kelly.



Andersen's own book on the Ripper murders *'Blood Harvest'* was first published in 2014 and revised in 2020. In more recent years he kept engaged with the field by giving talks on Drutt at local history societies and was a guest speaker at the 2015 Jack the Ripper Conference in Nottingham. He contributed his knowledge and opinions to the message boards at Casebook.org and on Facebook, making a new generation of admirers.

We extend our deepest condolences to his family and friends. He will be missed.

⁷³ LMA: London Church of England Parish Registers, 1754-1938, ref. P72/JSG/078

⁷⁴ GRO: Civil death record, Bethnal Green, 1922 quarter 4, vol. 1C, page 111; Waltham Forest Council: Waltham Forest Burial Registers

⁷⁵ GRO: Civil death record, Bethnal Green, 1953 quarter 1, vol. 5C, page 236

The Darkness at the Top of the Stairs

Harold Hall – Part 3

By Keith Lee

In 1909, Harold Hall was sentenced to death at the age of 27, for the murder of Kate Roman. Who was he? The answer to that question is more complicated than it first appears.

Harold Hall was born at 10 Indigo Street, Ardwick, Manchester, on March 26th, 1882. His parents were William Hall, a journeyman house painter, and Mary Elizabeth Ann Hall, formerly Harrison. It was she who registered his birth on the April 22nd¹. He had two older brothers: William Joshua, born in 1875, and John, born in 1879².

Superintendent Registrar's District <u>Chorlton</u>										
Registrar's Sub-District <u>Ardwick</u>										
18 <u>82</u> . BIRTHS in the Sub-District of <u>Ardwick</u> in the County of <u>Lancaster</u>										
Columns —	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
No.	When and Where Born.	Name, if any.	Sex.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.	Baptismal Name if added after Registration of Birth.
138	10 Indigo Street, Ardwick 1882	Harold	Boy	William Hall	Mary Elizabeth Ann Hall formerly Harrison	Painter	X The mark of Mary Elizabeth Ann Hall formerly Harrison 10 Indigo Street, Ardwick	26th March 1882	T. Halliwell Registrar	

Harold Hall's birth certificate

about six miles (10 km) east of Manchester. He was also the son of a house painter⁵. Their wedding took place at St. Mary, St. Denys and St. George Church, Manchester, on December 25th, 1874. William was 21 and his bride was 19. The witnesses were the bride's older brother and the groom's younger sister⁶.

Mary Elizabeth gave birth to a daughter, Louisa Ann, in 1877⁷, but the girl died in 1880 as the result of serious burns, two years before Harold's birth. An inquest was conducted, and her death was ruled accidental but no details of the accident have yet been located⁸.

1874 Marriage solemnized at <i>St. Mary, St. Denys and St. George Church</i> in the Parish of <i>Manchester</i> in the County of <i>Lancaster</i>									
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.	
263	December 25 th 1874	William Hall	21	Bachelor	Painter	Fresham Street, Chorlton	Joshua Hall	Painter	
		Mary Elizabeth Ann Harrison	19	Spinster		16 Gorton Lane	William Harrison	Railway Clerk	
Married in the <i>above Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>W. Halliwell</i> or after <i>Banns</i> by me,									
This Marriage was solemnized between us, <i>W. Halliwell</i> in the presence of <i>William Harrison</i> <i>Mary Elizabeth Ann Harrison</i>									

Harold Hall's parents' marriage certificate

Even when they had only two children, the parents faced financial challenges. Mary and her sons William and John were together at the Chorlton Union Workhouse on Nell Lane in Withington from May 10th to May 27th, 1881. On that occasion, Mary's name was recorded as Elizabeth, so that may be the name by which she was generally known. Her marital status isn't recorded⁹.

In April 1884, at the age of two, Harold acquired a younger brother. Joseph was born at Stanley Terrace in the Manchester suburb of Clayton¹⁰. He was William and Mary's last child.

It appears that, about 1885 or 1886, Mary Hall and her four boys were admitted to the workhouse at Ashton-under-Lyne, the town where their father had been born. The mother was said to be "fond of drink" and left the workhouse occasionally. The workhouse officials did try placing William, the oldest brother, in various outside

¹ GRO: Civil birth record, Chorlton, 1882 quarter 2, vol. 8C, page 728

² GRO: Civil birth records, Chorlton, 1875 quarter 4, vol. 8C, page 681 and 1879 quarter 4, vol. 8C, page 712

³ GRO: Civil birth record, Chorlton, 1856 quarter 1, vol. 8C, page 486

⁴ GRO: Civil death record, Chorlton, 1862 quarter 4, vol. 8C, page 380

⁵ GRO: Civil birth record, Ashton under Lyne, 1853 quarter 4, vol. 8D, page 334

⁶ Manchester Archives and Local Studies: Anglican Parish Registers, 1754-1930, archive roll 718

⁷ GRO: Civil birth record, Chorlton, 1877 quarter 2, vol. 8C, page 785

⁸ GRO: Civil death record, Manchester, 1878 quarter 1, vol. 8D, page 175. Her name on this record is Sarah Ann Hall.

⁹ Manchester Archives and Local Studies: Manchester Workhouse Registers, 1800-1911, Religious Creed Register, microfilm M 327/2/2/4.

¹⁰ GRO: Civil birth record, Ashton under Lyne, 1884 quarter 2, vol. 8D, page 512

jobs, but his mother invariably turned up eventually and took him away¹¹. The exact details can't be determined because all the poor law union's creed, admission and discharge records were pulped during World War II¹².

When the 1891 Census was conducted, John, Harold and Joseph Hall were together by themselves in the workhouse; neither their parents nor their older brother were with them. Their ages were shown, correctly, as 11, 9 and 6, respectively. In the column headed Profession or Occupation on the handwritten census return, they're shown as "*scholars*"¹³. It appears they had simply been left there by their parents.

14	John Hall	Brother		X	Scholar			do Manchester
15	Harold do	do		9	do			
16	Joseph do	do		6	do			

1891 England Census detailing the Hall brothers

A woman called Elizabeth Hall, of the same age as the boys' mother, stayed seven times at the New Bridge Street Workhouse in Manchester between August 1890 and May 1893. Her marital status was never recorded¹⁴. The times she wasn't in the workhouse she may have been in prison. On December 11th, 1891, an Elizabeth Ann Hall was convicted of simple larceny at the Salford general quarter sessions and sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labor; her age and marital status aren't shown¹⁵. On August 15th, 1893, an Elizabeth Hall, age 38, marital status not shown, was convicted at the Salford Hundred Sessions of stealing a purse containing £20 and 10 shillings from a chemist. She was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment with hard labor; this prisoner had three previous theft convictions as well as four convictions for drunkenness¹⁶. Whether or not this woman was the boys' mother remains to be seen and what became of her is unknown.

William Hall, the boys' father, was observed working as a house painter in Macclesfield, a town in the neighboring county of Cheshire, and evaded any attempts by the Ashton-under-Lyne guardians to reach him¹⁷. The boys' gradual realization that their parents had abandoned them must have been very difficult to deal with, especially in the harsh environment of the workhouse. No doubt they became closer as a result. Still children, they faced a hostile world together, without anyone to protect them. In June 1891, John, Harold and Joseph were rejoined at the workhouse by their older brother William, or Willy, as they called him¹⁸. In the sure knowledge that the four boys had been abandoned by their parents, the Ashton-under-Lyne workhouse officials contacted the Manchester and Salford Boys' and Girls' Refuges and Homes to discuss the children's future.

The Boys' and Girls' Refuges organization had been established in Manchester by two Sunday school teachers in 1870. Its objective was to house and feed the city's destitute homeless children¹⁹. In 1872 it began working with Annie MacPherson, the Scottish philanthropist, who believed the best way to reform and protect street children was to send them to live with and work for rural families in flourishing British colonies. MacPherson and her sisters set up several 'distribution homes' in the province of Ontario, Canada, to arrange and monitor the children's placement with local farmers' families²⁰. The charity was probably selective in which children it accepted for emigration. A reputation for exporting criminals would have been detrimental to its long-term success, in both England and Canada.

The Boys' and Girls' Refuges agreed to include the four Hall boys in the next group being sent to Canada. They were transferred from the workhouse to the Boys' Emigration Training Home at 68-80 Great Ducie Street, in the Strangeways area of Manchester on March 16th, 1892²¹. On admission, a profile was created for each boy. This is Harold's profile²²:

¹¹ The Together Trust: Case file for Hall, Wm. Joshua; Note from Thomas Styant, 30th June, 1891

¹² Ashton under Lyne, Lancashire, Poor Law Union • FamilySearch

¹³ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891, class RG12, piece 3280, folio 109, page 12, GSU roll 6098390

¹⁴ Manchester Archives and Local Studies: Manchester Workhouse Registers, 1800-1911, Admissions and Discharges Registers and Religious Creed Register, microfilms M 4/11/6, 4/11/7 and 4/11/8

¹⁵ UK National Archives: Home Office Criminal Registers, 1791-1892, series HO 27, piece 219, page 90

¹⁶ UK National Archives: Home Office Calendar of Prisoners, ref. HO 140/145. The Manchester Weekly Times, August 18th, 1893, page 3

¹⁷ The Together Trust: Case file for Hall, Wm. Joshua; Note from Thomas Styant, 30th June, 1891

¹⁸ The Together Trust: Case file for Hall, Wm. Joshua; Application form for Wm. Joshua Hall, 27th June, 1891

¹⁹ Manchester and Salford Boys' and Girls' Refuges, Manchester, Lancashire (childrenshomes.org.uk)

²⁰ Home Children - Wikipedia

²¹ The Together Trust: Boys' and Girls' Refuges, Boys' Emigration Training Home, Admission Book, 1892, pages 56-58

²² The Together Trust: Boys' and Girls' Refuges, Boys' Emigration Training Home, Admission Book, 1892, page 57

<i>Age and date of last birthday:</i>	<i>10 Oct 4/91</i>
<i>Where born:</i>	<i>Not known</i>
<i>Education – Standard passed:</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>Day school attended:</i>	<i>Ashton u Lyne Union</i>
<i>Been in hands of Police:</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Been in Reformatory or Industrial School:</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Present address, occupation, with whom living:</i>	<i>Union Workhouse Ashton under Lyne</i>
<i>Name of Father:</i>	<i>William Hall</i>
<i>Occupation:</i>	<i>[Blank]</i>
<i>Alive or Dead:</i>	<i>Not known</i>
<i>Name of Mother:</i>	<i>Elizabeth Hall</i>
<i>Occupation:</i>	<i>[Blank]</i>
<i>Alive or Dead:</i>	<i>Alive</i>
<i>Address of Parents:</i>	<i>Not known</i>
<i>Character:</i>	<i>[Blank]</i>
<i>Name and Address of nearest Relatives:</i>	<i>None known</i>
<i>Height:</i>	<i>4' 4"</i>
<i>If Vaccinated:</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Complexion:</i>	<i>dark</i>
<i>Colour of Hair:</i>	<i>Black</i>
<i>Colour of Eyes:</i>	<i>Dark Brown</i>
<i>Condition:</i>	<i>fair</i>
<i>Medical Report:</i>	<i>good</i>
<i>Remarks: This boy, with his brothers Joseph and John, was deserted by his parents and left in Ashton under Lyne Union.</i>	

The date of birth recorded in the Admission Book for each of the brothers is wrong. Perhaps their parents never told them their exact birth dates.

The Refuges solicited donations of clothing for all the children they sent to Canada. Flannel vests, shirts, 'drawers' (underwear) and wool scarves were particularly requested²³. Before leaving England, each boy was given a sturdy box containing three complete suits of warm clothing, an overcoat, several hats, three pairs of boots, pants braces, cold-weather underclothing, a hairbrush and comb, writing paper and a Bible²⁴.

"The evening before our emigration parties leave is generally devoted to the friends of our young emigrants (or such of them as it is suitable to invite), who gather for tea. A social evening is spent, the comfortable outfits we provide are eagerly examined, and thus the farewell is surrounded with many happy memories²⁵.

The group was also treated to a lecture on the resources of Canada.

²³ *Preparing for Canada* (togethertrustarchive.blogspot.com)

²⁴ *Sailed for Canada* (togethertrustarchive.blogspot.com)

²⁵ *The Children's Haven*, April, 1896

On March 31st, 1892, Harold and his brothers were in the group of forty-seven boys, ranging in age from seven to sixteen, who met with Manchester's mayor at the Town Hall. He said goodbye on behalf of the citizens of Manchester, followed by a warm shake of the hand and a 'God's speed' to each boy. The group's next stop was the Young Men's Christian Association on Peter Street, where they attended a prayer meeting²⁶. Finally, they gathered at the foot of the Albert Memorial in front of Manchester Town Hall for a photograph²⁷ with the city's mayor and several of the charity's representatives, including – on the mayor's left side – Reverend Robert Wallace, who would accompany the group on its voyage to Canada.



Emigration party bound for Canada

Proceeding to Manchester Piccadilly Railway Station, the group caught a train to Liverpool. The boys were then taken to Liverpool Docks, where they boarded the steamship *Sarnia*, joining several other groups of children that various charities were sending to Canada on the same ship, as well as over a hundred regular passengers²⁸.

Late on the 31st, the *Sarnia* cast off²⁹. For Harold and his brothers, along with most of the other boys in the group, it was probably their first experience of sea travel. No doubt they considered it an adventure. No record has been found of the weather conditions that prevailed during the voyage.

The steamship *Sarnia* arrived at the port of Halifax on Canada's east coast on Sunday, April 10th³⁰. Harold, his brothers and the other boys in his group were taken by train from Halifax to Annie MacPherson's distribution centre, called the Marchmont Home, at Belleville, Prince Edward County, Ontario³¹. From there, the boys were sent to live mainly with families that were located within that county.

Each of the four brothers was sent to a different family but the families were within a few days' walk, making it possible for the boys to occasionally visit one another. All the families ran farms, so typically the boys were kept busy with work during the spring, summer and fall. They were expected to attend church and Sunday school every weekend and were sent to their local day school only during the winter months, when there was less work to do on the farms³².

The main reason for limiting the radius of distribution was so that a representative of the charity could visit each child brought to Canada at least once every year. A brief report was completed by the representative after each visit. Copies of the reports were sent back to the Manchester organization³³. Thanks to this practice, it's possible to form an impression of how Harold and his brothers fared for their first few years in Canada.

However, this is not the place for a detailed reconstruction of all four brothers' lives in Canada, so instead, here's a brief summary:

- John, after seven years of progress on the farm and at school, became increasingly anxious to reach his mother and bring her to Canada³⁴. There are indications he may have returned to England several times in his mid-twenties and early thirties³⁵.
- William, the oldest brother, was kicked to death by a horse in August, 1898³⁶.

²⁶ *The Children's Haven*, May 1892

²⁷ *The Together Trust: Boys' and Girls' Refuges, Boys' Emigration Training Home, Photographic Scrapbook*, March, 1892

²⁸ UK National Archives: Board of Trade, Commercial and Statistical Dept., Outwards Passenger Lists, series BT 27

²⁹ *The Liverpool Weekly Mercury*, April 9th, 1892, page 8. Other sources show the departure date as March 21st or April 1st

³⁰ *The Halifax Herald*, April 11th, 1892, page 7. Another source shows the arrival date as April 9th

³¹ Emigration Records (togethertrustarchive.blogspot.com)

³² *The Together Trust: Boys' and Girls' Refuges, Emigration Registers*

³³ Records at Marchmont (togethertrustarchive.blogspot.com)

³⁴ *The Together Trust: Report from Marchmont Home*, John Hall, January, 1899

³⁵ For example: UK National Archives: Board of Trade, Commercial and Statistical Dept., Inwards Passenger Lists, class BT26, piece 479, item 4, and the same, piece 631, item 37

³⁶ Archives of Ontario: Death Registrations, 1869-1949, collection Ms935, series 89

- Joseph, the youngest brother, was adopted by the childless couple he'd first been sent to³⁷ and, after their deaths, inherited their farm³⁸.

As for Harold, he lived with three different families between 1892 and 1896. His file offers no explanation for the changes. The last farmer he stayed with described him as “*slow and heedless*”³⁹. After leaving that family, he tried to make a living as a casual farmhand, but by August 1899, age 17, he was destitute. At the Marchmont representative's suggestion, he enlisted in the Lincoln Regiment⁴⁰, an independent militia company that paid its soldiers about fifty cents a day⁴¹. The last note in his Manchester Boys' Refuges file is dated June 1903, and states: “*Is now a soldier in South America, writes occasionally to his brothers*”⁴². If John or Joseph subsequently received any correspondence from Harold, it's not mentioned in their files.



Marchmont Home representatives report

Despite what the note says, there's little likelihood that Harold would have been recruited to fight in South America. He spoke neither Portuguese nor Spanish, so would be completely isolated and unable to comprehend orders. Also, in the period 1902 through to 1905 there were no major conflicts in any Central or South American country⁴³ which might require the recruitment of foreign mercenaries.

The reference to South America may have been a misunderstanding. A more likely possibility is that he was a soldier in South Africa. Thousands of Canadians volunteered to fight alongside the British Army in South Africa against the Boers between 1899 and 1902. If Harold Hall was one of the Canadian volunteers, he must have enlisted in late 1901 or early 1902, since he was still being paid by the Lincoln Regiment for part of 1901. Although the conventional warfare phase of the Second Boer War ended in June 1900, the Boers organized themselves into guerilla units and continued attacking British troops in numerous skirmishes until the end of May, 1902⁴⁴. Amongst the Canadian units under British command was one called the Canadian Scouts. It was a freewheeling group with little respect for British military customs and a perfect foil to the Boer guerillas⁴⁵.

Amongst the lists of soldiers who served in the Canadian Scouts is one H. Hall, regimental number 338. His record includes no identifying information, not even his age, so it's no more than a possibility that this is Harold Hall of Manchester⁴⁶. Regardless of the accuracy of this identification, Harold Hall himself spoke of being in South Africa. He allegedly told Detective Inspector Frederick Wensley:

*"I once went to a brothel with a French woman at Johannesburg and she robbed me of all I had, about £30. I didn't do anything to her, but I made up my mind if it occurred again what I would do"*⁴⁷.

The present value of the stolen amount is around £4,620⁴⁸ or US\$5,800. How could Hall have acquired such a large sum? The answer may lie in the introductory remarks of the prosecutor at Hall's remand hearing: “*He had wandered about the world, and though described as a seaman, had done a good deal of mining in*

³⁷ Library and Archives Canada: 1901 Census of Canada, Marmora and Lake, Hastings (North), series RG31-C-1, page 2, family 10

³⁸ The Together Trust: Report from Marchmont Home, Joseph Hall, date obscured

³⁹ The Together Trust: Report from Marchmont Home, Harold Hall, July 3rd, 1896

⁴⁰ The Together Trust: Reports from Marchmont Home, Harold Hall, August 12th and August 15th, 1899

⁴¹ Library and Archives Canada: Dept. of Militia and Defence, Nominal Rolls and Paylists for the Volunteer Militia, 1857-1922, record group R180-100-9-E

⁴² The Together Trust: Manchester Boys' Refuges file for Harold Hall, June, 1903

⁴³ List of conflicts in Mexico - Wikipedia; List of conflicts in South America - Wikipedia

⁴⁴ Canada and the South African War (Boer War) | The Canadian Encyclopedia

⁴⁵ WarMuseum.ca - South African War - The Canadian Scouts in the Boer War

⁴⁶ Library and Archives Canada: South African War, 1899-1902, Service Files, file 20142, vol. 340, page 2, item 18899

⁴⁷ Old Street: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, pages 4 and 5

⁴⁸ www.in2013dollars.com

*South Africa*⁴⁹. ” The main mineral mined in South Africa, and particularly in the part of the country formerly occupied by the Boers, was gold.

Despite Hall’s claim that “*I have been nearly all over the world*⁵⁰,” no evidence of his presence has been found in any country during this period other than South Africa. Wherever his foreign travels may have led him, Harold Hall eventually returned to England. He told the police: “*I arrived in Liverpool 22nd October 1908 from Spain on the SS Thelma by working my passage over...*⁵¹”

Thelma was a Norwegian cargo ship⁵². But there’s no record of the Thelma arriving at Liverpool on October 22nd⁵³. In fact, there’s no record of it arriving on any day in the month of October⁵⁴. The Thelma did dock at Liverpool on November 1st, but it came from Copenhagen, not Spain⁵⁵.

Having supposedly arrived in Liverpool, Hall claimed he “*then took a weekly boat to London as a stowaway*.”⁵⁶ He doesn’t explain why he went to London. It seems an odd choice. His roots were in Manchester and, for all he knew, his parents or other relatives might still live there. The two cities were only a short train ride apart. Should he find no living relatives in Manchester, he’d still be eligible for admission to the workhouse there, based on the city being his birthplace, and it would at least provide food and somewhere to sleep until he was ready to seek work locally. In addition, he might have been able to obtain immediate treatment from the workhouse infirmary for the “*rupture*” he later mentions. If his destination had always been London, why did he take a ship to Liverpool? The voyage from Spain directly to the port of London would have been shorter and more straightforward.

Presumably the “*weekly boat to London*” was a barge that operated on the canal system created in England during the Industrial Revolution⁵⁷. It’s hard to believe that an adult could hide themselves aboard a relatively small vessel like a barge for the length of time required to reach London and not be discovered. However, that’s what Hall claims happened. Hall then said that, after reaching London, he “*entered Greenwich Hospital under the name of William Johnson and was treated for rupture [i.e. hernia⁵⁸] remaining there five weeks*.”⁵⁹ The largest medical facility in Greenwich was St. Alfege’s Hospital, the infirmary for the Greenwich Union at Vanbrugh Hill. No patient named William Johnson was admitted to St. Alfege’s in 1908 or 1909⁶⁰. However, there was another hospital in Greenwich, the successor to the original Greenwich Hospital, which had been a retirement home for Royal Navy sailors that was closed in 1869⁶¹. This other facility was called the Dreadnought Seamen’s Hospital. Its admissions register⁶² includes the following entry:

<i>Patient no.</i>	<i>180990</i>
<i>Admission date:</i>	<i>January 22nd, 1909</i>
<i>Name:</i>	<i>William Johnston</i>
<i>Quality:</i>	<i>A.B. [abbreviation for able-bodied seaman]</i>
<i>Age:</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Creed:</i>	<i>CE</i>
<i>Birthplace:</i>	<i>England</i>

⁴⁹ *The Westminster Gazette*, July 27th, 1909, page 9

⁵⁰ *Old Street: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley*, page 4

⁵¹ *Hall: page 1*

⁵² *Thelma-06 | Norskeskip 1850-2020*

⁵³ *The Liverpool Weekly Mercury*, October 31st, 1908, page 18

⁵⁴ *The Liverpool Weekly Mercury*, October 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st, 1908

⁵⁵ *The Liverpool Weekly Mercury*, November 7th, 1908, page 18

⁵⁶ *Hall, page 1*

⁵⁷ *History of the British canal system - Wikipedia*

⁵⁸ *19th Century Medical Glossary – Lochista*

⁵⁹ *Hall, page 1*

⁶⁰ *LMA: London Poor Law Hospital Registers, roll GBG/220/050, Greenwich Union Infirmary*

⁶¹ *Greenwich Hospital, London - Wikipedia*

⁶² *National Maritime Museum: Dreadnought Seamen’s Hospital Admission Register, ref. DSH/29,*

Ship: S.S. Valdivia
Port of registration: Glasgow
Owner: Gow Harrison, Glasgow
Complaint Hernia
Discharge date: February 25th, 1909
How disposed of: Healed (sent to Bognor)
No. of days in hospital: 34

90	Johnston	William	D.B.	27	C.E.	N.W.B.	England	S.S. Valdivia
Glasgow	Glasgow	Gow Harrison & Co	Hernia	Feb	25	Healed (sent to Bognor)	34	

Dreadnought Hospital's patients' registers

Hall's statement continues:

"Afterwards going to the Merchant Taylors' Convalescent Home at Bognor [Regis], Sussex for five weeks where I had a collection made for me⁶³."

The convalescent home's minute book shows a William Johnson, patient number 6570, being admitted there on February 25th, 1909, initially for three weeks. His stay was twice extended, first to March 23rd, then to March 30th, for a total of five weeks. However, no detailed patient admission records for this period have survived, so there's no identifying information, such as age or occupation, about this William Johnson⁶⁴. Still, there can be little doubt the William Johnston who received treatment for a hernia at the Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital was the William Johnson who recuperated at the Bognor convalescent home.

Since the health information Hall provided in his statement appears to be basically accurate, why did he lie about the name of his ship? Wasn't he concerned that the police would expose his deceitful narrative? Apparently not, and apparently his optimism was justified. The police didn't consider his statement to be an alibi, so there was no need to check information that didn't directly relate to the murder. As will be discussed in more detail later, their focus was on checking how accurately Hall described the crime scene and what happened there.

What is known about the S.S. Valdivia? It was a steel, single-screw steamship with a gross tonnage of 4,952. It was built at Glasgow for Gow, Harrison & Co. in 1905⁶⁵. It sank four months before Hall was hospitalized:

"News was received in London today [October 3rd, 1908] of the total loss at East London, Cape Colony [now part of the Republic of South Africa], of the British steamer, Valdivia, with a valuable cargo of Cape oil on board. The Valdivia was taking the oil for the Standard Oil Company from New York to Chefoo [a major port near Beijing, China, now called Yantai], and a day or two ago arrived off East London with eight feet of water in her funnel shaft. The leak rapidly increased, and steam pumps were sent alongside the Valdivia with a view to lightening her sufficiently to get her over the [sand]bar, and into East London harbour.

The water gained, however, to such an extent that the steamer gradually sank, and now both ship and cargo are a total loss. The Valdivia was insured for £47,000, but the cargo, valued at £50,000, is uninsured⁶⁶."

⁶³ Hall: page 1

⁶⁴ Guildhall Library: Robert Donkin's Charity, Men's Convalescent Home, Minute book (Indexed), 1906-1912, ref. CLC/L/MD/G/130/MS34243/007

⁶⁵ Gow & Harrison's 'Valdemosa' / Ships Nostalgia, post by Maritiem, dated April 13th, 2012

⁶⁶ The Evening Standard, October 3rd, 1908, page 5

“Part of the crew of the Glasgow steamer Valdivia, which foundered near the Cape last month, reached Southampton this morning [November 14th, 1908] in the Union-Castle liner Armadale Castle. The vessel was bound from New York to Chefoo, via Durban, when she struck a submerged rock and commenced to leak. The cargo of oil helped to keep her afloat for a time, but the ship had eventually to be abandoned.”⁶⁷



The wreck of the S.S. Valdivia

Assuming the information Hall gave to the Dreadnought Seamen’s Hospital was accurate and he was, indeed, a member of the crew when the Valdivia sank, why would he not want the police to know that? Perhaps there’d been some suggestion that his negligence contributed to the vessel’s sinking, and he didn’t want the newspapers linking his name to the shipwreck. From a practical viewpoint, after all this time, it’s unlikely the true reason will ever be known.

Harold Hall had begun using the name William Johnston or Johnson when he joined the crew of the Valdivia, and possibly even earlier. The false name may have been intended to help him evade someone who he believed was after him. Perhaps something Hall did while abroad had made him a wanted man, although no record has yet been found to indicate this. Alternatively, his fears may have been groundless, the product of delusion. In either case, he felt he must change his identity and cover his tracks.

At the end of his convalescence, Hall went to London. *“I then stayed in various lodging houses in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel”⁶⁸.* Of course, the lodging houses of Whitechapel didn’t keep guest registers, so there’s no way to verify this statement, but if it’s true, Hall was living in Whitechapel for six weeks after being discharged from the convalescent home. Presumably, he was wandering around the district looking for work. Hall probably used some of the money from the collection taken for him at the Bognor Regis convalescent home for his daily expenses while in Whitechapel and, perhaps, to buy the three-piece suit he wore when he returned to Whitechapel in July.

Is it possible that Harold Hall saw Kate Roman for the first time during this period? She could usually be found in the same place – outside the Britannia public house – at nighttime⁶⁹. It wouldn’t be surprising if she’d been noticed by Harold Hall during his strolls. Perhaps, even back then, he was a customer.

One story that surfaced after Roman’s death concerned her relationship with a sailor. Only one newspaper is known to have published the story, so there may be nothing to it.

“The police are keenly alert in the search after a man who was seen in the girl’s company a few days before the crime, and with whom there was, it is stated, a dispute over a sum of money. The man, who is described as having the appearance of a seaman, has not been seen in the neighbourhood since, although it is understood that “Kitty” had made some reference to a friend of hers in Duval-street about a sailor “who would have some money and who was coming to see her again”⁷⁰. ”

If Harold Hall was the seaman Kate knew, he might’ve been familiar with 12 Miller’s Court before July 1st, enabling him to describe the room even if he wasn’t actually there on the night of Roman’s death. There’s another reason to suppose the killer and Roman were already acquainted when they met on July 1st: the way the stranger behaved. Alfred Wilkins:

“noticed a man... standing close to Miller’s Court....He walked to the corner of Duval Street and stood there for a few moments, and then went toward White’s Row”⁷¹.

⁶⁷ *The Evening Standard*, November 14th, 1908, page 1

⁶⁸ Hall: page 1

⁶⁹ Stepney: PC Herbert Bursted, page 15

⁷⁰ *Lloyd’s Weekly News*, July 4th, 1909, page 2

⁷¹ Stepney: Alfred Wilkins, page 8

The corner of Duval Street was where the Britannia, Roman's favourite patch, was located. Could the murderer have arranged to meet her at Miller's Court that night and was awaiting her arrival there, but then, when she was late, went looking for her outside the Britannia?

Returning to the spring of 1909, after his sojourn in Whitechapel, Hall moved south of the Thames. "[F]rom the middle of May [I was] engaged in Salvation Army Social Work, Spa Road, Bermondsey, sorting paper and lodging at their home until 1st July..."⁷²



Salvation Army Elevator, Spa Road, Bermondsey

Hall's stay at the Salvation Army's Elevator was confirmed by a witness, John Cunningham, as described in Part 1 of this article. While there, Hall continued to masquerade as William Johnson⁷³. The events that immediately followed Hall's departure from the Salvation Army facility are also described in Part 1. According to Hall, after he'd killed Kate Roman, he "then left the room, leaving the door open, going up Commercial Road to Queen Victoria's Sailors Rest and slept there under the name of William Johnson, which name was entered in a book kept for that purpose at the Rest"⁷⁴. The porter at the Rest, John Arthur Thompson, confirmed: "I let Johnson in at 1:30 AM ... Johnson did not sleep there after [July 2nd] and I saw nothing more of him"⁷⁵.

After his night at the Seamen's Rest, Hall said he "tramped to Canterbury and Dover, sleeping at the Red Lion Public and Lodging House one night"⁷⁶. There is a Red Lion pub at Charlton Green in Dover, Kent. In 1909 its licensee was James Willis⁷⁷. Attempts to find whether any guest records from that time still survive have been unsuccessful, so this part of his story can't be verified. After that, Hall "tramped the country, arriving in Bristol on the 14th instant [July] and stayed at Stapleton Workhouse until Friday 16th instant"⁷⁸. However, there's no record of a Harold Hall or a William Johnson staying at Stapleton Workhouse any time during July, 1909⁷⁹. From there he states he "then staying Friday night at the Salvation Army, Tower Street, Bristol"⁸⁰. None of the Salvation Army locations in Bristol have records from the early 20th century, so Hall's overnight stay also cannot be confirmed.

How Harold Hall spent Saturday, July 17th, where he slept that night and what he did during the daytime on July 18th aren't described in his statement, but on the evening of Sunday, July 18th, he went to the police. What occurred at the police station that evening was recalled by the sergeant on duty, Sydney Rickards, 14A, at Harold Hall's trial:

"I was on duty in Bristol on the evening of July 18, when prisoner came up and said his name was Harold Hall and he was wanted in London for the murder of a woman whose name he believed was "Kate Rooney" in a house in a street off Commercial Street, London, at about 12 midnight on July 1. He explained the reason why he thought the name was Rooney—that he had seen an account of the murder in newspaper but could not give the name or the date of the paper—that he was a labourer out of employment and worked his passage from Spain to Liverpool, and went from there to London as a stowaway, and that sometimes he went by the name of William Johnson. He seemed to have a great load on his mind, so I cautioned him as to the serious charge he was making against himself and told him that what he was saying might be given in evidence against him. I then asked him if he would like to make a statement. He said he would, and I took down a voluntary statement. This is it (produced). I read it over to him and

⁷² Hall: page 1

⁷³ Old Street: John Cunningham, page 23

⁷⁴ Hall: page 1

⁷⁵ CCC: John Arthur Thompson, page 605

⁷⁶ Hall: page 1

⁷⁷ RED LION (Charlton) Pubs of Dover (dover-kent.com)

⁷⁸ Hall: page 1

⁷⁹ Bristol Archives: Records of Stapleton Workhouse, Creed Register, Jan. 1907-Dec. 1915; emails to author, February 29th and March 7th, 2024

⁸⁰ Hall: page 1

he signed it. I told him that he would be detained on that statement, and, in consequence of a wire from Scotland Yard the following morning, he was charged on his own confession with the murder of Kate Rooney and cautioned. The charge was read over to him and he replied, "Yes, sir," and he was taken before the justices on the 19th and handed over to the custody of Detective Inspector Wensley⁸¹."

The written statement signed by Harold Hall has the following preamble:

"Statement made by Harold Hall, age 27 years, of no fixed abode, who gave himself up at Bridewell Street Station at 7:10 PM, 18th July, 1909, and confessed to murdering a woman named Kate Roomey at London at about 12 m[idnight], 1st July, 1909.⁸²"

Harold Hall's statement itself was then read by Sergeant Rickard into the court record. Here it is, published unedited for the first time:

"I Harold Hall of no fixed abode wish to give myself up for the murder of Kate Roomey about midnight on the 1st July 1909 in a room at the top of a house in a street off Commercial Street Whitechapel by strangling her with my hand also thrusting the blade of a knife in the side of her neck. The knife which belonged to me had one blade broken. I then threw the knife on the bed. I then left the room leaving the door open, going up Commercial Road to Queen Victoria's Sailors' Rest and slept there under the name of William Johnson which name was entered in a book kept for that purpose at the Rest and left London on the 2nd instant and then tramped to Canterbury and Dover sleeping at the Red Lion public and lodging house one night, then tramped the country arriving in Bristol on the 14th instant and stayed at Stapleton Workhouse until Friday 16th instant staying Friday night at the Salvation Army Tower Street Bristol.

I arrived in Liverpool 22nd October 1908 from Spain on the SS Thelma by working my passage over then took a weekly Boat to London as a stowaway, then entered Greenwich Hospital under the name of William Johnson and was treated for Rupture remaining there five weeks afterwards going to the Merchant Taylors Convalescent Home at Bognor, Sussex for five weeks where I had a collection made for me. I then stayed in various lodging houses in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, then from the middle of May engaged in Salvation Army Social Work, Spa Road, Bermondsey, sorting paper and lodging at their home until 1st of July when I went to Shoreditch Empire in the evening and on leaving there about 10.45 PM I visited several Public Houses and afterwards when in Commercial Street I met this girl in question who stopped right in front of me and asked where I was going. I told her to get out of the road. She replied you need not be saucy and said come on, you might as well come on with us. I went with her to the room at the top of the house. I asked her to light the Gas. She replied there was none. I then took off my coat and waistcoat. She asked me to light a candle. I struck a match and found a candle on the mantelpiece at the side of the bed. I turned my head around sharp and saw her drawing her hand from my inside coat pocket. I said is that your game at the same time I flew at her in a rage and strangled her and thrust the knife in the side of her neck.

I make this statement voluntarily which is correct as read⁸³."

When cross-examined at Hall's trial, Sergeant Rickards stated:

"Prisoner appeared to be in great trouble and not to have had much rest for some time and not much food. He was not very tidy. His boots were worn and dilapidated.⁸⁴"

⁸¹ CCC: Sgt. Sydney Rickards, page 605

⁸² Hall: page 1

⁸³ Hall: pages 1 and 2

⁸⁴ CCC: Sgt. Sydney Rickards, page 605

Aside from his footwear and him being “*not very tidy*,” there’s no record of the clothes Hall was wearing when he walked into the police station. Could he still have been wearing the same three-piece suit he says he wore on July 1st?



Sketch of Harold Hall

Hall was formally charged at Bristol Police Court on July 19th, 1909. He was reported to have looked “*nervous and excited*.” He was described as “*a tall, thin man of dark complexion, and evidently sun-tanned by travel*⁸⁵.” Another paper stated: “*Hall is a man of slight build, of foreign appearance, with a thin, dark moustache*⁸⁶.”

Detective Inspector Frederick Wensley arrived in Bristol later the same day. He was shown Hall’s statement and then saw Harold Hall for the first time at about 3 pm. He said: “*We are police officers from London, and we shall arrest you on your own confession for the murder of Kate Roran [sic] at 12 Miller’s Court on the 2nd of this month*.” According to Wensley, Hall responded: “*Yes, that is true. I did it, and intended when I came here to act like a man and I mean to see it through*⁸⁷.”

As told by Wensley, during the journey back to London, Hall said to him: “*I want to tell you how it all happened*.” Wensley cautioned him: “*You must understand that what you tell me must be voluntary and I shall repeat it to the court*.” Hall responded: “*I want you to. I have not any friends here. Me and my three brothers were sent from Strangways Workhouse to Canada when we were children, and I have been nearly all over the world*.” Hall then describes being robbed in Johannesburg, coming to England, being a hospital patient, working at the Salvation Army shelter in Bermondsey (including mention of the knife and its broken shorter blade), meeting and killing Kate Roman, staying at the Sailors’ Rest in Limehouse and tramping the countryside since then⁸⁸.

Once back in London, Wensley took Hall to the Commercial Street Police Station and charged him again “*with the wilful murder of Kate Ronan [sic]. He made no reply to the charge. [The murder weapon] was lying on the Inspector’s [Travis’s] desk. Prisoner [said]: ‘That’s my knife.*⁸⁹” Hall was searched, but nothing relating to the case was found⁹⁰. Whether his clothing was checked for bloodstains is unknown.

The next morning, July 20th, Harold Hall appeared at the Old Street Police Court:

*“The accused, a tall, dark, young fellow, appeared much distressed as he entered the dock and was charged on his own confession with the murder*⁹¹.”

The newspapers didn’t describe how he was dressed, except to say he was “*a shabby-looking man*⁹².” Wensley outlined the events of the previous two days. The magistrate, Albert Cluer, asked whether the prisoner had upon him any paper containing an account of the affair. By paper, he probably meant a newspaper. He may have been wondering whether Hall’s detailed knowledge of the murder and crime scene might have been obtained from a newspaper report. Wensley replied that he had no paper on him. Hall was then remanded⁹³.

On the morning of July 27th, Wensley had Alfred Wilkins brought to the yard of the Old Street Police Court. There were eight or nine men there. Wilkins was asked to identify from amongst them the stranger he saw on the night of July 1st. He indicated Harold Hall, saying “*That is the man*⁹⁴.” At Hall’s trial in September, Wilkins was less certain about the identification. He explained that “*When I first said I recognized him, I had just got up out of a drunken sleep*⁹⁵.”

⁸⁵ *The Birmingham Evening Mail*, July 19th, 1909, page 4

⁸⁶ *The Western Daily Press*, July 20th, 1909, page 7

⁸⁷ CCC: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, page 606

⁸⁸ CCC: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, page 606

⁸⁹ *Old Street*: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, pages 6 and 7

⁹⁰ CCC: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, page 607

⁹¹ *The Evening Standard*, July 20th, 1909, page 16

⁹² *The Daily Telegraph*, July 21st, page 6

⁹³ *The North Mail*, July 21st, 1909, page 3

⁹⁴ *Stepney*: Alfred Wilkins, page 13

⁹⁵ CCC: Alfred Wilkins, page 602

In the afternoon of July 27th, the Old Street Police Court reconvened.

“Prosecuting on behalf of the Treasury, Mr. Williamson said that, apart from the confession made by the prisoner, there would be evidence to show that the knife found in the dead girl’s room undoubtedly belonged to Hall, who would further be identified as a man who was seen in her company on the night of the murder. Sergeant Rickards, of the Bristol Police, stated that in his signed confession Hall said he strangled the woman with his hands and afterwards thrust a knife into her neck. He came to London from Liverpool as a stowaway, having previously worked his passage from a port in Spain.

Alfred Wilkins of Duval-street, Spitalfields, stated that about midnight on July 1st he saw Kitty Roman walking along Duval-street in company with the prisoner. They turned together into Miller’s-court.

John Cunningham, a paper-sorter in the Salvation Army Social Home, Spa-road, Bermondsey, said that the prisoner, whom he knew as Johnson, worked there prior to the murder. The witness identified the knife produced [as evidence] as one which was found by the prisoner when they were sorting paper together. The accused left the place on July 1 and did not return.

When Mr. Williamson proposed to recall a witness and put a question to him so as to corroborate a part of Hall’s confession, Mr. Cluer, the magistrate, remarked: That is of no use at all. All this evidence is of no use. If the man withdraws the confession the case is at an end.

This concluded the evidence for the prosecution, and the prisoner, who neither asked questions nor made a statement, was committed for trial⁹⁶. ”

Magistrate Albert Cluer’s comment was an unusual intervention for a police court judge. It suggests he wasn’t impressed with the quality of the evidence. Cluer had a point. Although some newspaper reports stated that two witnesses had seen Kate Roman and her killer together⁹⁷, in fact there was only one such witness and that witness had a criminal record and a fondness for alcohol. Like Wilkins, Charles Watson saw the man but he didn’t see the man *and* Kate Roman together. Also, the absence of any fingerprint evidence in the prosecution’s presentation at the police court indicated that Hall’s prints hadn’t been found at the crime scene, not even on the murder weapon. As for the knife, it could be argued that there were thousands of such knives in London, some of which probably had broken blades; there was nothing unique about it, such as initials carved into the handle. Even Wensley admitted, *“This is quite an ordinary knife.”*⁹⁸ Thus, the case rested almost entirely on Hall’s confession. But as it turned out, that was enough.

Six weeks passed while the government made arrangements for a full-scale murder trial for Harold Hall. Tuesday, September 14th, 1909, was a dry, warm and breezy day⁹⁹. At London’s Central Criminal Court, colloquially known as the Old Bailey, Harold Hall, age 27, went on trial for the murder of Kate Roman. Except that, according to the trial transcript, the person he was accused of murdering was called Kitty Roran¹⁰⁰, and every newspaper that reported on the trial stated the victim’s name was Kitty Ronan.

By custom, the lawyers’ opening and closing statements and the judge’s summation for the jury were not preserved in the official published trial transcripts, but portions of them sometimes appeared in newspaper accounts of the trial. Likewise, any questions posed during cross-examination were omitted from the transcript and only the responses were recorded. The questions can usually be inferred from the answers. The judge assigned to the trial was Mr. Justice Coleridge, a former Liberal member of Parliament who also bore the title of the second Baron Coleridge. His father and grandfather had been senior judges¹⁰¹.

⁹⁶ *The Evening Standard*, July 27th, 1909, page 11

⁹⁷ For example: *The Western Times*, July 13th, 1909, page 8

⁹⁸ CCC: *Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley*, page 607

⁹⁹ *The Daily Mirror*, September 14th, 1909, page 3

¹⁰⁰ CCC: page 602

¹⁰¹ *The Times*, October 7th, 1907, page 8

Hall hadn't engaged a barrister to represent him at the trial, so one was appointed for him by the court. He was a gentleman named Henry Devenish Harben, whose father was chairman of the giant Prudential Assurance Company. Like Coleridge, he was an old Etonian. He aspired to be a Member of Parliament, but, although he stood for election several times, never succeeded. Instead, he and his wife became major financial supporters of the Suffragette movement¹⁰². The defense's plea was 'not guilty'¹⁰³. Whether Hall said this himself or it was said on his behalf by his counsel is unknown but given Hall's indifferent attitude before and during the trial, it probably was conveyed by Harben. The crown was represented by two experienced barristers, Richard David Muir and his brother-in-law, William Hamilton Leycester¹⁰⁴.

"Mr. R. D. Muir, in stating the case for the prosecution, said that the woman was twenty-four years of age, and had been living for some weeks prior to her death in a room at the top of a house in Miller's Court. At midnight on July 1, a man named Wilkins saw her enter the house with a man, and at 12:30 he saw the man leave alone. About 1:40 in the morning a man named Benstead who lived with Ronan, returned home, and found her lying dead on the bed. By her side was a knife, with which, there was no doubt, the murder had been committed, and great force must have been used to inflict such injuries as were found on the woman's throat.

Counsel went on to remark that the jury were probably aware that where notorious crimes had been committed and the perpetrator had not been found, a certain class of persons were prone to accuse themselves of having committed them. But no one would think of acting seriously upon such a statement unless it was corroborated. The prisoner was picked out from among eight other persons as being the man who entered the court on the night of the murder by a witness named Alfred Wilkins, and the knife which was found had been identified by a man who had worked with prisoner at a Salvation Army home as belonging to Hall¹⁰⁵."

Muir then quoted passages from Hall's statement to the Bristol police. He was followed by Harben. Mr. Harben, addressing the jury on prisoner's behalf, urged that the so-called confession was a bogus one, made up of materials obtained from the newspapers at a time when prisoner, after tramping the country for weeks, was "willing to clutch at any straw to get his next meal and his next night's lodging"¹⁰⁶.

Following the lawyers' opening statements, the witnesses were called. Although Harben cross-examined every witness except the Seamen's Rest porter, the answers his questions elicited rarely helped the accused's cause. It appears Harben wasn't completely familiar with the depositions from the inquest and the police court remand hearing. He also had an uncooperative client. His reasons for asking some of the questions are difficult to imagine, other than to satisfy his curiosity.

The first witness was Alfred Wilkins. He began by admitting he was himself in custody awaiting trial. He then related what he saw on the night of July 1st and repeated the description he'd given the police of the man who accompanied Kate Roman. He also described how he'd picked the accused out of a group of men shown to him by the police. In cross-examination, Wilkins conceded he was less certain than at the remand hearing about selecting Hall: "I am not quite so sure of him now." He admitted that he had awoken from a drunken sleep shortly before the identification occurred. Asked about his pending trial, Wilkins said he'd been charged with highway robbery with violence and had one previous conviction¹⁰⁷.

John Cunningham, the Salvation Army paper sorter, identified Hall as the man he'd known as Johnson and with whom he'd worked in Bermondsey. He described how they found the knife, that it had a broken small



Old Bailey's Statue of Justice

¹⁰² Henry Devenish Harben - Wikipedia

¹⁰³ The Evening Standard, September 14th, 1909, page 10

¹⁰⁴ CCC: page 602. LMA: London Church of England Parish Registers, Richard David Muir and Mary Beatrice Leycester, St. John the Evangelist, Lambeth, December 21st, 1889, ref. P85/JNA2/012

¹⁰⁵ The Illustrated Police News, September 25th, 1909, page 7

¹⁰⁶ The North Mail, September 15th, 1909, page 7

¹⁰⁷ CCC: Alfred Wilkins, page 603

blade and identified the knife that was shown to him in court as the same one. He said he'd last seen it on July 1st, the same day Hall left the factory for the final time. In cross-examination, Cunningham was asked why he believed Hall would not be returning when he left on July 1st; Cunningham said it was because Hall had explicitly told him so¹⁰⁸. Harben didn't challenge Cunningham's identification of the knife.



The murder weapon showing the broken smaller blade

P.C. Harry Woodley, who had drawn the plan of the crime scene used at the inquest and the remand hearing, described the dimensions and layout of 12 Miller's Court, and the distance from there to the Shoreditch Empire and to the Seamen's Rest in Poplar. In cross-examination he was asked about the position of the mantelpiece, whether the windows were covered and where the lamps were located in Duval Street. He answered the first two questions but didn't know where the Duval Street lamps were. Evidently Justice Coleridge asked him to check, because he returned later with a revised plan, showing the positions of five streetlamps in total, three in Duval Street and two in Miller's Court¹⁰⁹. This made it difficult for the defense to suggest there

was insufficient light for the stranger to be clearly seen by Wilkins, if that's what Harben was thinking when he asked about the lamps.

Henry Benstead, Kate Roman's partner, described finding her body and alerting the police. Harben asked about Roman's income; presumably, he wanted to make sure the jury understood she was a prostitute and that Benstead lived off her earnings. Benstead answered that *"She was not earning money of her own, as far as I know. I went out to support her"*¹¹⁰.

Jeremiah O'Callaghan, the stableman who went up to the flat after Benstead told him about finding Roman's body, described the body's appearance and how he found and moved the knife. Harben asked whether he saw any candles or matches in the room. O'Callaghan said he hadn't noticed any¹¹¹.

Inspector Thomas Travis of H Division also described the body's appearance, how he'd taken custody of the knife, and how the room was lit with two candles by the time he arrived. Harben asked him whether he recognized the deceased – Travis said he didn't – and whether what he saw was consistent with how Roman's killing was described in Hall's statement. The Inspector replied he didn't think the statement's description *"truly represents the murder, as there was no sign of a struggle."* He also confirmed that *"She was lying in a position to indicate recent sexual intercourse"*¹¹².

In his testimony, the divisional surgeon, Percy John Clark, also referred to *"appearances of intercourse having taken place within a couple of hours of my seeing the body."* Presumably, this referred to *"the moist semen on the drawers"* that Clark observed when he first examined Roman¹¹³. He went on: *"There was a wound in her throat which had apparently caused death by dividing the large vessels and nerves on the right-hand side of the neck."* He also opined the wound wasn't self-inflicted. In cross-examination, he was asked about the indications of strangulation. Clark said although blood had obliterated any finger marks on the throat, there were other indications of strangulation, such as the protrusion of the tongue and dilation of the pupils. In his opinion, Roman had been strangled first, then had her throat cut. Justice Coleridge, perhaps confused by what sounded like self-contradictory testimony, had his own questions for the surgeon.

Question: Did you notice anything about the nostrils?

Answer: [There was] frothy blood exuding from the nostrils.

Question: What does that point to?

¹⁰⁸ CCC: John Cunningham, page 603

¹⁰⁹ CCC: PC Harry Woodley, pages 603 and 607. The location of the revised version of the plan is unknown.

¹¹⁰ CCC: Henry Benstead, page 604

¹¹¹ CCC: Jeremiah O'Callaghan, page 604

¹¹² CCC: Thomas Travis, page 604

¹¹³ Stepney: Dr. Percy John Clark, page 5

Answer: Strangulation or suffocation.

Question: Rather than death by hemorrhage?

Answer: Yes, my lord.

Question: The tongue between the teeth, does that rather point to death by strangulation or death by hemorrhage?

Answer: It was more a sign of strangulation¹¹⁴.

This was completely contrary to Clark's testimony a few minutes earlier and the opinion he expressed at the inquest, where he said: *"In my opinion cause of death was haemorrhage from division of the large vessels on the right side of the neck, the result of an incised wound¹¹⁵."* Hemorrhage is also the cause of death shown on Roman's death record¹¹⁶. At the trial, nothing more was said about the discrepancy.

John Arthur Thompson, the porter from the Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest, confirmed that a man named Johnson had booked two beds on the afternoon of July 1st for that night, and that he'd admitted Johnson about 1:30 am on July 2nd. However, he couldn't identify Hall as the man who called himself Johnson¹¹⁷.



Seaman's Rest facade

Sydney Rickards, the Bristol police sergeant, described Hall arriving at his police station on July 18th, saying he'd murdered a woman in London about midnight on July 1st, and giving a voluntary written statement. Rickards then read the statement into the record. Harben asked him about Hall's appearance that evening. Rickards reply has already been quoted.

When Detective Inspector Frederick Wensley took the stand, he began his testimony with his arrival at the crime scene on July 2nd and what he observed there. He then recounted what Hall had told him as they were returning to London from Bristol, and that Hall had recognized the murder weapon lying on Inspector Travis's desk. Then he said:

"The case was reported in the newspapers on the morning of July 3, and the inquest opened on the 4th, and was published in the papers on the 5th. The adjourned inquest took place on the 12th and was published on the 13th. There was nothing said in it about the room being at the top of the house, or about the girl having been strangled, or about the knife having one blade broken. This passage in the Morning Advertiser – 'The doors of the houses in this court are never locked at night, so that anyone might enter;' – is the only reference that I know of to the door being open. There was nothing said about there being no gas in the room, or about a candle being found on the mantelpiece, or about the mantelpiece being by the side of the bed¹¹⁸."

In cross-examination, Harben wanted to know how thoroughly the police had compared his client's statement with the press reports. Wensley responded:

"I have looked through the newspaper reports with considerable care with the view of ascertaining the facts I have been asked. It was, of course, a good deal discussed, and the representatives of various papers came to inquire. I have in my experience met with bogus confessions¹¹⁹."

Evidently Wensley had taken notice of Albert Cluer's warning at the remand hearing that the crown's case might be precarious, so he'd compared the details of the murder as described in Hall's statement with the

¹¹⁴ CCC: Dr. Percy John Clark, pages 604 and 605

¹¹⁵ Stepney: Dr. Percy John Clark, page 6

¹¹⁶ GRO: Civil death record, Whitechapel, 1909 quarter 3, vol. 1C, page 115

¹¹⁷ CCC: John Arthur Thompson, page 605

¹¹⁸ CCC: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, pages 606 and 607

¹¹⁹ CCC: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, page 607

descriptions published in the newspapers. However, it seems he reviewed only a few newspapers. Although he was correct about no newspaper mentioning the absence of a gas supply, the candle, the mantelpiece and the broken knife blade, he was wrong about the room's location and the strangulation.

"The man with whom Roman had been living came home at nearly two o'clock this morning, and on going upstairs found the woman lying fully dressed on the bed with her throat cut... The room in which the murder was committed overlooks the court..."¹²⁰.

Dr. Clarke, divisional surgeon, said he was called to the house by the police at two o'clock yesterday morning, the house consisting of two rooms. In the upper room he saw the body of the deceased¹²¹.

It is believed from the position of the body and the absence of any sign of a struggle that the unfortunate girl was first strangled¹²².

One of the neighbours who went into the house when the discovery was made told the following story: ...When I went upstairs...it looked to me as if she had been strangled first, and then her throat was cut afterwards¹²³."

However, even though two of the details in fact had been made public, there were still four other details that hadn't been disclosed and yet were known to Hall. Equally important, his description of the murder included none of the misinformation that appeared in early newspaper reports, such as the throat being slit from ear to ear and a handkerchief being stuffed into the victim's mouth. On the face of it, Hall's statement can therefore still be considered indicative of his guilt. Of course, there's another possibility: if Harold Hall was innocent, he could have been told the details of the crime by the real murderer.

Harben wasn't finished with Wensley. He wanted to know what kind of person the victim was and what kind of people she associated with. Wensley replied:

"The deceased was a prostitute and her friends are [prostitutes]. She mixed with all sorts of characters.

Is Miller's Court in an area with much violent crime?

We have a good many crimes of violence in the neighbourhood.

Apart from the broken blade, is there anything distinctive about the murder weapon?

This is quite an ordinary knife.

Why do you think the victim had a penny in her hand and do you agree with Inspector Travis there were indications of recent intercourse?

The inference I drew from the penny in her hand was that she was in the act of robbing someone and I reported to the effect that she had been murdered practically in the act or immediately after connection...My report on the penny incident was sent to the Assistant Commissioner of Police. It was confidential and has not been published.

What can you tell the court about the steps taken by the police to identify the man seen with the victim?

I was present when Wilkins identified prisoner. I was present at the inquest and heard the evidence of Charles Watson. He said that at 11:45 on the Thursday night he met Alfred Wilkins outside 17 Duval Street—that they were talking, [and he] said he noticed a man standing at the corner of Miller's Court. The others [i.e., other witnesses] called to identify prisoner failed to do so¹²⁴."

¹²⁰ *The Evening Standard*, July 2, 1909, page 15

¹²¹ *The Evening Dispatch*, July 3rd, 1909, page 6

¹²² *The Sevenoaks Chronicle*, July 9th, 1909, page 6

¹²³ *The Illustrated Police News*, July 10th, 1909, page 3

¹²⁴ CCC: Det. Insp. Frederick Wensley, page 607

Harben didn't ask Wensley about the absence of fingerprint evidence or whether Hall's clothing was checked for bloodstains. No witnesses testified for the defense.

"The jury took ten minutes to find the prisoner 'Guilty.' Asked if he had anything more to say, Hall shook his head. Mr. Justice Coleridge, in passing sentence, said:

"You have been found guilty of a cruel murder. You have made the only legal reparation possible by a full and free confession of your guilt, and if by that you mean, which I believe you to mean, to express your contrition, you made the only moral atonement open to you. The law, which you have broken, must take its course"¹²⁵. ""

[Hall] made no observation when sentence of death was pronounced and walked lightly from the dock¹²⁶.

"after sentence of death, which he heard unmoved, he nodded to his counsel as he turned to leave the dock"¹²⁷. "

In the light of modern research, the trial's outcome was not surprising.

"Confessions exert a strong biasing effect on the perceptions and decision-making of criminal justice officials and lay jurors alike because most people assume that a confession, especially a detailed confession, is, by its very nature, true. Confession evidence therefore tends to define the case against a defendant, usually overriding any contradictory information or evidence of innocence"¹²⁸. "

The passing mention by Wensley in his testimony of a confidential report "on the penny incident" to the Assistant Commissioner is perhaps what he referred to obliquely in his autobiography when he wrote: *"So far as my duty permitted, I went to much trouble to ensure that the authorities should know the whole facts of the case."* The brief account of the case that Wensley gives doesn't name any of the players. He wrote that it caused him more personal anxiety than many other more famous cases. According to his version:

"A woman was found stabbed to death in a room in which she lived, in an East End alley. From the circumstances we came to the conclusion that she had lured some man – probably a seaman – there to rob him., and that when her purpose became apparent, he had, in a fit of rage, struck at her with a knife, and, not realizing he had killed her, walked out of the place. After a while the man was found at Bristol and, as I was bringing him back to London, he told a story that confirmed our theory in every particular. He was a seaman in ill health, who had had a very rough time after being robbed by a woman in South Africa of everything he possessed. He had recently been discharged from a hospital when he met the woman who he was now accused of having murdered. When she tried to rob him, the remembrance of the previous episode caused him to lose all self-control, and he had struck her down."

On October 4th Wensley was summoned to the Home Office to give his views in person, and as a result Hall was reprieved. Wensley commented: *"I must admit that a load was taken off my mind"¹²⁹. "* He doesn't elaborate on exactly what his views were.

MURDERER REPRIEVED.

Harold Hall, who surrendered to the Bristol police and confessed to having murdered Kitty Ronan, a young woman, in a room in Miller's-court, Duval-street, Spital-fields, London, and who was sentenced to death at the Central Criminal Court on September 14, has been reprieved, by the Home Secretary.

Reprieve as reported in a local newspaper

As far as the author can determine, the announcement of the reprieve appeared in none of the major English newspapers¹³⁰, so almost nobody knew about it.

During his career, Wensley dealt with some of the toughest people in London, but he may have been taken in by Harold Hall. He never seems to have asked himself why Hall used a false name, why he stole

¹²⁵ *The Illustrated Police News*, September 25th, 1909, page 7

¹²⁶ *The Sevenoaks Chronicle*, September 17th, 1909, page 6

¹²⁷ *The Illustrated Police News*, September 25th, 1909, page 7

¹²⁸ Richard A. Leo, *False Confessions: Causes, Consequences, and Implications* (<https://jaapl.org/content/37/3/332>)

¹²⁹ *Forty Years of Scotland Yard* by Frederick Porter Wensley; Doubleday, Doran & Co., Garden City, New York, 1931, page 275

¹³⁰ The only papers in which it has been found to date are: *The Cornish Echo*, October 8th, 1909, page 3, and *The Sunday Dispatch*, October 10th, 1909, page 4

a knife from the Salvation Army just twelve hours before the murder, why he hung around the most notorious street in London at midnight and why, if his intent wasn't lethal, he both strangled and stabbed Roman. Aren't Hall's words to Wensley, that "*I made up my mind if it [being robbed by a prostitute] occurred again what I would do*"¹³¹, " the essence of premeditation?

Following his reprieve from execution, Hall was sent to Maidstone Prison in Kent to begin serving a life sentence. The prison's return in the 1911 England Census describes him as an able-bodied seaman, age 29, single and born in Toronto, Canada¹³². The physical characteristics documented on his inmate records¹³³ were:

Height: 5ft. 7 ½ in.
 Complexion: dark
 Hair: black
 Eyes: brown
 Marks: mole under and on right eyebrow; scar left cheek

There's no mention of a scar on Hall's torso, which is surprising for a person who, less than a year earlier, had surgery for a hernia. The same record showed him as being born in 1881 in Belleville, Canada, so perhaps the whole record should be considered unreliable.

At some point between 1911 and 1917 Hall was transferred from Maidstone to Parkhurst Prison on the Isle of Wight¹³⁴. On March 19th, 1917, he was granted parole and a week later he was released¹³⁵. No document has yet come to light that explains why a person convicted by a jury of a brutal murder became a free man after less than eight years imprisonment.

The answer might reside in Hall's prison inmate file. Attempts to locate it have been unsuccessful so far. This is regrettable, because access to his file might also help answer some other questions, such as who he corresponded with while incarcerated. Did he write to or receive letters from either of his surviving brothers in Canada, and what might they reveal about events that occurred before Kate Roman's murder?

According to Frederick Wensley:

*"Twenty years afterwards, in 1929, this same man called upon me at Scotland Yard, to thank me. He had been released during the war, had volunteered for the army. He had served in France and elsewhere with distinction, reaching, I think, the rank of sergeant"*¹³⁶.

No British Army service file or medal card has been found for a Harold Hall that can be positively identified as the one convicted of murdering Kate Roman. Possibly his military record was amongst the millions of World War I service files and other documents that were destroyed when the Army Records Centre was bombed in 1940 during the London Blitz¹³⁷. As it is, we have only Wensley's hearsay evidence that Hall was a wartime soldier.

There is however one record from 1917 that describes a man named Harold Hall as a soldier. On April 25th of that year, at the church of St. Paul in Battersea, Wandsworth, Harold Hall, age 34, bachelor, married Janie Brien, age 25, spinster. The groom's

1917. Marriage solemnized at <u>St Paul's Church</u> in the Parish of <u>Battersea</u> in the County of <u>London</u>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
88	<u>April 25th 1917.</u>	<u>Harold Hall</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>Bachelor</u>	<u>Soldier</u>	<u>14p. Hb. Road</u>	<u>William Hall</u>	<u>Seaman</u>
		<u>Janie Brien</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>Spinster</u>		<u>14p. Hb. Road</u>	<u>Thomas Brien</u>	<u>Scaffolder</u>

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Anglican Church by Reverend or after — by me,

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Harold Hall in the Presence of us, Ellen Cooper a. l. Brien

Janie Brien Kate Cooper ass. curate

Harold Hall and Janie Brien's marriage certificate

¹³¹ CCC: Frederick Wensley, page 606

¹³² UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911, ref. RG14PN4159 RD51 SD3 ED32 SN9999

¹³³ UK National Archives: Metropolitan Police, Criminal Record Office, Habitual Criminals Registers and Miscellaneous Papers, ref. MEPO 6/29

¹³⁴ UK National Archives: Metropolitan Police, Criminal Record Office, Habitual Criminals Registers and Miscellaneous Papers, ref. MEPO 6/29

¹³⁵ Harold Hall | The Digital Panopticon

¹³⁶ Forty Years of Scotland Yard by Frederick Porter Wensley; Doubleday, Doran & Co., Garden City, New York, 1931, page 275

¹³⁷ The 1940 fire at Arnside Street - The Long, Long Trail (longlongtrail.co.uk)

rank or profession is shown as Soldier, Hants. Regt. [i.e., Hampshire Regiment]. His father's name was William Hall, deceased, and the father's rank or profession was jeweler¹³⁸.

If this is the Harold Hall who was convicted of murdering Kate Roman, his actual age was 33¹³⁹ and his father, although called William, was a house painter¹⁴⁰, not a jeweler. Given the dysfunctional family of which Harold Hall was a member, mistaken beliefs about his exact birthdate and his father's work are conceivable. Alternatively, mis-stating his age and father's profession wouldn't be out of character to a man who had a record of deceit. That the groom at the wedding is a convicted murderer seems at least possible.

On a more positive note, if ex-convict Harold Hall had indeed enlisted in the British Army immediately after his release, the Royal Hampshire's would have been his regiment, because the Isle of Wight, where he was imprisoned, is off the coast of the county of Hampshire and anyone recruited there would naturally have been assigned to that regiment.

Hall's new wife, the former Jane Teresa Brien, was born at 28 Weston Street, Battersea, Surrey on July 3rd, 1890. Her parents were Cornelius Brien, builder's laborer, and Jane Brien, formerly Neville¹⁴¹. When she was baptized on July 27th, her middle name was recorded as Treazer, and her father's trade was shown as scaffolder¹⁴². Jane Brien contracted infantile paralysis, also known as poliomyelitis or simply polio¹⁴³, before she was ten¹⁴⁴. The extent of the disease's damage to her body isn't known.

Because Jane Brien lived in south London¹⁴⁵ and probably had limited mobility, and because the wedding took place only a month after Hall's release from Parkhurst, most likely they became acquainted through correspondence that began when Hall was still a prisoner. Again, access to Hall's inmate file might make it possible to clarify their early relationship.

After the wedding, Harold Hall and his new wife would have had very little time together before he had to rejoin his regiment for basic training. During the previous twelve months, various battalions of the Royal Hampshire's had participated in some major World War I offensives in Europe and suffered heavy losses¹⁴⁶. Reinforcements were needed, so he and other new recruits would have been shipped to France as soon as possible, probably no later than October.

After the signing of the Armistice between Germany and its opponents on November 11th, 1918, most of the Royal Hampshire battalions demobilized¹⁴⁷. Perhaps Harold Hall returned to England in time to celebrate Christmas with his wife.

On October 18th, 1920, Jane gave birth to a daughter, Marjorie Ellen, at the General Lying-in Hospital on York Road in Lambeth, London. The

1920	Marjorie Ellen	Harold Hall	Jane Teresa	164 Usk Rd	Seaman	C.B. Worr
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Marjorie Ellen Hall's baptism record

father was identified as Harold Hall, Seaman Merchant Service, of 164 Usk Road, Battersea¹⁴⁸. Marjorie was baptized on November 21st, 1920, at the same church where her parents were married; their home address and the father's occupation are the same as on the birth record¹⁴⁹. She proved to be their only child. When the England Census was completed on June 19th, 1921, the record¹⁵⁰ for 164 Usk Road, Battersea shows:

- Jane O'Brien, head, 69 years 11 months, female, married, birthplace: London

¹³⁸ LMA: London Church of England Parish registers, 1754-1938, ref. P70/PAU/006

¹³⁹ GRO: Civil birth record, Chorlton, 1882 quarter 2, vol. 8C, page 728

¹⁴⁰ Manchester Archives and Local Studies: Anglican Parish Registers, 1754-1930, archive roll 718

¹⁴¹ GRO: Civil birth record, Wandsworth, 1890 quarter 3, vol. 1D, page 618

¹⁴² LMA: London Church of England Parish registers, ref. P70/JN/004

¹⁴³ Polio - Wikipedia

¹⁴⁴ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1901, class RG 13, piece 454, folio 98, page 9. FMP incorrectly transcribes the surname as O'Brien.

¹⁴⁵ UK National Archives: Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911, ref. RG14PN2223 RG78PN76 RD26 SD3 ED3 SN276

¹⁴⁶ Timeline - The Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum

¹⁴⁷ Timeline - The Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum

¹⁴⁸ GRO: Civil birth record, Lambeth, 1920 quarter 4, vol. 1D, page 441

¹⁴⁹ LMA: London Church of England Parish Registers, ref. P70/Pau/010

¹⁵⁰ UK National Archives, Census Returns for England and Wales, 1921, series RG 15, piece 02266, schedule 3. The transcription on Findmypast.com is full of errors

- *Cornelius O'Brien, son, 36 years 9 months, male, single, birthplace: Battersea, London, occupation: Pedlar*
- *Jane Hall, daughter, 28 years 11 months, female, married, birthplace: Battersea, London*
- *Marjorie Hall, grand-daughter, 8 months, female, birthplace: Lambeth, London*

Hall wasn't at home when the census was completed. Why his mother-in-law and brother-in-law chose to show their surname as O'Brien rather than the name by which they'd always previously been known, Brien, is a mystery.

Based on his daughter's birth and baptism entries, Harold Hall, after returning to England at the end of World War I, had found work as a merchant seaman. His Merchant Navy Central Records card¹⁵¹, which bears his signature, provides basic information:

<i>Surname:</i>	<i>HALL</i>
<i>Christian Name:</i>	<i>Harold</i>
<i>Birth Year:</i>	<i>1882</i>
<i>Place:</i>	<i>Manchester</i>
<i>Dis[charge] A No.:</i>	<i>1115260</i>
<i>Rating:</i>	<i>Sailor</i>
<i>Height:</i>	<i>5'9"</i>
<i>Colour Eyes:</i>	<i>Brown</i>
<i>Hair:</i>	<i>Black</i>
<i>Complexion:</i>	<i>Dark</i>
<i>Distinguishing marks:</i>	<i>[Blank]</i>

Another Merchant Navy card, showing the code numbers of the ships on which he was a crew member, indicates he served on three vessels between 1924 and 1927¹⁵².

When Hall visited Frederick Wensley at Scotland Yard in 1929, as already described, Wensley says: "*I was able to give him an opportunity to earn a living in a decent way*¹⁵³." Wensley seems to be implying that Hall, at the time of his visit, was unemployed, or, perhaps, under-employed, and that he helped Hall find full-time work. He gives no hint as to the nature of that work. Amongst the ripples from the Great Depression in 1929 was that "*the demand for European exports declined*¹⁵⁴." Many of those who worked on merchant ships, dependent as they were on cargo shipments for their employment, were idled. Harold Hall needed a different way of making a living, and it seems Wensley gave it to him.

Whilst Frederick Wensley's help may have taken care of Hall's financial concerns, it seems that his home situation was also parlous. By 1932, Hall and his wife had separated. Jane Teresa Hall became the only adult occupant of the house at 164 Usk Road, Battersea¹⁵⁵. There seems to have been a reconciliation of sorts in 1935: an Alfred William Johnson joined Mrs. Hall and her daughter at the house, but as a tenant, not an owner¹⁵⁶. The addition of "*Alfred*" to Harold Hall's usual pseudonym hardly disguises his presence, but it's the first evidence that his wife had been made aware of his dual identity. It's also evidence that the man she married was indeed the convicted murderer of Kate Roman.

5075	Rw	Ow	Hall, Jane Teresa	164
5076	R	—	Johnson, Alfred William	164

1935 Electoral Register

¹⁵¹ UK National Archives: Britain, Merchant Seamen, 1921-1941, series BT 349, card type CR1, date stamp year: 1924

¹⁵² UK National Archives: Britain, Merchant Seamen, 1921-1941, series BT 348, card type CR2, date stamp year: 1924

¹⁵³ *Forty Years of Scotland Yard* by Frederick Porter Wensley; Doubleday, Doran & Co., Garden City, New York, 1931, pages 275 and 276

¹⁵⁴ *The Great Depression in Britain - Historic UK* (historic-uk.com)

¹⁵⁵ LMA: Register of Electors, 1932; Parliamentary Borough of Battersea, St. John Ward, page 521

¹⁵⁶ LMA: Register of Electors, 1935; Parliamentary Borough of Battersea, St. John Ward, page 475

Harold Hall's resumption of a false identity nearly twenty years after being paroled suggests he may have developed a psychological need for an alter ego, or perhaps it was the re-emergence of a need that stretched back to his days before his return to England in 1908. After all, he had joined the crew of the doomed oil tanker *Valdivia* as William Johnston, a persona that segued into William Johnson and now had become Alfred William Johnson. Were Hall's name changes accompanied by personality changes? Was that why his marriage broke down?

The marital reunion was short-lived. In 1936, the name of Jane Hall's housemate changed to William Rodger, who was again a tenant¹⁵⁷ and remained a tenant in 1937¹⁵⁸. William Rodger seems to have been a real person, not just another false front. There was at least one man of that name living in Battersea in the 1930's, a bar cellarman born in 1911¹⁵⁹. He married a Wandsworth native called Maria Carrana in 1938¹⁶⁰.

After 1937, Jane Hall remained at 164 Usk Road for many years, but never with another adult except her daughter Marjorie, who celebrated her 21st birthday on October 18th, 1941¹⁶¹. Marjorie left the family home a few years later when she married George C. Ride, a pattern maker, in 1943¹⁶². As for the man born Harold Hall, it's hard to track a person with multiple randomly shifting identities, as was probably his intent. He may have stayed in England, returned to North America or ended up anywhere a ship could take him. After 1935, he simply disappears.

Was Hall telling Wensley the truth when he said he did nothing to the Johannesburg prostitute who stole his money? When Kate Roman led her last customer up the stairs to her unlit room, who followed her? Was it Harold Hall or William Johnson or Arthur Johnson or something even darker?

Whatever became of...?

Jane Teresa Hall lived alone at 164 Usk Road, Battersea until at least 1965. She died on August 5th, 1977, age 88, at St. John's Hospital in Battersea, Wandsworth. The causes of death were myocardial degeneration and arteriosclerosis¹⁶³.

Marjorie Ellen Hall, together with her husband, George Ride, had two daughters, Susan in 1948 and Sally in 1950. Marjorie died at Crawley, Sussex in 1996, age 75¹⁶⁴.

Frederick Porter Wensley had a distinguished career in the Metropolitan Police for another twenty years after Hall's conviction. He was promoted several times, ending his career as chief constable of the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard¹⁶⁵. Upon retirement in 1929, he began receiving an annual pension of £605¹⁶⁶. Two years later his memoir was published as *Detective Days* in England and *Forty Years of Scotland Yard* in the United States¹⁶⁷. The book must have been a bestseller; when Wensley died in December, 1949¹⁶⁸, he left an estate valued at £15,429 and 10 shillings¹⁶⁹. The 2024 equivalent of that amount is £683,000¹⁷⁰, close to US\$860,000.

Acknowledgement

The author is indebted to Caroline Flint, Record and Archives Officer, The Together Trust, for providing most of the records used for this article's description of the lives of the Hall brothers in Canada. Such records are © *The Together Trust*.

¹⁵⁷ LMA: Register of Electors, 1936; Parliamentary Borough of Battersea, St. John Ward, page 459

¹⁵⁸ LMA: Register of Electors, 1937; Parliamentary Borough of Battersea, St. John Ward, page 459

¹⁵⁹ UK National Archives: 1939 England and Wales Register, ref. RG 101/25C

¹⁶⁰ GRO: Civil marriage record, Battersea, 1938 quarter 3, vol. 1D, page 1137

¹⁶¹ GRO: Civil birth record, Lambeth, 1920 quarter 4, vol. 1D, page 441

¹⁶² GRO: Civil marriage record, Battersea, 1943 quarter 1, vol. 1D, page 396

¹⁶³ GRO: Civil death record, Wandsworth, 1977 quarter 3, vol. 15, page 1146

¹⁶⁴ GRO: Civil death record, Crawley, 1996, month 5, district 7801A, register A43A, entry 073

¹⁶⁵ Wikipedia: Frederick Wensley, Life and career

¹⁶⁶ UK National Archives: Metropolitan Police Pension Registers, MEPO 21

¹⁶⁷ Wikipedia: Frederick Wensley, Published works

¹⁶⁸ GRO: Civil death record, Wood Green, 1949 quarter 4, vol. 5F, page 459

¹⁶⁹ England High Court of Justice: Calendar of All Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration Made in the Probate Registries, 1950

¹⁷⁰ www.in2013dollars.com

Notes

Abbreviations

CCC = Central Criminal Court, London

Rex v Harold Hall, September 14th, 1909, a transcript is available at [t19090907-77 | The Proceedings of the Old Bailey \(oldbaileyonline.org\)](https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/record/19090907-77). In the on-line trial transcript, the trial date is incorrectly indexed and shown in the heading as September 7th, which was the date on which the judicial session began. Within that session, the trial of Harold Hall took place on September 14th, as is clearly stated in the official printed hard-copy record of the trial.

GRO General Register Office, London, England

Hall Harold Hall's Statement to the police in Bristol, Gloucestershire, July 18th, 1909

LMA London Metropolitan Archives

Old Street Old Street Police Court, London, remand hearing for Harold Hall, July 20th, 1909

Stepney Stepney Coroner's Court Inquest on the body of Kate Roman, depositions, July 3rd and 12th, 1909

Quotes to Cogitate On...

"On my return I found the Jack-the-Ripper scare in full swing. When the stolid English go in for a scare they take leave of all moderation and common sense. If nonsense were solid, the nonsense that was talked and written about those murders would sink a Dreadnought."

The Lighter Side of My Official Life by Robert Anderson. Hodder and Stoughton, 1910

...Weird

Coincidences...

If the memoirs of Detective Chief Inspector Walter Dew are to be believed, as well as catching one of the most infamous murderers of the 20th Century, Dr Hawley Crippen in 1910, he also knew Mary Jane Kelly prior to her murder in 1888...

Elizabeth Long was a key witness in the murder of Annie Chapman. The next victim, Elizabeth Stride, as known to her friends as 'Long Liz'...

When Mary Ann Nichols's body was being prepared for burial it was removed from the mortuary via Chapman's Court to an undertakers on Hanbury Street...the next victim was Annie Chapman on Hanbury Street...

Conversations

That Could Have Happened

By Jurriaan Maessen



With almost all of the police attention focused on carrot-moustached miscreants carrying pots of ale (not to mention the fascinatingly detailed accounts of eyelash-discerning mythomaniacs loitering outside), it is no wonder that any investigation into the Miller's Court victim would not have extended too far beyond a 12-hour radius in both temporal directions of November 9. After all, appeasing future researchers preoccupied with finding Mary Kelly was hardly a concern that bothered the contemporary mind; any police resource would for obvious reasons be allocated towards the atrocity itself, not towards some peripheral debate between Mary Jane Kelly antecedent-connoisseurs trying to reconstruct her pre-9 November whereabouts.

All the more surprising that on November 12th several newspapers had described an attempt by a City police sergeant named Bradshaw to follow up on an apparent lead suggesting Mary Kelly nightly visited a certain public-house at Fish Street Hill, Bishopsgate (City territory). "(...) On making inquiry at the house in question", the report states, "(Bradshaw) found that she had not been there for upwards of a month past." In the atmosphere of crazed hysteria following the murder in Miller's Court, 'a month past' must have seemed like a sheer eternity, so as far as we know that ended the inquiry then and there.

Considered in its proper context, the decision to not further pursue the matter was quite understandable, although it doesn't exactly lessen our feelings of unease whenever we are confronted with such unelaborated upon statements hinting at Mary Jane Kelly having taken up her old line of work prior to October 30th: the date on which Joseph Barnett had (by his own account) terminated his relationship with the deceased.

In both his inquest statement and an early interview with a Star reporter, Barnett appears to suggest that Kelly had abstained from prostitution altogether during the entire eighteen months of their cohabitation, at least up until the time of their separation just ten days prior to the murder, emphasizing that "he and the deceased were very happy and comfortable together until another woman came to sleep in their room, to which he strongly objected."

"That was the only reason, not because I was out of work", he added.

This statement was vehemently counter-argued at the inquest by Julia Venturney, who had this to say about the relationship: "She told me that she was fond of another man, that she could not bear the man Joe she was living with, although he was very good to her."

Although nightly visits to a public house and soliciting prostitution does not necessarily amount to the same thing, there do exist some additional indications pointing to Kelly having taken up the trade some time before Barnett claimed she had. The first suggestion countering Barnett's apparent insistence on Mary Jane's virtue originates from none other than John McCarthy, who stated that "since her murder I have discovered that she was an unfortunate, and walked the streets in the neighborhood of Aldgate", effectively pleading ignorance. McCarthy did add that "her (Kelly's) habits were irregular, and she often came home at night the worse for drink." Kelly's former landlady at Breezer's Hill had told a reporter that "some short time ago, she was aroused about two o'clock one morning by Mrs. Kelly, who came with a strange man and asked Mrs. M'Carthy to give her a bed, which she did, receiving two shillings in payment." Finally there was the claim by a police constable named Edward Newberry stating upon his retirement in 1911 that he had locked up Kelly for drunkenness "some little time before she was done to death". Confirmation of the claim was subsequently accomplished when Newberry's name was discovered on a Thames court record dated September 19th, 1888, recording the

arrest of a 22-year-old Mary Jane Kelly and 56-year-old man named David Curby for being drunk and disorderly. Another very likely instance of Mary Jane engaged in prostitution during the time she lived with Barnett at Miller's Court.

The obvious discrepancy between Barnett's version of events and the aforementioned hints has made some researchers presuppose some nefarious motive on his part, some of them even going so far as to propose a suspect candidacy for the poor fellow. Apart from the obvious fallacy of such a proposition, one would imagine a competent sleuth like Abberline to have at least questioned Barnett about the discrepancies at some point. In fact, I'm reasonably confident that he did just that.

I'm also fairly confident that something made him realize that pressing him on the matter may have resulted in some sort of personality implosion on the part of Barnett which may in turn have jeopardized the chances for a coherent inquest testimony. On the other hand, the apparent discrepancies did not appear to have weighed too heavily on his mind. Or the coroners for that matter, who seems to have had a similarly forgiving attitude towards Kelly's former lover-by-convenience, addressing him with the distinctly commiserating words: "You have given your evidence very well indeed."

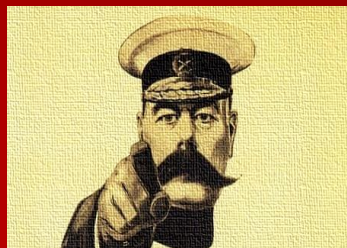
Good boy!

My guess is that both the detectives and the coroner at some point concluded the witness was either unaware of Kelly's activities during their cohabitation, or he chose to sanitize the truth on her behalf. In either case, it wouldn't have had any particular bearing on the case at hand. Whatever the circumstance I get the distinct impression that Barnett may have suffered from a form of simpleminded utopianism, prompting him to paint an incongruous idyll of their relationship. An idyll likely not shared by Kelly.



An advert taken from the Penny Illustrated, 18th February 1888. Despite its claims to be natural and harmless, it did, in fact, contain 65mg of morphine per fluid ounce. First patented in 1845, it was so popular that Edward Elgar wrote a piece for a wind quintet entitled *Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup*. The product was eventually withdrawn from sale in 1930.

SUGGESTIONS? COMMENTS? QUESTIONS? COMPLAINTS?



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Did Jack the Ripper ever come to Los Angeles?

by

James T Bartlett

Los Angeles has had several memorable serial killers – the Night Stalker, the Grim Sleeper, the Sunset Strip Killers, the Golden State Killer, Charles Manson and his Family – but a connection between Los Angeles and Jack the Ripper isn't immediately apparent, besides inspiring countless Hollywood screenwriters.

The usage of words like “boss,” “right away,” and “fix me,” in some of the letters written by the Ripper seemed to suggest an American slant, though this is of course assuming they were genuine and they weren't used to shift suspicion to the ever-popular suspect: a “foreigner.” That said, in the wake of the murders the Press did seize excitedly on a few American copycats/possible suspects, perhaps most notably Francis Tumblety from St Louis, Missouri. But was there a chance the Ripper went West? In the early 1880s Los Angeles was a near-lawless backwater of 11,000 souls, but just a decade later it had 50,000 residents and was growing fast. People of every stripe were arriving daily, and there were real suspicions that Jack the Ripper had been roaming the streets there.

“Jack the Ripper Again on Deck” was the headline in the *Los Angeles Herald* of March 17, 1892, the story having hit the headlines because a day or so earlier an Albert Oliver Williams had been arrested near Perth, Australia, and charged with murdering his wife Emily in Melbourne.

Jack the Ripper Again on Deck.

His Identity Believed to Be Established.

Williams had arrived in Australia with Emily in late 1891, but had left behind something gruesome in his former family home at Rainhill, Liverpool. Workmen there had noticed a noxious smell coming from under the kitchen floor and digging down they found the bodies of a twelve-year-old girl, two smaller children and his wife Marie who clutched the body of a young baby in her arms. They had all been murdered and several of them had their throats cut. Now, barely a few months later, Emily had suffered the same brutal fate on the opposite side of the world, and messages began telegraphing back and forth across 10,500 miles. Soon enough a theory emerged that Williams was in fact the infamous Jack the Ripper, on the run from the police in England.

Police calculated that his regular trips from Liverpool to London coincided with the dates of the Whitechapel murders, and the *Herald* reported that Williams' appearance “tallies exactly” with descriptions of a man seen with several of the Ripper's victims. The report added that the brutality of his Liverpool murders suggested “the ferocity of Jack the Ripper,” and that “the question of who Williams really is, and how he lives, is a mystery.” The next day the *Herald* reported that Williams' real name was Frederick Bailey Deeming and revealed that he had a long career of theft, bigamy, deception and murder from around the world.

A month later on April 17, the *Los Angeles Times* jumped on the bandwagon and added fascinating further details about Deeming/Williams, who they described as a “phenomenal villain,” and “a fiend in human form.” According to their report, a man named Charles H Williams had lived in Los Angeles around 1887 and in January 1888, some four months before the murder of Mary Ann Nichols in Whitechapel, he had married a “worthy lady” named Nannie Catching before stealing around \$2,500 from her (around \$70,000 in today's money) and disappearing without a trace.

The article had a melodramatic, jokey tone, describing Charles as a “fascinating fellah,” and how Nannie, a respected music teacher and singer, came to hear the “seraphic strains” of his voice at the First Baptist Church on Sunday mornings. The “exceedingly popular” Charles was “so nice, you know,” and after he “laid siege” to her affections for fifteen months, they had been married at Central Baptist Parsonage.

A MUSIC TEACHER FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF A FAKIR.

Nannie's friends had been sceptical about Charles from the start and warned her against marrying him but alas she didn't listen. A few months later the "hypocritical scoundrel" and "arch hypocrite" shed "crocodile's tears" about a few hundred dollars he had "used" (presumably meaning taken from her without permission), but faithfully vowed to repay. Impressed by his honesty, Nannie had been lulled into a false sense of security and when she came home from giving music lessons to find a note saying he had gone to Temecula on business (some eighty-five miles south) and would be back in a couple of days, she wasn't worried. But as those days passed "anxiety took the place of eager expectation," and of course Charles never returned. There wasn't even



a wedding photo as a memento for Nannie, as her estranged husband had studiously avoided having his picture taken.

The report added that Deeming may have developed an accent (or pretended to have one), which allowed him to pass as American and/or Australian and noted other small similarities between him and Charles. Both were Freemasons, good at singing, and had mechanical and engineering knowledge. More substantial evidence came in the form of several illustrations that featured a "desperado" with a large, drooping moustache and a big hat who was said to be Charles Williams on a hiking trip to Pasadena, some ten miles outside Los Angeles.

The report insisted these hiking illustrations closely matched a photograph and illustration of Deeming (which also featured in the report) and that Nannie was lucky to be rid of such an "unmitigated scoundrel." Even so, we can only imagine her shock when she learned from the newspapers that her lying, missing husband had been accused of being a multiple murderer, let alone Jack the Ripper.



The *Times* had dug up the 1888 report about Nannie's fake husband when an anonymous Los Angeles attorney saw the portrait of Deeming in the *New York Post* following the Australian arrest and was sure that



he was the Charles H Williams he knew in LA back in 1887. The attorney had contacted the *Times* about his suspicions and they ran a chronological table of Deeming's known whereabouts, aliases and crimes from the years 1880 to 1892, with a "hiatus" noted between parts of 1886-1889, the obvious implication being that this was perhaps when he was in California. The attorney also recalled a train journey he had shared with Charles and former real estate broker Charles E Lloyd. When the attorney had spoken about a case involving a man who had repeatedly married women, stolen their money then deserted them, he was shocked how animated Charles became, and how many questions he asked about it. So much so in fact that he was convinced he was talking to a similar kind of criminal.



The report then mentioned shoemaker Thomas Shooter, who said that in 1886 he had met a Charles H Williams in San Francisco and gave him a job at his business on Commercial Street in downtown Los Angeles. Presenting himself as something of a global traveller, Charles said he was a former shoe salesman from Australia and was described as having "agreeable and insinuating manners" and being "a good conversationalist." He was said to be rather boastful too and spoke of large sums of money he had made in the mines during his time in Australia.

Charles worked at the shoe store for a year and boarded with the Shooters, though he always slept with the light on because he was "nervous of the night." The Shooters never truly warmed to their employee/lodger however and when Charles said he needed a loan of \$200 to go into a real estate business with a J J Southworth

(some reports say Southwick), they refused. Charles left immediately and obtained the money from someone else: Nannie Catching.

More darkly, Mrs Shooter recalled that Charles told her he had been married with a child in Australia but when his wife had died he had “danced for joy on her grave.” It was a comment that chillingly bough to mind where Emily’s body was found; under a bedroom hearthstone. Mrs Shooter also said that he admitted to her he often sought out women with money and that he frequently contradicted himself about his past.

Additionally, the Shooters and Southworth confirmed that there was a striking resemblance between Charles and the portrait of Deeming, something the *Times* called “one of the most remarkable coincidences on record.” Southworth, who found Charles distrustful in financial matters, mentioned the similarities without even knowing who the subject of the portrait was.

Charles finally fled Los Angeles when he was recognized on the street by a “lady from Ohio” and Shooter subsequently found a photograph taken in Ohio among his abandoned personal effects. Was she another scammed wife/victim? Could this Charles Williams have evolved into Albert Williams, murderer of his children and two wives and were they both aliases used by Deeming?

At this time the *Herald* and *Times* newspapers were fierce rivals and having been somewhat scooped about this possible sensation, the *Herald* hit back the next day, April 18, 1892, calling the *Times* story “bosh.” They reported that Nannie now said her husband was actually named William Williams and that in 1883 he worked for a secret organization (and at a boot factory) in Sydney, Australia. Deeming was in Sydney at the same time, but in prison, so the *Times*’ “scoop” was dismissed as a coincidence of names and geography. Nannie now said the pictures and illustrations in the *Times* were not a match and contradicted several other things they had reported too. “Thus is the sensation exploded” concluded the *Herald*, though it is more likely Nannie was trying to save herself further embarrassment. The following day, April 19, the *Times* noted that their enquiries showed Deeming had been in prison in Sydney in 1882 not 1883, so was potentially at large at the same time/could have called himself William (or Albert) Williams.

On April 20, the *Times* added more fuel to their fire when they reported that real estate agent A W H Peyton said Charles Williams came to see him in Los Angeles back in 1886 (presumably around the time he started working for Shooter). Peyton had been suspicious of him and felt that the Deeming and Williams illustrations/photographs showed the same man. In fact he said that he wouldn’t be surprised if Charles turned out to be “one of the vilest criminals on earth, for I have never met a man with a harder face...” *The Herald* shot back by trying to discredit the “anonymous attorney” by interviewing Charles E Lloyd, the man who had been on the train with him and Charles. Lloyd said he had first met Charles in a church choir in Los Angeles in 1887 and saw nothing to suggest that Nannie and Charles were in an unhappy marriage, despite how it ended. He added that he had been one of the last people to see Charles before he disappeared.

Lloyd did not notice any likeness between the illustrations/pictures and described Charles as about 5ft 6”, 140 pounds and “rather good looking,” though he admitted that his wife and many other ladies of her acquaintance “never could abide him.” *The Herald* sniffed that “The most callow brain can turn out dime novel stories without end,” and said their readers could “rest assured” that “The Demon Was Not the Los Angeles Man.”

With copies still presumably selling well, on April 21 the *Times* buttressed its accusations by noting that several people had seen a facsimile of Deeming’s handwriting and all had agreed there was a strong similarity to Charles’. They had no actual samples of Charles’ to compare side-by-side however and contemporary criminology often dismisses such evidence as highly unreliable.

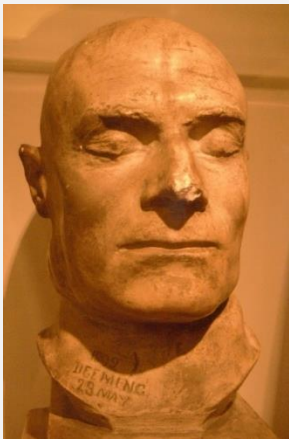
The report also referenced the *San Francisco Examiner*, which reported that George Bidwell, who was lecturing in San Francisco about his experiences as a Bank of England fraudster, had studied the case and reasoned that he knew Charles H Williams as Shear, a man who had been released from Sing Sing in 1884 after serving time for bank fraud in New York. Shear had turned up at Bidwell’s doorstep in Hartford,

Connecticut looking for food, shelter and a job. The Bidwell family saw him as thoroughly trustworthy, gave him a job and advanced him money for a new suit. For a time “Shear” worked as a clerk, but one day he was sent to the bank to cash some checks – and was never seen again.

The angry Bidwell did what he could to track Shear down, apparently finding a trail of at least three other wives he had married and stolen from, but the last he heard was that Shear was in Kansas, intending to go West (to California, perhaps?). Bidwell confirmed the illustrations were of the man he knew as Shear, though it’s worth remembering he was on a lecture tour at the time and may have been looking to drum up business.

A few days later on April 25, 1892, the *Times* reported on another “new complication” that seemed to draw the Williams/Deeming connection closer together. In the small town of Los Gatos, some sixty miles outside San Francisco, a man named Albert Williams (the same fake name Deeming used in Australia), had abandoned a daughter named Henrietta who was now a “Salvation Army waif” and who had posted a desperate letter in *War Cry* that ended: “Please, dear Jesus, send papa home.” This apparent abandonment had happened back in July 1886 (perhaps on that journey West?) and when Deeming had been arrested recently in Australia, he was said to have had a picture of Henrietta in his possession. The *Times* reminded readers that Shooter had met a man named Williams in San Francisco and that there was “strong circumstantial evidence” that Shooter’s Los Angeles job offer was the motivation for him to skip out on young Henrietta and her mother.

Strangely, after that day both the *Times* and the *Herald* fell silent about Williams/Deeming and though Deeming made a last-ditch attempt to stave off execution and instead be transported back to England by



confessing to at least two of the Ripper murders, it was to no avail. He was executed in Melbourne gaol in May 1892, and as was common practice at the time a death mask was made. One was kept in Melbourne, where it is still on display at the Victoria Police Museum, while another was dispatched to Scotland Yard’s famous private Black Museum.

For many years it was described to visitors as the death mask of Jack the Ripper and though Deeming has long been dismissed as the infamous Whitechapel killer, the books, documentaries and movies have kept coming. As for the many coincidences that suggest Deeming may have spent time in Los Angeles, that seems more a screenwriter’s dream or a media fantasy than anything realistic – or does it?

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San Francisco Chronicle – April 18, 1892

Los Angeles Herald – April 25, 1892

An earlier version of this article appeared in the *LA Weekly* on May 24, 2017; it has since been revised and expanded. The Australian connection was also discussed by the author in the February 2019 *Dead & Buried* podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/season-two-episode-1-dont-marry-in-haste/id1167723907?i=1000430534383>

PERSECUTION OF JEWS IN RUSSIA.

Under the auspices of the International Working Men's Educational Club, a Mass Meeting will be held on Saturday, Nov. 1st, at the Great Assembly Hall, Mile End, E., to protest against the Inhuman Treatment and Persecution of Jews in Russia. The chair will be taken by Mr. Jas. Beal, L.C.C. Many Socialist speakers have promised to attend.

Taken from *Justice* on the 1st November 1890, this small article references the International Working Men's Educational Club on Berner Street, next to Dutfeld's Yard where Elizabeth Stride was murdered.

VICTORIAN DOMESTICITY

A Column on Daily Life

By Amanda Lloyd



For this edition, we're going to focus on what we now term as 'street food' and specifically the types available in London in our period of interest, the late 19th century.

Victorian Street Food

Street food meant a way of life for the majority of the working poor and in most of the overpopulated cities across the country. These people had little or no means of cooking at home because overcrowding meant many had to live in lodging houses, or they shared a kitchen with several other families. Lodging houses accommodated hundreds of people with perhaps just one kitchen to cater for all and even those fortunate enough to rent a room for themselves may only have had a fire on which to boil a kettle, so street food was heavily relied upon on a daily basis.

There was plenty of choice, although food was limited to one's pocket, nevertheless, there was a lot of cheap food to be had. On the way to work coffee stalls would be set up along the street selling hot beverages, bread, hot peas, boiled eggs and occasionally porridge. A pie may be bought from the pie man for lunch and a hot meal of fish and potato to take home at night.



Bread, fish, oats and potatoes were the main staples of the working-class diet. Fish was cheaper than meat and was consumed by all. In London with Billingsgate fish market and the Thames teeming with eels, there was a plentiful supply of jellied eels, whelks, mussels, winkles, cockles all served from stalls in tin mugs or plates to be consumed on the spot, the vessel returned to be wiped clean for the next customer.

Fried herring, cod, haddock, whitebait, sprats (small fish belonging to the herring family) among others, would be served with fried or baked potato generously sprinkled with salt and vinegar.



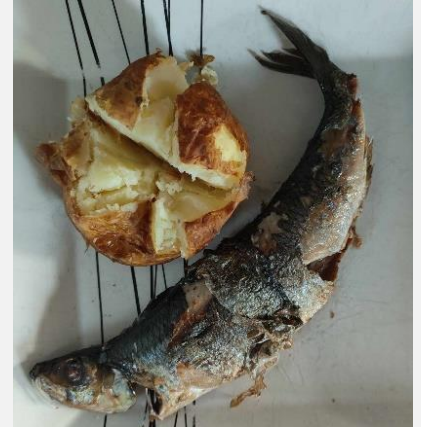
Fruit stalls were everywhere, seasonal fruit was cheap and ready to eat on the go. Apples, pears, plums and greengages were the most popular. From August onwards roasted chestnuts could be bought on almost every street corner and a favourite among the inhabitants of the metropolis, their enticing smell drawing rich and poor alike.

Meat was eaten sparingly among the working poor. A pair of cooked pig or sheep trotters were a treat on a Sunday night. Meat pies were also popular. Chicken, rabbit and beef were the usual fillings and could be eaten hot or cold. Often a pie man would enter the local public houses and sell his hot pies for a penny or two each.

Public houses also sold food to their customers, usually cold meats, bacon, cheese and bread, but for a few pennies more a decent meal of meat, potato and peas was readily available washed down with some beer.

Refreshment stalls were aplenty selling beer, tea, lemonade and ginger beer. Water was considered unsafe to drink unless it was boiled so it was not uncommon for people, even children, to consume only beer.

With the advent of commercial refrigeration ice-cream was a delicious treat for those with the pennies to spare. Originally introduced as a luxury food by the Italians a good century or so earlier, it was now available to the masses. Ice cream venders would go street to street enticing children to go running to their parents to buy a tub to share.



And one thing was for sure, nothing went to waste. Victorians would eat the whole animal or fish, the bones were used to make stock or broth. Offal, the kidneys, liver and heart were all eaten and the fish, once gutted, were cooked whole. The small bones would be consumed and provided a good source of calcium. Small fish, for example whitebait and sprats, were eaten whole with head and tail, lightly floured and fried.

It is at this juncture that I feel I must slightly digress and share my own traumatic experience with sprats. As a child of four years old I used to watch my granny cook and I remember very clearly her sitting on a day in a chair with a lapful of sprats in newspaper. She did cut their heads off and as I watched each one I noticed their mouths would open to a surprised 'O'. Having witnessed this and then to be served up a plateful of these fried headless fish was just too much for me. My hysterical cries were not unheard and she never served them to me again.

Typical to the East End but not exclusively, we cannot forget to mention the popular pie and mash shops which sprang up everywhere around the first half of the 19th century. These served eel pie and mash with a sauce known as liquor, a parsley and herb concoction made with the stock of the boiled eels. Other pies were gradually introduced but it was the liquor that set these shops apart from others. Pie and mash shops still survive today but their numbers have dwindled right down.



Finally we have to mention the fish and chip shops. Fish fried in batter served with chips as we know them today was first introduced in the 18th century by the Jewish community who fried their fish in egg and flour to preserve it to eat cold, but by the 19th century fish and chip shops had sprung up everywhere all over London and across the country and the locals couldn't get enough of it. For many of the working poor it was the most nutritious meal of the week.

As I finish writing the very air that I breathe has the stench of fish, not unlike Billingsgate fish market on a Saturday morning. The end result of my culinary skills which can be seen in the articles illustrations. I really do hope the smell is gone by tomorrow!

A Question of Blades 2:

Looking at the possible knives of the Ripper for the non-canonical victims

In the previous article, we looked at the knives which were possibly used by the Whitechapel murderer in the ‘canonical five’ murders. We will now take a look at some of the non-canonical victims in detail: Emma Smith, Martha Tabram, Alice Mackenzie and Frances Coles, and we will also mention Ada Wilson and Annie Millwood who were attacked on the 28th March 1888 and the 25th February 1888 respectively. There are certainly others who could be considered; however, I am focusing only on those mentioned.

For the attacks on Wilson and Millward, I am not debating the likelihood of them being early victims of the Whitechapel murderer, I’m just assessing the wounds. Wilson was stabbed in the neck, whilst Millwood had wounds to mainly her legs.

We have no real detail on the knives used in these two cases, other than each was described as a clasp knife (fig. 1). Some readers may not be sure what is meant by a clasp knife, so I will provide a brief explanation.



Fig. 1 Victorian clasp knife

The term clasp knife refers to a folding knife. The terms pocket knife and penknife are also sometimes used. In general, a penknife is often deemed to be smaller than a clasp knife and British Law defines a pen knife to be three inches or less in length.

In the Wilson and Millwood cases, the length and sharpness of the blades are not known, although both were sharp enough to cause penetrating stab wounds. Such knives are easily carried by an individual. I would, however, not see this type of knife as the likely weapons used for the major cuts seen to the bodies of four of the five canonical cases. Such a knife, however, may well have been used in the Tabram murder, which we look at later in this article.

We next move on to the case of Emma Smith. Here, there is no evidence of a knife being used, rather, it is the consensus view that some blunt object was used. We should, however, ensure this consensus is correct. Her inquest began on Saturday 7th April 1888 and George Haslip, the House Surgeon at the Royal London Hospital who attended Smith on her admittance to the hospital stated:

“Mr. George Haslip, house surgeon, stated that when the deceased was admitted to the hospital she had been drinking but was not intoxicated. She was bleeding from the head and ear, and had other injuries of a revolting nature. Witness found that she was suffering from rupture of the peritoneum, which had been perforated by some blunt instrument used with great force. The deceased told him that at half past 1 that morning she was passing near Whitechapel Church when she noticed some men coming towards her. She crossed the road to avoid them, but they followed, assaulted her, took all the money she had, and then committed the outrage. She was unable to say what kind of instrument was used, nor could she describe her assailants, except that she said that one was a youth of 19. Death ensued on Wednesday morning [4 Apr] through peritonitis set up by the injuries.”¹

“Dr. Hellier [Haslip], (The house-surgeon on duty), described the internal injuries which had been caused, and which must have been inflicted by a blunt instrument. It had even penetrated the peritoneum, producing peritonitis, which was undoubtedly the cause of death, in his opinion. The woman appeared to know what she was about, but she had probably had some drink. Her statement to the surgeon as to the circumstances was similar to that already given in evidence. He had made a post-mortem examination, and described the organs as generally

¹ The Times, 9th April 1888

normal. He had no doubt that death was caused by the injuries to the perinaeum, the abdomen, and the peritoneum. Great force must have been used. The injuries had set up peritonitis, which resulted in death on the following day after admission [4 Apr].”²

“**Mr. George Haslip**, house surgeon, deposed that the deceased was admitted suffering from severe injuries, which he thought had been caused by some blunt instrument. She had been drinking, but was not intoxicated. She had a ruptured pirinium of very recent date, and also some bruises on her head. Her right ear was torn and bleeding. She told witness that at 1.30 that morning she was going by Whitechapel Church when she saw some men coming, and she crossed the road to get out of their way, but they followed her. They assaulted her and robbed her of all the money she had. She could not describe the men, except that one looked a youth of 19. After her admission she gradually sank, and died two days later [5 Apr]. The deceased stated that she had not seen any of her friends for 10 years.”³

Smith herself was unable to say what kind of instrument was used. Inspector Edmund Reid, the detective heading the case, said the following in his reports:

“The peritoneum had been penetrated by a blunt instrument thrust up the woman’s passage, and peritonitis set in which caused death.”

So we are clear no blade was used on Emma Smith, but just what was used, we cannot determine.

The next case is our most controversial by far. Not only is it questioned whether Martha Tabram was a Ripper victim at all but also how many knives were used in her murder. Martha fell victim to thirty-nine knife-related injuries and our best place to start our investigation is to go back to the report of Dr T R Killeen, who was called to the body on the 7th August 1888. As is often the case, the reports of the inquest tend to vary greatly in the actual words used. Here, we shall look at three reports from separate newspapers:

*“Dr. T. R. Killeen, of 68, Brick-lane, said that he was called to the deceased, and found her dead. She had 39 stabs on the body. She had been dead some three hours. Her age was about 36, and the body was very well nourished. Witness had since made a post-mortem examination of the body. The left lung was penetrated in five places, and the right lung was penetrated in two places. The heart, which was rather fatty, was penetrated in one place, and that would be sufficient to cause death. The liver was healthy, but was penetrated in five places, the spleen was penetrated in two places, and the stomach, which was perfectly healthy, was penetrated in six places. The witness did not think all the wounds were inflicted with the same instrument. The wounds generally might have been inflicted by a knife, but such an instrument could not have inflicted one of the wounds, which went through the chest-bone. His opinion was that one of the wounds was inflicted by some kind of dagger, and that all of them were caused during life.”*⁴

*“In the witness’s opinion the wounds were not inflicted with the same instrument, there being a deep wound in the breast from some long, strong instrument, while most of the others were done apparently with a penknife. The large wound could have been caused by a sword bayonet or dagger.”*⁵

“Dr. T. R. Keeling gave his evidence as follows:- I am a fully qualified doctor practicing at Brick-lane, and was called to the deceased on the morning of the 7th of August at about half-past five. I found her dead. On examining the body externally I found no less than thirty-nine punctured wounds. From my examination of the body it seemed to be that of a woman about 36 years of age, and was well nourished. I have since made a post mortem examination of the

² Lloyds Weekly News, 8th April 1888

³ East London Advertiser, 14th April 1888

⁴ The Times, 10th August 1888

⁵ Daily News, 10th August 1888

body. The brain was healthy; the left lung was penetrated in five places, and the right lung in two places, but the lungs were otherwise perfectly healthy. The heart was rather fatty, and was penetrated in one place, but there was otherwise nothing in the heart to cause death, although there was some blood in the pericardium. The liver was healthy, but was penetrated in five places; the spleen was perfectly healthy, and was penetrated in two places; both the kidneys were perfectly healthy; the stomach was also perfectly healthy, but was penetrated in six places; the intestines were healthy, and so were all the other organs. The lower portion of the body was penetrated in one place, the wound being three inches in length and one in depth. From appearances, there was no reason to suppose that recent intimacy had taken place. I don't think that all the wounds were inflicted with the same instrument, because there was one wound on the breast bone which did not correspond with the other wounds on the body. The instrument with which the wounds were inflicted, would most probably be an ordinary knife, but a knife would not cause such a wound as that on the breast bone. That wound I should think would have been inflicted with some form of dagger.”⁶

Several points emerge from these three reports. Only the *Daily News* specifically mentions a penknife and suggests a bayonet might have caused the wound to the heart. The wording used in the report, specifically the term “were done apparently with a penknife” might also suggest this is an interpretation of the doctors’ comments, rather than the actual words.

Over the years, as is often the case in this subject, these comments get accepted as fact, when they may simply be suggestions by the doctor, or even interpretation by the reporter. The idea of a bayonet, and if it is a legitimate possibility, was discussed some years ago on Casebook.org⁷ but we shall look, however, into all the suggestions for the weapons used. We will start with the widely accepted view that the majority of wounds were made by a penknife. We have already pointed out a penknife today is considered to have a blade of no more than three inches. It’s clear from Killeen’s testimony that some of the wounds reached a considerable depth and one must question if a penknife would be able to make such an injury.

A point that appears to be often overlooked is that while the wound to the heart was considered by Killeen to be the fatal blow, several of the other wounds may also have been mortal wounds. The view of the doctor clearly is that a penknife could not have punctured the sternum and reached the heart, due to the length of the blade and its fragility.

Next we turn to daggers. These come in an astonishing range of shapes and sizes (fig. 2) and of course are double-edged as opposed to an ordinary single-edged knife. Unfortunately, Killeen doesn’t say if the wounds

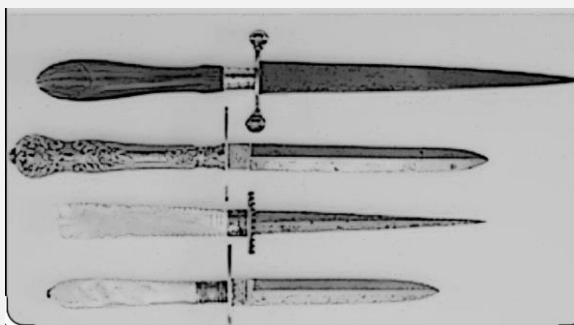


Fig. 2 A selection of Victorian daggers

are single or double-edged including the ones to the sternum and heart. If he had done so, it would certainly be easier to reach a conclusion. However, a dagger would certainly be capable of making all thirty-nine of the wounds. That Killeen does not mention the wounds were double-edged leads one inevitably to suspect that either the wounds were not made by a double-edged dagger, or that he didn't check. His conclusion that a different blade was used for thirty-eight of the wounds appears to be based more on the fragility and strength of the weapon, rather than any cutting profile.

It should, at this point, be noted that Killeen was relatively inexperienced. Medical directories suggest he had only been at his address at 68 Brick Lane some two years, and his qualifications. LRCS (Ireland) and

⁶ *East London Observer*, 11th August 1888

⁷ <https://forum.casebook.org/forum/ripper-discussions/victims/non-canonical-victims/martha-tabram/680-dr-killeen-the-bayonet-wound-theory>

<https://forum.casebook.org/forum/ripper-discussions/victims/non-canonical-victims/martha-tabram/6684-the-home-office-annotations-do-they-rule-out-a-bayonet>

Lic.K.Q.coll.phys (Ireland) were passed in 1885 and 1886 respectively⁸. Just how much experience of examining these types of wounds therefore is open to question.

We will now move on to bayonets and again there are many types. I think one can rule out the 1876 'lunger model' (fig. 3) as it would have left an unmistakable triangular impression but



Fig. 3 'lunger' model bayonet, 1876

in theory we could be looking at a Yataghan model, (fig. 4), which resembles a short sword or dagger. In 1888 of course we saw the introduction of what we today think of as a 'knife bayonet' (fig. 5), but if such would be available to civilians is debatable. I am indebted to Steve Stanley for his assistance on the various different types of bayonet.



Fig. 4 Yataghan bayonet

I mentioned earlier that we should consider that Killeen possibly never said bayonet and it was an insertion by a journalist. Either way, Killen or the reporter, one wonders if the accounts of soldier possibly being involved, did not lead to the suggestion.

And finally, I return to the 'ordinary knife' spoken of by Killeen. What if this was not a pen or a clasp knife, but a sturdy knife, with a sharp point, to allow it to puncture the sternum? Such could easily account for all of the thirty-nine wounds.



Fig. 5 Knife bayonet

This is far from an easy case on which to draw a conclusion. It's the general consensus that there were two blades but some would question a single individual carrying two blades at a time. It has been suggested that the 'penknife' could have been Martha's which the killer then took from her and utilised. On a personal note, I find that just a little bit 'special case pleading' myself. Overall, I am inclined to suggest no more than a single blade was used; a sturdy 'ordinary' knife, which was used with more intent and effort for the blow to the heart. If we accept Killeen's hypothesis that a penknife could not physically have made the heart wound (and that pen knives are around three inches long) then I suggest we are looking at a blade of at least four inches in length and one which is sharp.

Our investigation into Martha is now complete, but only in terms of the length of blade used and the fact that a shorter blade could not have inflicted the wound to her heart. Before looking at the knife used in the Alice Mackenzie case however it would perhaps be prudent to look again at one section from the previous article regarding determining blade length:

"When attempting to determining the length of blade used, one needs to look at the length and deep of the wounds. A stabbing wound gives the more reliable data as to length. However, unless the blade is fully inserted to the hilt of the knife, we may only have a minimum length for a blade when we need the full length. If we are looking at a slicing wound like those on the necks of the victims, determining the blade used can be very difficult, This is because very similar looking wounds can be achieved by moving either a short bladed or a long bladed knife across the neck. The difficulty of determining Blade Size is discussed in an in-depth article at the website Forensicmed.co.uk⁹"

Dr Phillips carried out the post-mortem on Alice Mackenzie and his testimony with reference to the wounds and knife was as follows:

"The witness then described the wounds, of which there were several, and these were most of them superficial cuts on the lower part of the body"¹⁰

⁸ Complete Jack the Ripper A-Z: The Ultimate Guide to the Ripper Mystery by Paul Begg, Martin Fido and Keith Skinner

⁹ <https://www.forensicmed.co.uk/wounds/sharp-force-trauma/sstab-wounds/>

¹⁰ The Times, 19th July 1889

And

“The wound in the neck was 4 in. long, reaching from the back part of the muscles, which were almost entirely divided. It reached to the fore part of the neck to a point 4 in. below the chin. There was a second incision, which must have commenced from behind and immediately below the first. The cause of death was syncope, arising from the loss of blood through the divided carotid vessels, and such death probably was almost instantaneous.”¹¹

*“The great probability is that he was on the right side of the body at the time he killed her, and that he cut her throat with a sharp instrument. I should think the latter had a **shortish blade and was pointed**.”¹²*

And

“[Coroner] Are the injuries to the abdomen similar to those you have seen in the other cases? - No, Sir. I may volunteer the statement that the injuries to the throat are not similar to those in the other cases. The knife that was used could not have been so large as the ordinary butcher's slaughter knife.”¹³

Given that Phillips said the cuts were superficial, with no real penetration of the body, as reported in the *Times* 19th July, it is hard to understand how he reached his conclusion on the length of the blade used and I would refer back to forensimed.co.uk mentioned above. Phillips however, produced another in-depth report¹⁴ which has been retained in the MEPO files at the National Archives. The relevant information is below:

“6. Conclusions. Death was caused through Syncope arising from the division of the vessels of neck left side. Nature of instrument & its use. The wound was caused by sharp cutting instrument with at least two strokes...The instrument used was smaller than the one used in most of the cases that have come under my observation in these “White chapel Murders.”

Dr Bond was asked to take a look at the body and on the 18th July 1891 he and Dr Phillips examined it. Phillips was present so that he could provide Bond with a view of the wounds prior to the previous post-mortem. Bond then produced his own report¹⁵.

“The cuts appeared to have been inflicted with a sharp strong knife. I could form no opinion as to the width of the blade or the length of the knife, but undoubtedly the cuts might have been done with a short knife; it must in my opinion have had a sharp point.”

I believe that Bond is, in effect, repeating what Phillips and Blackwell had said in the Stride case which we covered in the previous article. Given the available evidence (or lack of it, given there were no penetrating wounds that could be used to assess the length of the blade), he is not discounting a short blade, but no definition of short is given by Bond, nor is an actual size suggested by Phillips. Indeed, Phillips appears to have decided that Mackenzie was not by the same hand as the other victims. A report by Superintendent Arnold dated 17th July 1889 mentions Phillips' view that *‘injuries in this case are not so severe and the cut on the stomach is not so direct’* thus a different knife was used. I am not sure I agree.

The final case we shall be looking at is that of Frances Coles, who was killed on the 13th February 1891. The first doctor on the scene was Frederick John Oxley MRCS, of 1 Dock Street but it was Dr Phillips who once again carried out the post-mortem. The descriptions of the wounds are not as detailed as one would have liked:

“George Bagster Phillips, M.R.C.S., divisional surgeon, also described the condition of the body when found, and said, - On Saturday morning I made a minute examination of the incision in the throat. There was an external wound, the edges of the skin being not exactly cut through,

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² *The Times*, 15th August 1889

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ Ref. MEPO 3/140, ff. 263–71

¹⁵ Ref. MEPO 3/140, ff. 259–62

there being a portion of about an inch long undivided. In my opinion, there were three distinct passings of the knife across the throat - one from left to right, one from right to left, and the third from left to right. Below the wound there was an abrasion, as if caused by a finger nail. Above the wound there were four abrasions, possibly caused by finger nails. From the position of these marks I opine that the left hand was used. There were some contused wounds on the back of the head, which I am of opinion were caused by the head coming into violent contact with paving stones. I came to the conclusion that death had been almost instantaneous, occasioned by the severance of the carotid arteries and other vessels on the left side. In my opinion, the deceased was on the ground when her throat was cut. I think that her assailant used his right hand in making the incisions in the throat, and that he had used his left hand to hold her head back by the chin; that he was on the right side of the body when he made the cuts. The tilting of the body to the left was to prevent the perpetrator from being stained with blood. There was a complete absence of any struggle or even any movement from pain, but it may have arisen from the fact that the woman was insensible from concussion."¹⁶

At this point I will break from Phillips' testimony. Like in the Stride case, a weapon was produced that could have been the weapon used. We need to look at that before proceeding further.

A sailor, named Duncan Campbell, staying at the Sailor's Home in Well Street, claimed that on the morning of the murder a man approached him and offered to sell him a clasp knife. The man was allegedly James Sadler who had been drinking with Coles on the night she died. Campbell accepted and gave 'a shilling and a bit of tobacco for it.' About half an hour later, Campbell heard of the murder of Frances Coles and checked the knife but found no signs of blood. He then washed it and noticed that the water was pinkish i.e. 'slightly salmon coloured.' He considered this to be more likely rust than blood. Campbell then pawned the knife for a brief period to Thomas Robinson, a marine store dealer. After reclaiming the knife, he took it to the police and retold his account of how he had obtained it. He then picked Sadler out at an identity parade. Thomas Robinson, the owner of the shop where Campbell pawned the knife told the inquest:

"The CORONER. - So you have seen Jack the Ripper's knife?

Witness. - On Sunday I cut up my dinner with it.

Mr. Lawless. - Was the knife very blunt when you had it first?

Witness. - Yes. I had to sharpen it on our whetstone. I could not have cut the bread and meat with it before I sharpened it."¹⁷

This sounds as if the knife was very blunt. However, let's now return to the testimony of Dr Phillips:

*"The knife was produced in court and the divisional surgeon, Dr Phillips, gave his opinion together with that on Sadler's clothing and wounds, reported in The Times on 24 February 1891: The knife produced would be capable of inflicting all the wounds found on the neck. It was not a very sharp knife that caused the wounds."*¹⁸

This would seem to indicate that Phillips believed this could have been the weapon used. However, there are several points which I feel need to be noted. Firstly, he looked at the knife *after* it was sharpened and so we must ask if he took its apparent condition before sharpening and Thomas Robinson's comments into consideration. One would like to think he did, but one cannot of course be at all sure of this. Thus there must be an element of doubt. Another point that I feel is important is we frequently see it reported that Phillips said the knife used on Frances was blunt, which isn't the case. What he actually said was:

"It was not a very sharp knife that caused the wounds."

¹⁶ The Times, 24th February 1891

¹⁷ The Times, 24th February 1891

¹⁸ The Times, 24th February 1891

Not very sharp is not the same as blunt. It may seem a minor quibble, but I feel it is significant, assuming the inquest report is recorded correctly. I suggest that by using the phrase “*not a very sharp knife*,” Phillips may have been attempting to differentiate between this knife and his views on the canonical murders which he believed involved a *very sharp* knife.

Dr Oxley, who was initially called to the body, also gave evidence on 24th:

*“Other evidence having been taken, Mr. Oxley, the surgeon who was called to see the body on its discovery, expressed his opinion that the wound could not have been inflicted by a man who was incapably drunk, and that the knife purchased by Campbell could hardly have produced so large and clean a cut.”*¹⁹

So once again, we have no clear description of the knife or the estimated blade length.

Conclusions

What remains very clear with regard to the non-canonical victims looked at in this work, is the doctor’s failed to give an estimation of blade length, something that was done for the canonical victims. This of course makes it hard to assess if a similar type of blade was used in any of the cases. However, it should be noted, that a different type of blade does not exclude the same killer in any of the cases. My examination of the Tabram murder leads me to suggest that no more than a single ‘ordinary’ blade was used, probably not a dagger and certainly not a bayonet.

The two tables below which I have split between canonical and non-canonical victims give my views on the type and number of weapons used in both articles in this series:

Victim	Number of weapons	Type of weapon
Wilson	1	Clasp knife
Millwood	1	Clasp knife
Smith	1	Blunt object
Tabram	2 or 1	Knife ²⁰
Mackenzie	1	Sharp knife, pointed blade ²¹
Coles	1	Knife - not very sharp

Victim	Number of weapons	Type of weapon
Nichols		Long 6-8 inches, moderately sharp
Chapman		Very sharp at least 6 inches long
Stride		Very sharp but may not be pointed, length uncertain
Eddowes		Sharp pointed at least 6 inches long
Kelly		“Strong knife at least six inches long, very sharp, pointed at the top

¹⁹ East London Advertiser 28th February 1891

²⁰ this is my own personal opinion and is open to debate

²¹ Phillips claimed a shorter blade but gave no dimensions, nor how he arrived at that conclusion given the lack of deeply penetrating wound

²² from Bond’s report

Sources:

The Complete History of Jack the Ripper, Philip Sugden

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Review

Whitechapel Women Virtual Tour - Beyond the Streets

Madeleine Keane

After over a year of being curious about the Whitechapel Women virtual tour created by the organization Beyond the Streets, I finally made some time to watch it. I came away from the tour very impressed with the concept and how they tied it into their mission.

Beyond the Streets is a London-based organization that works to help women working in the sex industry to find a way out and rebuild their lives. The organization's mission statement best explains what they're about:

*"We, Beyond the Streets, work with women involved in the UK sex industry. We work to see women safe from coercion, violence, and abuse. We collaborate to ensure women are not compelled to sell sex and to create routes out of prostitution by working with others, including those with lived experience. Together we work to challenge the stigma that surrounds the sale of sex, to eliminate 'survival sex' and more broadly to end violence against women and girls."*²³

Beyond the Streets created the tour in 2017, and the virtual tour launched in late 2022. The tour itself focuses on the lives of the canonical five victims of Jack the Ripper. Instead of visiting the murders sites, the tour stops at various spots in the East End that the victims frequented during their lifetimes. The tour removes any mention of Jack, referring to him as the unknown killer. I found the victim-centered narrative coupled with the details that the tour guides provided about how their organization seeks to help present-day women in similar circumstances to be a refreshing one. Tying together the past and the present is an effective way to help the modern public understand the canonical five's lived experiences.

I was especially impressed with how the tour emphasized what the Victorians termed "casual prostitution" and what we call survival sex were and still are very much a part of the reality that unhoused women face. The tour maintained a delicate balance between what has been accepted as the standard narrative of the victims' final moments and the new narrative Halle Rubenhold presented in her book *The Five*, which, while being a groundbreaking and highly acclaimed work, requires further rigorous study. The tour's script leaves room to add new information that will likely emerge in the future, which indicates to me that the organization is an open-minded one that tries to include all points of view in its tour narrative.



You can access the virtual tour or book a walking tour through the website, whitechapelwomen.com. The website also contains educational resources about the Whitechapel victims and survival sex in general, as well as information about the Beyond the Streets organization and the work they do.

²³ www.whitechapelwomen.com/about. Whitechapel Women. Accessed 10/15/2024

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This advert, taken from the Essex Times on the 14th July 1888 concerns Harrison, Barber & Co, the horse slaughterers who were embroiled in the case, most notably the murder of Mary Ann Nicholls in Buck's Row, which was a short distance from their location.



Jack the Ripper and Abraham Lincoln. One Man Links the Two Greatest Crimes of the 19th Century

Tony McMahon

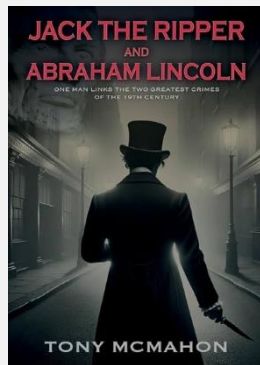
Troubador Publishing, 2024

Troubador.co.uk

308pp; illus; index of names

ISBN: 978-1805143642

Softcover £12.00. Kindle eBook £7.99



A few years ago Scott Martelle wrote *The Mad-man and the Assassin: The Strange Life of Boston Corbett, the Man Who Killed John Wilkes Booth* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2015), in which he suggested that Jack the Ripper was Thomas ‘Boston’ Corbett, the man who killed John Wilkes Booth (the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln). Corbett had escaped from the Topeka Asylum for the Insane on 26 May 1888 and spent a short time in Kansas, then vanished. Martelle suggested that Corbett came to London and committed the Whitechapel murders, but a popular theory is that he may have lived in a cabin in a forest near the town of Hinckley, Minnesota, and died in the Great Hinckley Fire of 1 September 1894. A man named Thomas Corbett was claimed in that fire, but it isn’t known whether this was Boston Corbett.

I approached *Jack the Ripper and Abraham Lincoln* reluctantly, thinking it would be another attempt to put Boston Corbett in the frame, but it turned out to be about the American quack doctor Francis Tumblety. And it wasn’t as fanciful as it might at first appear because Tumblety was suspected by the London police of being Jack the Ripper and did have a peripheral connection with the assassination of Lincoln.

Unfortunately, the book is mostly about the links between Tumblety and Lincoln. It examines the claims that Lincoln was homosexual or bisexual and delves deep into the homosexual milieu of the

mid-to-late Victorian United States. It’s fascinating stuff and will be of considerable interest to anyone interested in Tumblety’s early life, but I know very little about this subject and my ignorance puts informed comments beyond my ability. However, it unfortunately takes eight entertaining and informative chapters - 255 pages - before one reaches Whitechapel, our area of specific interest, and sadly, one gets the usual basic story with no new information, theories, or insights.

McMahon over eggs the pudding, in my view. Tumblety certainly came under suspicion, as any man with his extreme opinion of women would have done, but there is no real evidence that the police believed he was the killer. The only reason for thinking otherwise is a letter ex-Chief Inspector John Littlechild wrote on 23 September 1913 to the multi-talented journalist and writer George R Sims. McMahon says this letter “reveals the extent to which Scotland Yard believed Tumblety was Jack the Ripper”, but it doesn’t. The relevant part of the letter reads, ‘I never heard of a Dr D. in connection with the Whitechapel murders, but amongst the suspects, and to my mind a very likely one, was a Dr T. (which sounds much like D.) He was an American quack named Tumblety...’ He goes on to say that Tumblety’s ‘feelings towards women were remarkable and bitter in the extreme, a fact on record.’

As said, it seems clear that Tumblety’s attitude towards women was why Littlechild thought Tumblety was “a very likely” suspect, and what we have learned about Tumblety since the discovery of the letter makes it very hard to disagree with that verdict, but Littlechild only mentioned Tumblety because Dr D, of whom he had never heard, could have been Dr T(umblety). There is nothing in the letter to suggest that Scotland Yard seriously considered that he was the murderer, and even Littlechild appears to have dismissed him, writing that Tumblety wasn’t a sadist but the Ripper “unquestionably was”. It doesn’t matter whether

they were or were not sadists, what matters is that Littlechild believed one was and the other wasn't.

Overall, Tony McMahon has written a very interesting account of Tumblety's life at the time of the Lincoln assassination, not simply whether he was involved in the assassination plot, but also the homosexual milieu through which he moved. And that is really what this book is all about. The Ripper is a very small part of the book and there's nothing much that's new or of interest on that topic, beyond some comments about Littlechild's beliefs about homosexuals. The book is worth the investment if you're interested in the life and times of Tumblety, but maybe not if your interest is in the Ripper.

Jack the Ripper's Streets of Terror. Life During the Reign of Victorian London's Most Brutal Killer

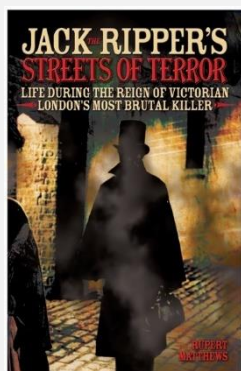
Rupert Matthews

Arcturus, 2024

256pp; illus; index

ISBN: 9781788280105

Softcover £7.99. Kindle eBook £99p



This book was originally published in a large format hardcover back in 2013, and as far as I can tell, this softcover edition hasn't been updated in the decade or so since then, so we won't spend too much time with it here. Rupert Matthews is a prolific author of books covering a wide range of often historical subjects. However, he's also written about the paranormal, including *Ghosts and Poltergeists* (London, Arcturus, 2015), a collaboration with another Jack the Ripper author, Paul Roland, whose *The Crimes of Jack the Ripper. The Whitechapel Murders Re-Examined* (London: Arcturus) was published in 2018.

As one might expect, this book doesn't show signs of much original research. It pretty much follows the standard pattern of Ripper books and rehashes the known facts. It begins with the usual account of Britain and London in the last quarter of the 19th century, touching on such anxieties as prostitution and describing changes to and the growth of the press. Then Matthews describes the murders, including a brief look at the post-Kelly non-canonical victims, and concludes with a very brief description of a handful of suspects.

Matthews' focus, in principle at least, is the terror caused by the murders and how the crimes affected the lives of those living in the murder district. The jacket blurb describes this graphically and way over the top: 'gangs of vigilantes patrolling the streets, bloodthirsty lynch mobs out for revenge...' For all I know, there may have been vigilante gangs patrolling the streets, but the members of the Vigilance Committees who patrolled the streets were not vigilantes but were akin to a neighbourhood watch group.

The book is competently written and presented in short chunks under subheads, which makes it perfect for anyone with a short attention span and probably ideal to accompany any school classes using the Ripper story to teach the history of the late Victorian period. It's an excellent introductory overview, but there are so many "introductory overviews" out there. This paperback is modestly priced at £7.99, but there is a Kindle edition is fantastic value for 99p. An unabridged audiobook from Audible is also available. You can also pick up the hardcover edition for a couple of pounds.

Jack the Ripper and the Whitechapel Murders

Ken Hughes

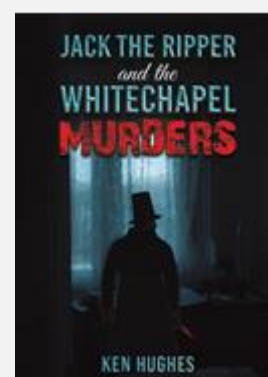
Austin Macauley, 2024

www.austinmacauley.com

260pp

ISBN: 9781398472075

Softcover £19.99. Kindle eBook £3.49



This book was self-published as an eBook several years ago - I forget just how many years - and as far as I can tell from a quick perusal of the Kindle edition I bought back then, it hasn't significantly changed. It begins with a few chapters that provide an overview of the time, place, and victims. Then, it has chapters that basically repeat the inquest testimony reported in contemporary newspapers. There is a section of photographs, several in colour, none of particular interest. The colour photos probably put up the cover price, which I thought unacceptably expensive at a penny short of £20 for a softcover book!

Exploring the Lives of Victorian Prostitutes

Claire Richardson

Pen and Sword, 2024

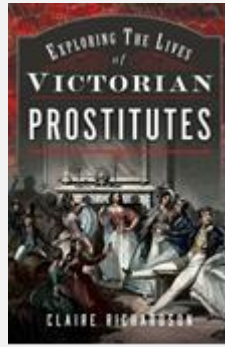
www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

165pp; illus; notes; biblio; index

ISBN: 1399044648

Hardcover £20.00, Kindle

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Prostitution in Victorian times – or in any other time, including our own - is a complex subject to which one can hardly expect to do justice in as few as 144 pages. Claire Richardson barely scratches the surface but nevertheless does a reasonable job of looking at each stage in a prostitute's life, from the reasons why she entered the profession to how she left it.

Each chapter is broken down into a few pages, looking at the different circumstances that could influence a prostitute's life or which influenced the direction that life took. For example, the first chapter, "Falling: The Route Into Prostitution", looks at what caused women and young girls to become prostitutes. Such possibilities as parent loss, parental harm, seducers, and abuse, each gets a couple of pages, so it's all pretty basic, but it's a great introduction to Victorian prostitution as well as the underbelly of the Victorian era.

Other chapters deal with subjects as varied as "What Prostitutes Looked Like", which deals with clothing as well as physical attributes; "Where to Find a Prostitute", which basically covers indoors and outdoors; "Crime and Legislation", which covers violence committed against prostitutes and the punishment meted out by the courts. A corresponding chapter, "Crime and Legislation", looks at various laws enacted to curb prostitution, such as the infamous Contagious Diseases Act.

The book deals almost exclusively with female prostitution, so there is no discussion of male brothels such as the notorious establishment in Cleveland Street, or male prostitute Jack Saul (see Glenn Chandler's *The Sins of Jack Saul*, 2016). And I should mention that there is no mention of Jack the Ripper or the Whitechapel murders, and a quick flick through the index suggests that there was no mention of Whitechapel or East London. There is no

reason why the author should have mentioned these, but they are subjects of interest to Ripperologists.

Jack the Ripper. A Legacy of Terror and the Search for the Truth

Gary Ogden

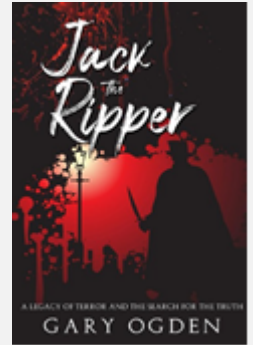
Independently Published, 2024

95pp

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Jack the Ripper: The Man Behind the Myth

Conrad Strickland

Independently Published,

2024

76pp

ISBN: 9798338731130

Softcover £8.29, Kindle

eBook £4.54



Okay, there's not much to say here, probably because these books don't have much to say. They are short; one is just 95 pages, and the other is 76 pages. Normally, books of less than 100 pages wouldn't get reviewed, not because they're bad but because short books barely scratch the surface of the subject and generally offer nothing new. One tries to be polite by saying that such books provide an overview of the case for those who know nothing about it but are curious to know the basic facts. This may be and very often is true, but we're overwhelmed by such books and don't need any more.

Jack the Ripper. A Legacy of Terror and the Search for the Truth has 95 pages, so it's not a bad length, but it's a long way from being the 'in-depth investigation' promised in the blurb. However, in fairness, it covers pretty much everything a Ripper novice needs to know. Five chapters describe the victims, then Gary Ogden proceeds to look at topics such as the Jack the Ripper letters through a handful of suspects to the lives of the victims before they became victims.

Overall, it's brief, it's basic, and it's a good overview. Whether we want another overview is, as said, the question. The free Kindle eBook is

generous, and I guess £4 isn't a silly price for the softcover.

Jack the Ripper: The Man Behind the Myth is a curious little book that lacks illustrations, a bibliography, sources, notes, an index, a publisher, a date of publication, copyright details and even the author's name. Amazon tells me it's Conrad Strickland and the blurb there says of this title, "This captivating book takes you on an in-depth investigation of one of history's most infamous serial killers". Needless to say, in 76 pages you know it's not going to be an 'in-depth investigation', and it isn't. But the author does at least look briefly at the number of ways the Ripper crimes influenced popular culture. Nevertheless, asking more than £8 for such a short and basic book is a cheek.

Jack the Ripper: Dissecting the Truth

Roger Barber

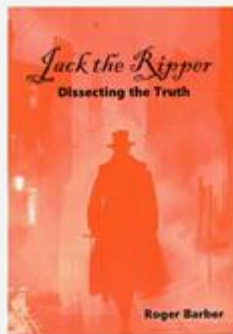
Introduction by Stewart Evans

Independently Published, 2024

182pp; illus; biblio; index

ISBN: 9781399992916

Softcover £15.00



Roger Barber is a veteran Ripperologist who contributed a paper to the now-defunct *The Criminologist*, a journal founded and edited by Nigel Morland (see Vol 14, no 3. Autumn 1990) in which he nominated a new suspect. As a result, Roger was given an entry in the first edition of the *Jack the Ripper A to Z*. Those were the days when you didn't have to be dead to get an entry, so he's not in the book anymore, which is good news for all concerned.

Jack the Ripper: Dissecting the Truth basically carries on from where the article in *The Criminologist* finished, expanding on the few facts Roger Barber had about his suspect, a man named Edward Buchan. Sadly, not much more is known about him, but Roger has certainly ferreted out what could be found.

The book provides a concise but detailed account of each of the victims and follows it with a couple of chapters about the police investigation and press reporting of the murders. Roger Barber has been kicking around Ripperology for several decades, so he knows his stuff. He concludes with a chapter

about Edward Buchan, filling in as much information as he can about Buchan's life, his family, and his death.

The book is a little expensive, but was enjoyable and informative, had a section of illustrations, a bibliography and an index, and as a bonus introduction by Stewart Evans, one of the most respected Jack the Ripper authors.

Naming Jack the Ripper, The Definitive Reveal

Russell Edwards

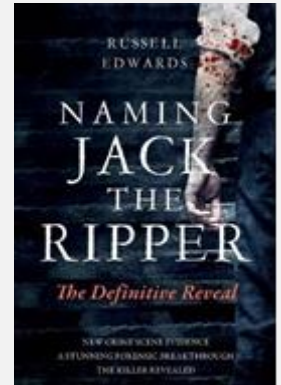
Globe Pequot Press, 2024

384pp; illus; index

ISBN: 9781493090075

Softcover £20.19, Kindle

eBook £5.99



Naming Jack the Ripper, The Definitive Reveal is an

updated account of how author Russell Edwards purchased a length of material, variously described as a "shawl" and a "table-runner", which was allegedly found in Mitre Square on the night Catherine Eddowes was murdered, and how DNA analysis revealed it had been in contact with both Eddowes and the Jack the Ripper suspect Aaron Kosminski. The book was first published in hardcover in September 2014 and was reviewed in Ripperologist #140. An amended softcover edition followed in July 2015 and was reviewed in Ripperologist #145.

When published the book was heavily criticised, with much of it being questioned, particularly the belief that a mistake had been made in the DNA analysis. Edwards claimed that the MtDNA allegedly from Eddowes was very rare. It was however quickly pointed out that the reported MtDNA of 314.1C (which is indeed relatively rare) was, in fact, a mistake and it should have been read as 315.1C which is common. Following this criticism all reference to the rarity of the MtDNA was removed from the paperback edition and replaced with wording which simply said the DNA on the shawl matched that of a descendent of Catherine Eddowes, thus sidestepping the issue of the rarity.

The updated book also sidesteps the issue and states that the MtDNA matches the descendent of

Catherine Eddowes. Edwards explains the lack of detail by stating “*we could not include those [results] in the book as it was getting too complicated due to the complexity of the science behind it.*” The reader is asked to accept these statements on trust without any references as they were with Edwards’ previous edition.

Scientific professionals had also complained that the DNA evidence had not been published in a peer reviewed scientific journal, meaning it had not received the approval of experts who had reviewed the evidence and conclusions. Edwards himself confirmed “*A peer review is the process of evaluating submissions to an academic journal. Using extremely strict criteria, a panel of reviewers with expertise in the same subject area decides whether to accept a submission before publication. Peer-reviewed articles are widely considered a highly credible source due to the stringent and demanding process they go through before publication.*” but it took two and a half years for a peer review paper to be completed, when it was submitted to the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* at midnight on the 15th November 2018. It was then published early the following year.¹ It ran into problems almost immediately, with fairly long critical letters being published in the journal by D Kim Rossmo PhD on the 11th September 2019² and Felice L Bedford, PhD on the 16th September, 2019.³ Edwards responded on the 30th September 2019 and the 4th October 2019 respectively.⁴

Just before publication of the updated book however, there was a new development. On the 12th August 2024 the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* issued an Expression of Concern (EOC)⁵ which was published in Vol. 69, Issue 5, September 2024, Pg. 1938.

In broad terms this meant the journal had investigated the concerns of credible critics who had expressed unease at the methodology and/or conclusions of the original paper. As the investigation was inconclusive, but with strong indicators that the concerns were valid, an Expression of Concern was issued. It’s important to understand that this isn’t a frivolous notice but is

close to an article being withdrawn or retracted, both of which can be very damaging to the researcher’s reputation.

With the issuing of this EOC any claims made by Edwards must be treated with extreme caution. The DNA analysis has not been universally accepted, and if (and it’s always been a monumentally big IF) the material did have the DNA of Catherine Eddowes and Aaron Kosminski on it, its provenance would need to be established far more robustly and until such time as that happened the material would arguably become considerably less important.

One can, to a degree, have sympathy for Russell Edwards however. When his book was first published he knew very little about DNA analysis and depended on the conclusions of Jari Louhelainen. Would any Ripper researcher have done anything different if their trusted source was certain beyond doubt about the DNA on that material?

Further questioning was also put forward from other quarters regarding the provenance of the ‘shawl’ allegedly found at the Eddowes murder scene by a Metropolitan policeman named Amos Simpson. That the material came from Simpson and had remained in the possession of his descendants was accepted, but there was the issue of an absence of evidence that Amos Simpson had been anywhere near Mitre Square on the night Catherine Eddowes was murdered. Mitre Square was in the jurisdiction of the City of London Police and Simpson was a Metropolitan Policeman and one with no connection with the East End.

According to the received story, Simpson found the material in Mitre Square on the night Catherine Eddowes was murdered. He’d then taken it home for his wife and it had remained in the family thereafter. But as well as there being no evidence to suggest Simpson was there in Mitre Square that night, he had no right to take anything from the murder location and would not have received permission from the City Police to do so.

In Chapter Fourteen, *Filling in the Blanks*, Edwards suggests that Amos Simpson, an acting

¹ Louhelainen, Jari, and Miller, David: ‘Forensic Investigation of a Shawl Linked to the ‘Jack the Ripper’ Murders’, *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, March 2019. The paper can be viewed at doi.org/10.1111/1556-4029.14038

² doi.org/10.1111/1556-4029.14191

³ doi.org/10.1111/1556-4029.14192

⁴ doi.org/10.1111/1556-4029.14195 and doi.org/10.1111/1556-4029.14189

⁵ doi.org/10.1111/1556-4029.15595

sergeant, had been put into plain clothes and drafted into the East End to undertake surveillance, most probably on either anarchists or Fenians, and that as a result, he believes with a degree of certainty that Simpson was one of the men referred to in a newspaper story by a Metropolitan Police Sergeant, Stephen White.

Basically, White's story posits that two or three men were posted in a house at the only entrance to a cul-de-sac. White was checking in with his men when he met a man leaving the cul-de-sac. Shortly afterwards one of his men left the house and discovered the body of a murdered woman. That man, according to Russell Edwards, was Amos Simpson and the cul-de-sac was Mitre Square. The idea that Mitre Square was the cul-de-sac was an old one, going back at least to 1975 with Donald Rumbelow's *The Complete Jack The Ripper*. Here he stated "*Clearly it refers to the Mitre Square murder; as it is the only murder which fits the facts*"

In fact the description given by White neither fits Mitre Square nor the discovery of Catherine Eddowes' body. White wrote, "*At the end of the cul-de-sac huddled against a wall was the body of a woman, and a pool of blood was streaming along the gutter from her body.*" Eddowes wasn't found huddled against a wall, nor was there blood streaming into and along a gutter, and Mitre Square was not a cul-de-sac. Nor does there appear to be any obvious reason for policemen to be stationed in a house in Mitre Square to watch anarchists, Fenians, or anyone else.

If the scene fits anywhere, it fits Elizabeth Stride's murder in the passage leading to Dutfield's Yard. Dutfield's Yard wasn't strictly a cul-de-sac, but there was no exit except through the gates into Berner Street and Stride was found huddled against the wall and comments were made about her blood running in the gutter. Police may also have been stationed there to keep an eye on the anarchists using the club. It is not impossible that Simpson, working undercover, acquired the material from an unknown source earlier that night and then took up position in Berner Street. Following the murder there was a transference of blood onto the material via Simpson's handling of both the body and the

'shawl'. This, and the resulting change in definition from Stride to Eddowes becoming the fourth Ripper victim⁶ meant the story became garbled and shifted towards the version Edwards describes in his book.

Even with this speculative scenario we are still hampered by the fact we have no confirmation that Simpson and the Met were watching the Dutfield's Yard entrance, which wasn't really a cul-de-sac.

The White theory is further undermined by the fact that there were several other versions of it, with one rather more mundane version appearing in *The Jack the Ripper A-Z*. Here it is stated "*A version of the story that appeared in the East London Advertiser (27 September 1919) explicitly states that White did not see the murderer and gives quite a different account of his movements: His experience of murders was perhaps unique. He was engaged on the whole of the Jack the Ripper crimes which caused such a grim sensation among East Enders. One night he was on what appeared to be a certain clue to the mysterious murderer of women in the Whitechapel region. He kept watch in an East End street, but the murderer's movements were not in accordance with anticipation. For about ten minutes only he left the street, and to his amazement he found on his return that a woman had been stabbed. He saw no man anywhere, and the mystery became even more baffling. As is well known, Jack the Ripper was never discovered.*"

Edwards fails to mention this alternate version in his book, which, given the significance of his version to his overriding theory and argument somewhat calls into question the veracity of it.

Edwards justifies his stance by stating "*I have been advised this officer was Acting Sergeant Amos Simpson, of the Metropolitan Police, who was on duty, undercover, with White and City of London Police Constable Charles Webber - the forces working together.*" The person who 'advised' him was David Melville-Hayes, the descendent of Simpson who owned the 'shawl' and Edwards goes further by writing "*There may not be written evidence from the time that categorically proves the family story of how Simpson came into the possession of the shawl, but equally it cannot be disproven and there appears to be no deliberate*

⁶ At this point Tabram was believed to be the first victim, the 'Canonical Five' were yet to come.

attempt at deception.” “However, when I spoke to David Melville-Hayes about this subject, he categorically stated that Amos Simpson had been there on the lookout for Fenian terrorists”

Oral family history is, as we know, an area where great caution is needed, I’ve encountered such issues in my own work and the reader is here, again, asked to accept the basis of the evidence on trust. The fact however remains that nothing is known about White or the officers he had stationed or where they were stationed.

In his update Edwards also puts forward a connection to the freemasons via the family of Aaron Kosminski, specifically his elder brother Issac, which is given as the reason for the mutilations carried out on the victims. I do not intend to debate this at any length other than to say, many of us have spent best part of four decades rejecting links to the masons. I think it is ill-advised to do a full 180° turn just because the family of our preferred suspect were masons.

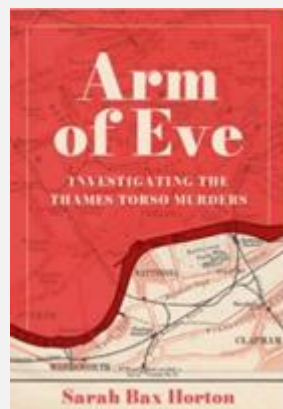
The attempts to exhume Aaron Kosminski are of course discussed, as are the more recent attempts to arrange a new inquest into the murder of Catherine Eddowes. Both attempts have failed and I leave it to the reader to decide on the usefulness of both, in particular the latter.

There are parts of the book, that I can happily agree with; but there is also repeated presentation of possibilities, such as the origin of the ‘shawl’, the location of Simpson and the presence of semen on the shawl, as fact. It is the DNA evidence however that remains the overriding issue and, given the Expression of Concern, we can only conclude this ‘evidence’ appears to be NOT proven.

Steven Blomer is a researcher and the author of Inside Buck’s Row.

Arm of Eve: Investigating the Thames Torso Killer
Sarah Bax Horton
The History Press, 2024
288pp; illus; notes; biblio
ISBN: 9781803997483
Hardcover £17.99. Kindle eBook £8.99

Traditionally there’s been a dearth of books



dedicated to the so-called ‘Thames Torso Murders’ and Sarah Bax Horton’s latest offering is one of only five I’m aware of. The book is well structured and begins with four chapters detailing the dismemberments in question; the 1887 ‘Rainham Mystery’, the 1888 ‘Whitehall Mystery’, the 1889 case of Elizabeth Jackson and the so-called 1889 ‘Pinchin Street Torso’.

Sarah then provides us with an overview of her chosen suspect, James Crick, and completes matters with chapters on the various arguments which back her theory up.

Charles Hebbert’s Westminster Hospital reports are the sole basis for the investigation remit and there is no challenge to their voracity. I will leave it open to the reader to debate on the merits of this approach given the fact there were several other unsolved female dismemberment cases which occurred in London during this period.

The writing style is good, as is its pace. It’s also well sourced, which is obviously an essential requirement for any book to be taken seriously. There’s some nice illustrations, particularly the rarely seen sketch of John Faircloth, Elizabeth Jackson’s former partner.

We do, however, have issues that need clarifying. The chapter on Crick’s family background is confusing, with the disjointed details of James Crick’s half-brother Arthur/Patrick Coughlan/Crick being of particular note. A review is not the place to detail a potential counter argument as the author has no right of reply but I feel I do have to question Sarah’s assertion that Arthur Coughlan/Crick also went by the name Patrick Coughlan. A look at *Ancestry.com* indicates Patrick was sentenced to seven years in gaol in 1867 (some of which were served in Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum) and married a ‘Catherine’ living at 7 Red Cross Court, Borough around 1866. Arthur however was supposedly serving his apprenticeship as a lighterman at this time and married a Maria Pushman Oaks in 1873. The 1861 Census also mentions another brother named John. The author then goes on to state “another” brother died age six but neither Patrick, Arthur nor John qualify as they are all listed on official documents as alive after that age. Although Sarah’s assertions may well prove to be correct, I

think, at the very least, these discrepancies should have been more adequately addressed.

The James Crick theory, by Horton's own acknowledgement, essentially rests on two cases of rape which occurred on the Thames in 1889. Crick was found not guilty for the first crime (although he almost certainly did it) and guilty for the second. That he was a thoroughly unpleasant individual whose assaults were far more widespread than just these two examples isn't really in doubt, but whether he was responsible for four murders between 1887 and 1889 is another matter entirely.

Horton's use of newspaper quotes to back up her argument is essential due to the lack of official courtroom records but it is the use of the quotations which also gives me cause for concern. Arguably the most important quote used is when Crick is recorded as saying *"I intend to settle you, as I have done other women that have been found in the Thames if you make a noise. If you keep quiet you will be perfectly safe."*⁷ But it's important to remember, no, it's actually essential to understand, that any quote provided by a newspaper is not necessarily accurate. A quick trawl through the published articles from this time pulls up several variants to the one provided in the book and more articles fail to mention it than those which do. So, what appears, at first glance, to be a game changing piece of evidence is not quite what it seems. I'm not trying to argue that the quote *isn't* significant, of course it is, but for me I would be far happier if an author ensured their readers are given the true, wider picture.

One of Sarah's later chapters covers the 1902 'Salamanca Place Mystery' which is interesting, and she ultimately makes the wise decision of determining the case to be 'unproven' as a Crick crime. Again, we have some statements which contradict quotes later on, not least, in the description of the body parts being left in a *"neat pile"* when it's clear that subsequently this was open to the interpretation of the different witnesses. She does however proceed afterwards with a great chapter on the proven murder of Julia Martha Thomas by her maid, Kate Webster in 1879. This is a nice touch with Horton pointing out the parallels

between the disposal of Thomas's body and that of the Salamanca Place victim. It also provides the reader with an understanding of just how difficult it is to dispose of a body piecemeal and that it *is* possible to manoeuvre body parts over a considerable distance undetected.

She is also not shy from addressing the elephant in any Thames Torso room: Jack the Ripper. It should be remembered that Horton produced her own suspect book on that particular subject in 2023, with *One-Armed Jack: Uncovering The Real Jack The Ripper*⁸. Her analysis then, as now, is weighted towards FBI influenced profiling and also her own belief that Hyam Hyams was the Ripper but obviously not the Torso killer.

We have some further nice pieces of background information such as when we learn of the Thames Police awareness of river-based crimes: *"Regan commented about the vigilance of the river police in what was James Crick's home turf: 'Bermondsey and Horselydown, on the Surrey side, were noted places for smuggling. Whenever we saw a boat row in, and we had an idea that we could not catch it on the water, we would turn to the nearest stairs, pop ashore, and meet the passengers in the street.' This suggests that the Torso Killer would have found it difficult to dispose of body parts in the Bermondsey and Horsleydown areas. In addition, as a result of the Fenian bombing campaign during the 1880s, Tower Bridge wharf and the stretch of the river between Chelsea and London Bridge were more strictly patrolled, with one boat reserved to protect the Houses of Parliament."*⁹ This, of course, lends itself to question how the perpetrator got the body parts into the water in the first place.

There are a couple of weaknesses which shouldn't have got past an editor's desk, and I think the following quote regarding the Pinchin Street victim, is, by anyone's standards, a weak argument for a suspect: *"Another piece of physical evidence was the partly digested plums in the victim's stomach. They might have been sourced from anywhere in London, and were probably scrumped, or pilfered. The Southwark Park area, where my prime suspect's family the Cricks lived, had plum*

⁷ *Arm of Eve: Investigating the Thames Torso Killer* by Sarah Bax Horton, p.165 The History Press, 2024. Kindle Edition

⁸ By Michael O'Mara publishing, 2023. RRP: £9.81 ISBN: 9781789295160

⁹ *Arm of Eve: Investigating the Thames Torso Killer* by Sarah Bax Horton, p.266 The History Press, 2024. Kindle Edition

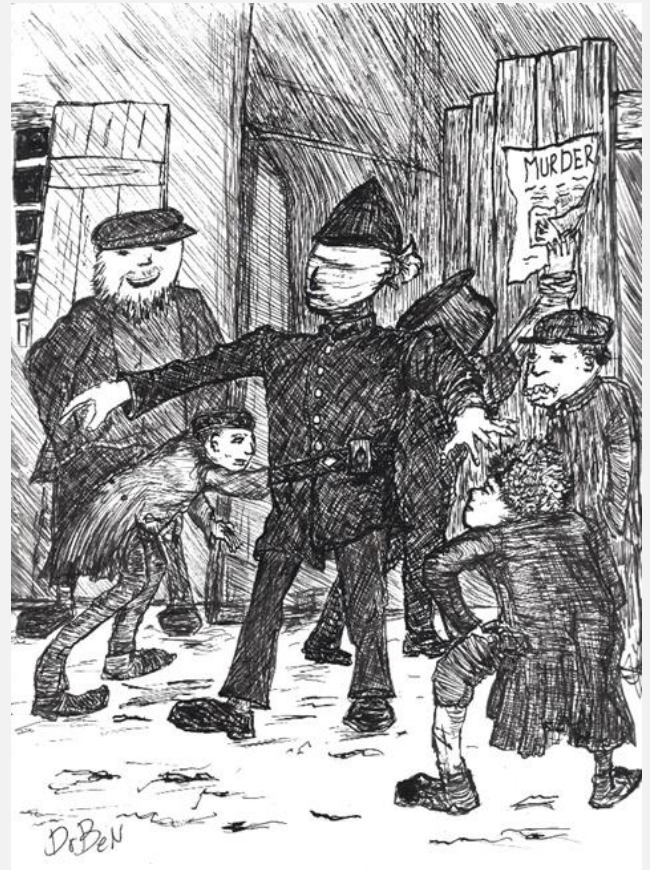
trees. A more likely place to pick up some fruit for free was Charlton, 4 miles further east, the location of several orchards and market gardens. In the hours before her death, the Pinchin Street victim might have been a carefree young woman on the deck of a boat, reaching up to overhanging branches for their late summer fruit.¹⁰ Using a ubiquitously available fruit as evidence of a murderer's guilt is pushing the bar just a little too low IMHO...

Horton also fails to address some key aspects of the case which I find strange. Why, for instance, if he admitted to other murders during and after the four torso case period did the newspapers fail to pick this up? Is there any evidence of the police doing any follow up too? Wouldn't the press and the Met be chomping at the bit to see if he was guilty? We also fail to read anything about the other men who were supposedly involved in the rape of Jessie Miller and Sarah Warburton. Was Crick in a gang or an organised ring of serial sex offenders? Of the names that were mentioned, were any researched and ruled out? And, *if* Crick had killed before, where's the research into any other unsolved cases he could potentially be linked to, and were these drownings or also dismemberments? It's left me frustrated and wanting more.

Ultimately, as with any suspect-driven book, the purpose is to put forward a *robust* theory and to convince the reader that they dunnit. Where *any* suspect book falls down is with the omission or over-emphasis on cherry-picked pieces of evidence and selective reasoning. This book is no different from any other suspect book in that respect, but it is very much worth reading. It's more lax than deceiving in places but Crick is a fascinating character and one, I think, we'll be hearing a lot more of in the years to come.

Suzanne Huntington is a researcher and the author of the soon to be published Thames Torso Murders: Fact or Fiction?

All reviews by Paul Begg unless credited otherwise.



Punch didn't pull any, erm, punches when they created the savage commentary on the Metropolitan Police's investigation skills - 22nd September 1888



¹⁰ *Arm of Eve: Investigating the Thames Torso Killer* by Sarah Bax Horton, p.123 The History Press, 2024. Kindle Edition

The Great American Doctor and Anatomical Knowledge

Part 2 – Tumblety and Canada East

By

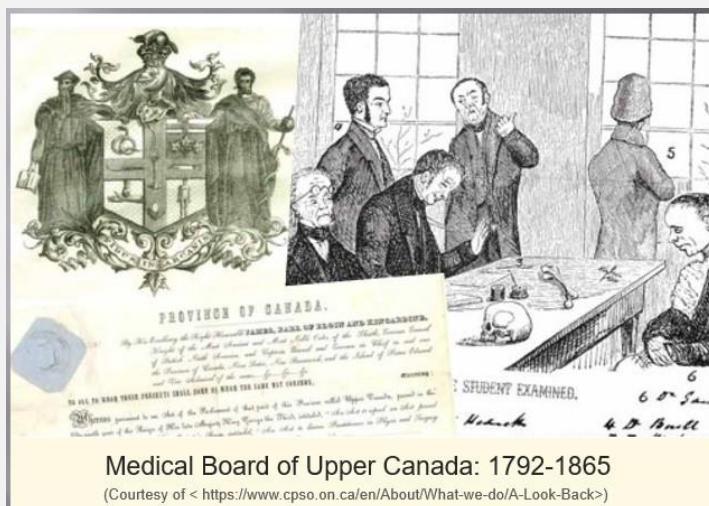
Michael Hawley

A seismic event occurred to Francis Tumblety in March 1857, which may have spawned a trajectory that placed him in the crosshairs of Scotland Yard detectives in the Whitechapel murders investigation in 1888. Part 1 of this article discussed how Francis Tumblety began his quack doctor business in the spring of 1856 claiming to be an Indian Herb doctor in Upper Canada (now Ontario Province), or Canada West. He scammed the sick and elderly out of their money by diagnosing a shocking disease, then offering a miraculous herbal cure for an exorbitant price. He opened up offices in small towns and cities and by December 1856, he had established himself in Toronto. By this time, Tumblety had become independently wealthy, a millionaire by today's standards. At first Toronto was a cash cow, but this abruptly ended on March 27, 1857, after two successive court cases caused him to shelve his highly successful disease diagnosis scam. Adolphus Binkert, a lithographer, took Tumblety to court for "taking money and property under false pretenses." This caught the attention of Dr John A Grant who quickly realized Tumblety was claiming to be a qualified medical doctor complete with a medical diploma yet was practicing medicine in Canada West without a proper medical license. In order to combat quackery, or fake doctors, Upper Canada required all physicians from the US with a qualified medical diploma to prove themselves to the medical board, which was composed of physicians and surgeons. Grant was the president of the Upper Canada Amendment Committee whose focus was to root out

quack doctors and would take advantage of this requirement against these impostors.

The Upper Canada medical licensing board quickly took Tumblety to court on March 27, 1857, and won; issuing a large fine and giving a warning that if he continues to practice physic he will be jailed for six months.¹

Tumblety presented to the court an eclectic, or herbal, medical diploma out of Philadelphia, which if true meant he went to an accredited medical school and received training in the disciplines of physic, midwifery, anatomy, and surgery. The



Medical Board of Upper Canada: 1792-1865

(Courtesy of < <https://www.cpso.on.ca/en/About/What-we-do/A-Look-Back>>)

Boston Pilot, May 16, 1857, reproduced the actual comments in court, where Tumblety said to the judge, "I have a diploma from the Medical College of Philadelphia," and he then produced it. In 1857, the only medical school was the Eclectic Medical College of Pennsylvania and American University of Philadelphia, which had received its charter from the State Legislature on February 25, 1850. It did not work, since he never applied for a license with the Upper Canada Licensing Board.

Incidentally, newspaper reports in the United States subsequent to the *Montreal Gazette*, November 22, 1888, such as the *New York World*, November 27, 1888, misread the word eclectic and published "electric." Note the original statement in the *Gazette*, "In 1860 or 1861 the doctor cut a great dash in this city [St. John, N.B.]. He purported to be an eclectic physician." The *New York World* rephrased this, "The first appearance of Twombly was in 1860 and 1861, when he cut a great figure at St. John, N.B. He claimed to be an electric physician..."

After April 1857, Tumblety was no longer allowed to diagnose and treat patients with overly expensive medicine, which put an end to his perfected and lucrative diagnosis scam in Canada West. He was still allowed

¹ *Toronto Globe*, April 2, 1857

to practice as a druggist, though. It was legal in Canada to act as a pharmacist without a license before 1868, which was when the Pharmacy Act of 1852 was modified to include licensing.²

Thanks to proponents of the alternative eclectic herbal and homeopathic medicines, Tumblety found himself with some allies and a way to possibly practice medicine in Toronto and continue his exploitive, yet lucrative profession.³ Even though the Upper Canada medical establishment was dominated by physicians trained in traditional allopathic medicine, the liberal press and many in the public heavily influenced the politicians to offer a pluralistic approach to medicine, meaning offering both traditional and nontraditional doctors. Just two years after Tumblety's case, licensing in Upper Canada saw reform with bills in 1859 and 1861 creating the Eclectic herbal/botanical medicines and Homeopathic medicine licensing boards. The first president of the board was N. Hopkins, M.D. He was originally from Dunnville, Canada West, and attended the Eclectic Medical Institute of Cincinnati in Ohio.

Immediately after Tumblety lost his court cases he abruptly stopped his multicolumn newspaper ads. Two months later on June 3, 1857, in the *Toronto Globe* he advertised again, but with a much shortened "Consultation Free" advertisement. These ads were very short without any testimonials of his skill at diagnosis diseases and only stating, "Can be consulted..." Tumblety was acting as a druggist. The advertisements make it clear that Tumblety was fully aware the medical community was watching and ensuring he acted strictly as a pharmacist selling his patent medicines.

Although he continued to maintain an office in Toronto with the help of assistants, Tumblety himself left town and opened up an office in Niagara Falls, New York.⁴ His first ad was on July 14, stating in his advertisement that he will be in Niagara Falls until September 14, 1857. In Niagara Falls, New York, it was perfectly legal for Tumblety to practice medicine, since New York State did not have the licensing regulations. He was free to use his strawman scamming techniques and charge huge fees. Maintaining an office in Toronto even though he left the country clearly meant that he saw future value in operating out of Toronto. His nephew Thomas Powderly stated under oath that Tumblety owned land just west of Toronto.⁵

It is understandable why Tumblety was so attracted to Toronto and the Provinces of Canada. While the US was filled with quack doctors and competition, this was not so in Canada because of the requirement for licensing physicians. It made him independently wealthy, which was a dramatic difference from his recent past of being part of the poorest of the poor in Ireland and then a laborer in Rochester.

Even though Tumblety's advertisements continued until September 1857, meaning he was physically present in Niagara Falls earning money, he certainly did visit Toronto. On July 30, 1857, Tumblety was arrested in Toronto for "Furious Driving." He was driving himself and a Mr Davidson aggressively in his horse and buggy down King Street when he accidentally hit a Moses Moore, as witnessed by a Captain R. Moodle. Tumblety was fined £2 10s and given a warning. This shows that Tumblety's Toronto assistant who was selling his patent medicine from the Toronto office was likely this Mr. Davidson.

In August 1857 after Tumblety left Niagara Falls, New York, he shifted his attention to Canada East, or Lower Canada, and to the largest city in the Provinces – Montreal. As noted, he continued to operate out of Toronto and even published in Montreal that he was headquartered in Toronto. Montreal had a population twice that of Toronto at around 60,000 with fully one third being English-speaking Irish Catholic immigrants. Tumblety set up his office at 18 Great St. James Street, then quickly placed his first advertisements in local newspapers, such as *The New Era* on August 22, 1857, and the *Montreal Gazette*, on August 25, 1857. The ad was his "Listen to the Voice of Truth and Reason" from the "Allwise Physician" advertisement, depicting

² Malleck, D.J., *Professionalism and the Boundaries of Control: Pharmacists, Physicians and Dangerous Substances in Canada, 1840-1908. Medical History*, April 1, 2004, v.48(2), p.175-198. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC546338>

³ Baehre, R., *The Medical Profession in Upper Canada Reconsidered: Politics, Medical Reform, and Law in a Colonial Society*, 1993, *Canadian Society of the History of Medicine*, Carleton University, <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/pdf/10.3138/cbmh.12.1.101>

⁴ *Niagara Falls Gazette*, July 29, 1857

⁵ *Circuit Court Archives, City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, Case Number 31430, Series A, 1904-1908*

him in a botanical garden. It also stated that he will be in Montreal for nine months from September 1, 1857, to May 1, 1858, then return to Toronto.

There is also an eyewitness account of Tumblety having opened up an office in Ottawa in 1857, and if the year is correct, it was likely before he opened up in Montreal and even before opening up an office in Niagara Falls. In the *Boston Globe*, November 27, 1888, it states:

“The writer first met Dr. Twombly in 1857, in Ottawa, where he opened an office and advertised himself as a specialist. His principal place of business at the time was in Toronto, from which city he travelled with two horses—one an Irish hunter, the other a cob—two dogs and a basket phaeton. He dressed in a very “loud” manner, and had with him a private secretary.”

The court case that Tumblety lost in April 1857 in Toronto only dealt with practicing medicine without a license in Upper Canada in violation of their Medical Act of 1827, but Montreal was in Lower Canada, or Canada East. They had their own medical licensing board called the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Lower Canada, which was established by the Medical Act of 1847 (amended in 1851).⁶ It also mandated that physicians were required to have a local medical license, which was signed by the Governor but controlled by the licensing board. A major difference, though, was physicians from the United States—as Tumblety claimed—did not have to prove themselves and take an exam as they had to in Upper Canada. They merely had to prove to the satisfaction of the medical board that they were of good character. This was done by testimonials, something Tumblety arrived with in volumes.

Tumblety’s advertisements and theatrics quickly got attention, but unwanted attention. His advertisements received criticism from those towing the line of the opposing conservative party. On September 16, 1857, a letter from a person, or persons, named Civis appeared in the *Montreal Pilot*, stating:

“When a new “Doctor” takes up his residence amongst us, apparently without certificates, references, or perhaps Colonial Diploma, should not the medical men of the city call the attention of the chief magistrate to the fact? Failing redress in that quarter, let them find out a case where some unfortunate being has perhaps been made miserable for life, by swallowing some horrible mixture destructive to both stomach and bowels, and thereon take action.”

Tumblety quickly found himself challenged by the traditional medical establishment, or at least by one member, but they did not take him to court for practicing without a license as proposed by the above letter from Civis. There may be two possible reasons for this. First, Tumblety may have quickly duped the board into giving him a license by bathing them in his “Credentials from prominent Rochester citizens.” Second, if the application process was still ongoing, it demonstrates that the medical establishment did not yet catch him practicing medicine. Operating for only a month likely meant there were no patients, or potential eyewitnesses, who realized that they just got scammed. Tumblety may have learned his lesson in Toronto and was acting as a pharmacist by merely selling his medicines until he officially received a license.

Regardless, certain physicians in the Montreal medical establishment did indeed act against Tumblety, but in a different way. They took him to court for illegally attempting to chemically induce an abortion on one of his patients, a local prostitute named Philomène Dumas. This would mean he was not of good character and would be denied a medical license by the Lower Canada Licensing Board. The whole thing was a set-up. Indian herb doctors were not professing their ability to perform abortions, so how did the Montreal traditional physicians get the idea to pursue this avenue? It was his private medical treatise pamphlet. Private/sexual disease doctors, like Tumblety’s mentor Lispenard would have been rumored to know how to perform chemical abortions. There is direct evidence that Tumblety was distributing his “Dr. Tumblety’s Private Medical Treatise” pamphlet in Montreal in the early fall of 1857, just as he was in Toronto. In November, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montreal denounced Tumblety’s publications:

⁶ Price, M, *The Professionalism of Medicine in Ontario during the Nineteenth Century*, McMaster University, April 1977, <https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/12231/1/fulltext.pdf>

*“DR. TUMBLETY AND THE R. C. BISHOP OF MONTREAL. – The R. C. Bishop of Montreal has denounced Dr. Tumblety’s publication as an immoral one. The condemnation is contained in a pastoral address to the Prelate’s flock.”*⁷

Tumblety’s impact must have been significant enough for the Bishop to make a denouncement, so it makes sense that traditional doctors would have been aware of him.

According to the *Montreal Gazette*, September 24, 1857, Tumblety was arrested on Tuesday, September 22, 1857, and was in front of the police court

DR. TUMBLETY AND THE R. C. BISHOP OF MONTREAL.—The R. C. Bishop of Montreal has denounced Dr. Tumblety’s publication as an immoral one. The condemnation is contained in a pastoral address to the Prelate’s flock.

magistrate, Charles J Coursol, Esq, the following day. A Detective Jean Baptiste Simard stated under oath that on Monday, September 21, 1857, he had received instructions to go to Tumblety’s office “to satisfy himself whether he could get anything to cause a miscarriage for a girl who was *enceinte* (meaning pregnant).” Tumblety asked if he was a Protestant, and after Simard affirmed this, then said, “Were you a Catholic, I would not give what I will give you since you are a Protestant.” Simard then claimed that Tumblety told him to come back in an hour and he would give him the medicine to kill the child. Tumblety also told him to let others know he helped him for the purpose of gaining more customers.

Simard then stated he actually returned to Tumblety’s office the next morning on September 22. Tumblety told him to bring the girl and he would arrange everything. When Simard arrived with the girl that day, Tumblety examined her “and told her she was *enceinte*, but he would give her something to relieve her of the child.” Tumblety gave her a bottle of fluid and tasted it himself to show her it was not injurious. Tumblety then gave Simard the bottle of pills and charged a large sum.

Philomène Dumas then testified that she was a spinster. She said on Tuesday, September 22, 1857, she went to Tumblety’s office around noon with a Detective Jean Baptiste Simard, then corroborated Simard’s account of events. Under cross examination by Tumblety’s counsel, Bernard Devlin, Dumas admitted that she lived in Mrs. Foley’s boarding house, a house of ill-fame, meaning a brothel. She also admitted that Detective Simard frequented the house at least twice. Devlin then asked Dumas, “Who requested you to make false representations to the prisoner, by pretending that you were pregnant when you were not?” Dumas admitted, “I do not know the gentleman’s name, I think he was a doctor.” Devlin then asked, “Is it not true that the prisoner advised Simard to marry you, which would be the best means of getting rid of the difficulty under which you pretended to labor as before mentioned?” Dumas replied, “He did.”



Bernard Devlin

What Tumblety’s attorney revealed was that Detective Simard deceptively approached Tumblety as a man who unexpectedly got his girlfriend pregnant and ask Tumblety to induce an abortion so that the

family would not know. He also revealed that this scam was conspired by “a doctor” and Simard.

Possibly fearing the negative publicity he was going to get in the newspapers because of this case, Tumblety countered by placing in the local newspapers on September 24, 1857, a massive four-column advertisement packed with testimonials from every city and town he worked in since the spring of 1856. It was also filled with prominent citizens attesting to Tumblety’s medical skills and character, including the Rochester, New York, testimonials from “prominent men of the City of Rochester, N.Y.” certifying that their “esteemed fellow-townsmen,” Dr. Francis Tumblety is entitled to public confidence. In the case of the *Montreal Gazette*, the advertisement was part of a page-five “Supplement to” the normal four-page paper.

⁷ *Toronto Globe*, November 20, 1857

One interesting difference between his earlier advertisement and this one is how long he claims to stay in Montreal. Originally, Tumblety stated that he was going to return to Toronto on May 1, 1858, and in this large ad, he published his return for March 1, 1858. In both cases, Tumblety planned on returning to Toronto, which hints at why he opened up an office in Montreal in the first place. If he did indeed receive a medical license in Lower Canada, it would indicate to the Upper Canada Licensing Board in Toronto that he was not a quack doctor. He would still have to demonstrate to the board his knowledge of anatomy and surgery. It is likely the reason he bought the anatomical sketches before opening up an office in Montreal. Recall in the June 19, 1857, edition of the *Toronto Mirror* titled *Medical Improvements* Tumblety did indeed treat his medical institute as a place of learning the human anatomy:

“Dr. Tumblety has recently purchased a splendid set of physiological engravings and representations, which can be seen at his rooms, opposite the St. Lawrence Hall. They consist of no less than ten set of fine plates, superbly mounted o rollers, and exhibiting the nerves, muscles, bones, and aorta, so clearly and beautifully as to convince the beholder, in truth and in very deed, that “we are fearfully and wonderfully made.” They have been imported at considerable expense from Rochester, in which city the Doctor practiced his peculiar department of medicine with success for several years.”

Notice that Tumblety acquired these engravings just after losing his court case on practicing medicine without a license and while his druggist business was the only source of income.

The case continued in police court on Friday, September 25, 1857. According to the *Montreal Gazette*, September 26, 1857, the next witness to be deposed was John Guy, a young man who had been living with Tumblety “now in custody” for a week before his arrest and was still living at his office. He remembered the event when Simard and Dumas entered Tumblety’s office, and recalled Tumblety saying, “The best thing you can do is to marry him.” Dumas replied that she would not “as her friends would be displeased with her.” Guy claimed Tumblety gave her medicine for her headaches, nervousness, and pain in the back. He also recalled that Tumblety was arrested at 4pm that day.

A chemist named John Birks was sworn in and testified for the prosecution. Birks was asked to analyze the contents of the bottle of fluid and bottle of pills on September 23. He testified that the ingredients in the pills included hellebore and cantharides, which “have the effect of causing a miscarriage.” Under cross-examination, Birks admitted that he did not know if the fluid and pills he analyzed were the same as those Tumblety sold. Birks also admitted that he did not know the concentration of these ingredients and used taste and smell to detect their presence. Two physicians, Pierre Picault and William Sutherland, attested to Birks’ skill as a chemist.

The case continued on Saturday, September 26, 1857. As published in the *Montreal Gazette*, September 28, 1857, Kenneth Campbell, witness for the defendant and assistant druggist, was deposed. He stated he worked at the shop of Johnson Beers & Co., known as the Medical Hall, and on September 14, 1857, a young man employed by Tumblety handed him a paper containing a prescription for making pills, which consisted of socotrine aloes, cast steel soap, gamboge, colicinch, gentian, mandrake, capsicum, and oil of peppermint (sp). He made no liquid for the doctor. He has seen the two pills said to have been analyzed by Mr. Birks, and “believed that they were made from the above prescription.” He examined the pills and fluid and judged by taste and smell that they contained no hellebore.

According to the *Montreal Gazette*, September 28, 1857, “The prosecution is brought forward under the Provincial Act 4 and 5 Vic, cap. 27, which is an exact counterpart of the English law, 1st Vic. Cap. 95. The Act says: “that whoever shall unlawfully administer, with intent to produce abortion, and poison or noxious thing, or by any other means whatsoever, with a like intent, shall be guilty of felony, and being guilty thereof, shall be liable, at the discretion of the Court, to be imprisoned in the Provincial Penitentiary at hard labor during the term of his natural life, or for any term not less than seven years, or to be imprisoned at the discretion

of the Court for a term not less than two years,” therefore decisions rendered in like cases in England, must be recognized here.

The magistrate stated that his job was to not try the case, “but to see if there is sufficient legal evidence to send the party to trial.” The magistrate committed Tumblety to prison to stand trial “at the ensuing term of the Court of Queen’s Bench.” The magistrate refused bail because Tumblety was “a stranger in the Provinces,” meaning he was a flight risk. According to a report published in the *Montreal Gazette*, October 5, 1858, the Court of Queen’s Bench declined to issue a writ of habeas corpus by both the Chief Justice and by a Judge Aylwin, but after yet another application for a writ on October 1, 1857, to Judge Guy, a “circuit judge of a court of inferior jurisdiction to that of the Queen’s Bench,” Tumblety was finally granted bail.

There has been a suggestion that the police magistrate, Charles J. Coursol was in on the trap, because “the doctor,” detective Simard, and the prostitute Dumas met in his office before Simard went to Tumblety’s office. The doctor brought the medico-legal knowledge and plan, the detective brought the enforcement, and the magistrate brought the conviction power. This is slightly unfair to Coursol, because in 1857, he was also a detective inspector and the superintendent of police. Wearing the hat of the superintendent of police, Coursol, should have been informed of these events. Today, we see an official being both superintendent of police and the police magistrate in the same jurisdiction as a serious conflict of interest, but not then. Coursol was not hiding this fact, because even in his role as police court magistrate in this case, the *Montreal Gazette*, September 24, 1857, gave the professional title of Coursol as “Inspector and Superintendent of Police.” Also, Coursol never judged this case and merely passed it onto the next judicial level to the Court of Queen’s Bench and even assigned a grand jury. Coursol did refuse bail, but his reasoning was appropriate. Tumblety was only recently residing in Montreal and it is reasonable to assume he may be a flight risk.

It was argued in the October 17, 1857, issue of *The New Era*, by its proprietor Irish Catholic political activist Thomas D’Arcy McGee that Tumblety was attempting to prejudice potential jurors in the upcoming Grand Jury on his case with his massive multi-column ads. McGee stated:

“[Tumblety] is busily employed these last few days in flooding the city with certificates of the wonderful cures he has performed in other places. The Gazette issued a whole supplement filled with his puffs; the Transcript, Argus, and Pilot have had two or three columns per day. The Advertiser, his special organ, keeps up a continued fire of certificates from all sorts of places and all sorts of persons. Even editorial endorsements have begun to appear within a few days past... Bogus certificates of this description are easily procured from the vain, the needy, or the corrupt. The genuinely educated physician scorns them – the quack only solicits them... The imposing documents are calculated, if not intended, to predispose a jury, on extraneous grounds, in favor of the accused... We warn the advertiser to refrain from this patent attempt to stuff the public, and if he does not heed the warning now given, and modestly look to his defence [sp], like any other accused person, we promise him the other story will be about his ears before his is a week older.”

Biasing potential jurors may very well have been part of Tumblety’s hidden agenda. The *Montreal Gazette* did not issue one supplement to their daily with Tumblety’s massive advertisement, as McGee stated, but they actually issued four and periodically spaced. The first ad was in their September 24, 1857, issue, and it was then reprinted as a supplement in their September 28, October 2, and October 9, issues. The ad was then stopped in the *Montreal Gazette* and the grand jury did not occur until the end of October. The problem, though, was the first two supplements were published prior to the completion of the police court case, meaning, a grand jury was not yet part of the equation. This suggests that Tumblety’s initial motive was to counter the negative publicity of the abortion case. Recall, in order for Tumblety to receive, or maintain, a medical license in Lower Canada, the medical board had to be convinced of his good moral character, and that was being attacked.



Tumblety's earlier advertising campaign in Toronto suggests that he was going to publish a large testimonial ad at a certain point in time, anyway. There is a difference, though. In Toronto, his large full-column testimonial ad began three months after he opened up his office and it included testimonials from Toronto residents. This particular Montreal four-column ad was published less than two months after he opened up the office, and of significance, it did not have any Montreal testimonials.

On October 24, 1857, the grand jury threw out the bill of indictment against Tumblety, recording it as "No Bill," thus, the case was dropped.⁸ The purpose of a grand jury is to have representatives of the community examine the evidence to see if there is probable cause to return an indictment. It is a shield against unfounded and oppressive prosecution, and in this case, the jurors believed the case against Tumblety was unfounded. McGee may have thought Tumblety's bias advertisements did the trick, but when it was a doctor who attempted to deceptively set Tumblety up - and it was doctors in the same traditionalist fraternity who have the chemist fluid and pills to be tested- it is not a surprise that the case was dropped.

The conservative-leaning French paper, *Le Courier du Canada* quickly published a commentary in their November 4, 1857, issue titled, *Legal Medicine. Tumblety Affair*, demanding further legal action against Tumblety:

"Tumblety whom the Grand Jury in Montreal has just acquitted, and thereto we have only one word to say: if this individual has escaped the penalty of the law, despite the serious facts proved against him in the inquiry conducted before the police magistrate, because of the specialised nature of the accusation, it is, it seems to us, the duty of the authorities to take up again the pursuit of other areas of accusation which may develop from the evidence of the inquiry..."

The commentary then made an important distinction about Tumblety either being a deceptive quack doctor or being a true abortionist who easily sidestepped the law. In both cases the paper believed the medico-legal field was in need of serious reform:

"It is to provide proof of the need for reform in the method of procedure that we offer the public the present Tumblety case in that it concerns the medico-legal expertise that has been produced in this matter. Tumblety had sold pills and liquids which were supposedly made up of abortive substances, or at least those which would fall within that category of medicines defined in English criminal law under the name of "noxious substances." The affair promptly and directly revealed one aspect of legal medicine: for if the medicines were of a completely inoffensive nature Tumblety had committed a deception in aggravated circumstances, and if on the other hand the medicines were of a type to cause the least danger to health, under the alleged circumstances, then Tumblety was guilty of an atrocious crime."

If Tumblety lost the case, then he knew the maximum penalty for violating Provincial Act 4 and 5 was seven years in prison. As we will see, when Tumblety was convinced he was going to prison, he vanished, never to return. Tumblety was finally released on bail in this abortion case. Because he did not jump bail, Tumblety was likely convinced that the ongoing chemical analyses would return with negative results for abortive substances. Either he did tell Simard and Dumas he was treating her headaches, as Tumblety's assistant claimed, or just as he did in Toronto, he was practicing his usual quack techniques and deceptively

⁸ *The Gazette*, October 26, 1857

claiming abortive properties. The fact that an amount of twenty dollars was exchanged suggests Tumblety faked the ingredients and exploited a paying customer.

Tumblety's legal issues to this point were over in Montreal, but as evidenced by his new advertisement, he felt it was time for the Montreal residents, especially members of Lower Canada's medical board, to hear from him. Tumblety placed an ad in the Montreal papers on October 30, 1857, titled, "To the Citizens of Montreal," where he publicly announced his innocence. The significance of this announcement is that it was the very first time that Tumblety used MD after his name. For Tumblety to have applied to the medical board for a license, the prerequisite for an American was a medical diploma, so Tumblety now publishing this fact makes sense. By November 2, he flooded the local papers with numerous advertisements; the largest being the multicolumn testimonial ads, but still without testimonials from Montreal. This occurred in a big way on December 5, 1857, when he placed an ad which had testimonials from Montreal residents, titling the ad, "Certificates from the Citizens of Montreal." This date, December 5, 1857, has a significance with an Irish Catholic man named Thomas D'Arcy McGee, and publishing testimonies from satisfied prominent Montreal citizens had a second purpose.

Published in the October 31, 1857, issue of *The New Era*, was the first instalment of a large two-part article, or biography on Tumblety. It was a fanciful biography titled, *Memoir of Tumblety*, which began with how he was born in Western New York with miraculous events. Part two of the article was in the November 3, 1857, issue. The author, Thomas D'Arcy McGee claimed that this memoir was translated from the "Original Dutch of the Tonawanda *Volksblatt*, September 31, 1857, which was supposedly the "leading German Medical Paper of the United States." The memoir begins with, "A Memoir of Francis Tumblety, 'The Indian Herb Doctor,' Graduate of the University of Paris, Member of the Royal College of Pharmacy H.B.G.; Q.U.A.C.K., &c. &c." In the brief introduction, it states:

"We commence to-day the Volksblatt's History of the renowned "Medicine-man," "Doctor" Tumblety. Though we summarily dropt [sp] the Doctor's advertisement, on the first appearance of his pamphlet (a copy of which may be seen in our office, in evidence of the nature of his "private practice"), still our duty to the public will not permit us to deprive them of the unspeakable gratification to be derived from the Volksblatt's chronicle. We can assure our readers, on most respectable authority, that although, like most biographers, our Dutch contemporary may dress up his story with some fanciful additions, the basis of it is plain matter-of-fact, and, if the "Doctor" really courts inquiry, can be proved to be such."

The use of "Q.U.A.C.K." makes it quickly apparent that the memoir is a satire, or parody, about Tumblety with the author, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, making every effort to follow through with his October 17, 1857, warning. He clearly responded to not only Tumblety continuing his massive advertising campaign but also to his case being dropped, and he responded with a smear campaign. In his October 27, 1857, issue, all he wrote was, "Dr. Tumblety.-The Grand Jury, on Saturday, returned 'No Bill' against the accused." In his very next issue, October 29, McGee announced his upcoming Memoir of Francis Tumblety, stating, "On Saturday next [October 31, 1857] will appear in the *New Era* (to be completed in successive numbers) A Memoir of Francis Tumblety, Graduate of the University of Paris; Member of the Royal College of Pharmacy; H.B.G.; Q.U.A.C.K., &c. &c." Tumblety referred to Aesculapius in his advertisements in an attempt to place himself within the group of qualified medical doctors, and the author of the memoir exploited this to explain Tumblety's medical origins:

"One night, as our adventurer sat dozing by a bar-room fire, in a country inn somewhere in Cataaugus [sp] county, a most remarkable vision appeared to him. He thought Aesculapius, the ancient god of medicine, appeared to him in the disguise of an old crone, who made up herb medicines in that neighborhood, and after anointing his temples, nostrils, and palms, with poppy-juice, thus addressed him – "My son, I am the divinity that of old presided over the primitive schools of medicine. Modern science has displace me from my tripod. My wand had

ceased to charm, and my ring to work wonders. Attend to me and your fortune is secure. Rise to-morrow morning, buy yourself a cane, a pair of spectacles, and a medicine chest, with printed directions. Commence seven miles at least from the place, and call yourself a doctor. Write letters to yourself, post them at one office, and release them at another. If they ask you what university you studied in, say Paris, or any other place far enough away. Go on courageously, my son. Lie and fear not. The world loves to be well humbugg'd, and it is your own fault if you do not make them pay well for it." With these words, Aesculapius embraced Tumblety..."

McGee then went into a long-winded story of Tumblety's very first cure, which occurred in a made-up rural town in Cattaraugus County, named Beersheba. In it, Tumblety is approached by a local peddler whose ass "that he raise from a colt" was sick. After initially refusing to treat the ass, Tumblety finally agreed, so he first examined it. The memoir continues, "Then the Doctor having sounded its lungs, pronounced the patient far gone in consumption, and ordered everyone present to leave the outhouse." For two days Tumblety isolated the ass and fed it food and medicine from "a bag which might hold a half bushel at least." On the third day, Tumblety led the now healthy ass out of the outhouse for the villager to see. Tumblety's reputation for curing incurable diseases spread through the neighborhood. The landlord of the outhouse inspected Tumblety's bag and discovered it was only oats, yet sworn testimonies then swamped the local newspapers about the amazing doctor.

By the style the story of the ass is written, it is clear that Thomas D'Arcy McGee knew the difference between a quack doctor and a well-intentioned nontraditional botanical doctor. Notice the scamming strawman technique of Tumblety professing to all that the ass had consumption. Since the ass was "cured" by merely eating oats, and oats does not cure consumption, the author is ensuring the reader understands that this was a scam.

In his very next *New Era* issue on November 5, 1857, McGee kept the issue alive with the following statement, "The Volksblatt containing the continuation of the "Memoir of Tumblety" can hardly reach us before the end of the week. The sequel of our translation will appear as soon as we receive the original."

Recall, reprinted in the *Toronto Globe*, November 20, 1857, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montreal denounced Tumblety's immoral publication. In the *New Era*, November 17, 1857, McGee responded to the Church's denouncement in an article titled, "The Last of Dr. F. Tumblety." He states:

"We learn with satisfaction, which has no tinge of personal triumph in it, that the highest ecclesiastical authority of this city has felt compelled to warn the laity against the infamous publication issued by this shameless mountebank." [Note: the definition of mountebank is a person who deceives others, especially in order to trick them out of their money; a charlatan]

In the article, we see McGee expounded on his reasoning for his two-part Tumblety memoir:

"We hope that our friends, whose sympathies had been so artfully appealed to, in order to interest them in this utterly unworthy person's behalf, are now satisfied that we did not warn them against him in vain. We were restrained from drawing direct attention to his filthy pamphlet by the fear that, if we quoted it, we might be unintentionally instrumental in increasing its circulation. We tried the legitimate weapon of ridicule, and not without effect."

The *Montreal Herald* then had to make a correction. In their November 23, 1857, issue, they stated, "No Episcopal Denunciation of Dr. Tumblety's book.-With reference to this subject, we have been informed that the denunciation in question was without any authority from the R.C. Bishop of the Diocese. In their November 25, 1857, issue, they had to make a correction. In the December 1, 1857, issue, they reproduced, "You will be good enough, I trust, to retract this your statement, and to inform your readers that I, the undersigned, am the clergyman who denounced the pamphlet; and that the denunciation in question was with the authority of the R. C. Bishop of Montreal. -J.J. Connolly, Priest of the Seminary."

Just as in Upper Canada, the Conservative Tory party supported the traditional medical community in Lower Canada and the radical party supported the nontraditional medical community. Non-practicing physicians made up a large number of politicians, making medicine and politics even closer bedfellows. A subtle difference in Lower Canada, including Montreal, was that the residents were also split between the Anglican English-speaking citizens and the French-speaking citizens. There was a large concentration of Irish immigrants within the English-speaking community in Montreal, thus, they already had significant political representation in the parliament.

Thomas D'Arcy McGee, the proprietor of Montreal's *New Era* newspaper, was not only a journalist, but he was also deeply involved in Irish social and political issues.⁹ He was born in Ireland in 1825 and was raised Roman Catholic. He quickly got involved in radical Irish social causes against Catholicism and openly opposed British rule, thus, supported Irish independence. In 1847, he edited *The Nation*, which was the voice of the Young Ireland movement. He participated in the Young Irelander Rebellion in 1848, and had to flee to the United States in order to avoid arrest. While living on the east coast of the US, he began a number of newspapers which focused upon Irish interests. Soon his political views changed dramatically, upset with democracy and republicanism in America. He became conservative, now espousing Catholic doctrine. McGee now preferred Canada over the US, because Catholic rights were recognized. It was at this time in the spring 1857 that McGee moved to Montreal, at the request of Irish immigrant leaders.

The reason McGee started the *New Era* newspaper was to gain a foothold into a career in Montreal politics and champion the Irish Catholic immigrant cause. He used the newspaper to defend Irish Catholic rights for representation, and attacked the influential Protestant-based Orange Order which attacked anything to do with Catholicism. McGee also wrote about the future of Canada and promoted the goal of confederation, or the federal union of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the Province of Canada. Ultimately, he was concerned for the betterment of Irish Catholic Canadians. In view of this, it makes sense that McGee attacked Tumblety and his exploitation of Montreal citizens.

According to the *Baltimore Sun*, November 14, 1857, McGee was presented with an expensive gift from "The Canadian admirers of Mr. Thomas D'Arcy McGee." It was a writing desk "containing the purse of \$2,000." The fact that this gift made the US and Canadian papers suggests this was connected to his political aspirations, since it demonstrated prominent Montreal citizens would spend money on him.

The *New York Times*, December 3, 1857, reported that Thomas D'Arcy McGee was nominated by the "Irish citizens of Montreal," as a Montreal representative in the Legislation Assembly of the Province of Canada. This occurred on December 1, 1857, at the Conference for Irishmen and Catholics of Montreal, which met at Bonaventure Hall. The minutes of the entire meeting were published in the *New Era*, December 3, 1857. The members discussed that approximately one third of the population of Montreal was Irish Catholic, so one of the three Montreal provincial parliamentary representatives should be Irish Catholic. It was none other than Tumblety's defense attorney Bernard Devlin, Esq, barrister, who addressed the conference and proposed the resolution to nominate Thomas D'Arcy McGee as their candidate. Devlin gave a long and eloquent speech on McGee and why he should represent Montreal Irish Catholics. The proposal was seconded, which then received a unanimous vote.

Although unanimous, there was a contingent of Montreal residents who rejected McGee because he hailed from the US. The *Buffalo Morning Express*, December 25, 1857, commented upon reports coming from Canadian papers, stating, "...as the instance of Mr. D'Arcy McGee, one of the candidates for Parliamentary honors from the ancient borough of Montreal. In a recent speech, after being violently assailed for having been an American citizen, he expressed his opinion in very candid terms." The Montreal elections were held on

⁹ Burns, R B, McGee, Thomas D'Arcy, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, v.9, University of Toronto, rev. 2020, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mcgee_thomas_d_arcy_9E.html

December 21 and 22, 1857, and McGee narrowly won. The *Chicago Tribune*, December 30, 1857, reported, “McGee was elected over Starnes by 29, in a poll of 9,100 votes.”

In Tumblety’s 1866 autobiography, he stated he was approached by a group of prominent Montreal “first citizens” asking him to challenge McGee in the elections:

“I had been practicing my profession in Canada with distinguished success, and, in the course of a prosperous career, I accumulated an equal amount of profit and of fame. So far as the latter went, I trust the reader will not deem me an egotist, when I state that in the British Provinces I had acquired the respect and consideration of the first citizens, in proof of which I was importuned by an influential body to represent them in the Colonial Parliament, in opposition to the celebrated Thomas Darcy McGee, a gentleman whose literary and political reputation is well known in this country. In order to substantiate this position—for I do not wish the public to take my word upon credit—I will here introduce some documentary evidence, which must speak for itself. In the year 1857, after being waited upon by a delegation representing a large body of Canadian citizens, urging me to enter the political arena, a course which my habits and my inclination strongly repudiated, and which I declined, it was rumored that I was nevertheless about to become a parliamentary candidate, and paragraphs to that effect found their way in the Canadian press. One of many I have before me. It was in the Union, Ottawa City, and reads as follows:

“It is hinted that Dr. Tumblety will offer himself as a candidate on grittish principles, in case of a vacancy in this constituency, and that he is now feeling the pulse of the people. The Doctor having amassed a fortune in the treatment of all ‘the ills that flesh is heir to,’ in which treatment he has ever been successful, now philanthropically proposes to devote his brilliant abilities to the cure of the dangerous diseases affecting the body politic, and is proudly conscious of the success that awaits him in the effort.”

The report was circulated so universally, that I deemed it incumbent to put forth a public disclaimer, which appeared in the Montreal Commercial Advertiser, of Dec. 7, 1857, of which the following is an extract:

*Sir: I notice in your valuable journal of the 3d instant, a short paragraph, in which it is intimated that it is my intention to offer myself, at the ensuing election, as a candidate to represent the suffrages of the people of Montreal, in opposition to D’Arcy McGee, and **that I am about to receive a most numerously-signed address**, and, I may add, have resolved to come forward for the representation of the Irish interest. In allusion to the above statements, I may say that it is not my intention at this present time to contest an election, but I have every hope, were I to do so, of ultimate success. [Author emphasis added]*

I have merely recalled the above, in evidence that my position at that time, in the city of Montreal, was such as to induce what I conscientiously believe to have been a majority of the voters to offer me their suffrages in a “parliamentary contest.””

With Tumblety only having been in Montreal for just three months and much of that time he was known by Montreal residents as being charged with inducing an abortion, plus, having the Roman Catholic Bishop denounce his pamphlet, it seems strange that prominent citizens would have approached him to challenge Thomas D’Arcy McGee to represent them in parliament. Even if many liked Tumblety, there is plenty of baggage surrounding Tumblety for him possibly losing to a person not representing the Irish Catholic residents. Also, Tumblety’s so-called documentary evidence is incomplete, since it made no comment about receiving a “numerously signed address.” Note an article in the *Commercial Advertiser* published in the *Montreal Gazette*, December 5, 1857, the same newspaper that Tumblety responded in just two days later:

“ANOTHER CANDIDATE:-We understand that the celebrated Dr. Tumblety is about to receive a most numerous signed address, requesting him to come forward as a candidate for the representation of the Irish interest in Montreal, in opposition to Mr. McGee. We have not yet learned the Doctor’s decision, but understand that the objects on the ground of damaging his professional character by a contest with such an opponent.”

This is clearly the newspaper announcement that Tumblety was referencing, since it states the identical phrase, “most numerous signed address.” This over-the-top phrase is exactly how Tumblety’s self-aggrandizing, Allwise-Physician advertisements sound. Combined with the fact that no Montreal “first citizens” group ever came forward admitting to this is highly suggestive that the announcement was yet another Tumblety ploy. He wrote it. Having Montreal readers believe that “a majority of voters” are so convinced Tumblety was such an upstanding and prominent figure that they wanted him to represent them in parliament, would certainly help his business. Now it makes sense that on the very same day, December 5, 1857, Tumblety published testimonials from prominent Montreal citizens that purportedly raved about him as a miraculous physician and quality person.

Another likely reason why Tumblety publicly hinted at challenging McGee’s candidacy is vindictiveness; a motive he will use on numerous occasions in the future, including against journalists and editors. Recall Prior’s comments about Tumblety’s vindictive action to him that very month. Publicly announcing that there was a majority of prominent Irish citizens who opposed McGee –enough publicly endorse another candidate– had to give McGee some level of anxiety only weeks before the election. Ever since Tumblety’s abortion court case, McGee had made it a point to publicly rebut Tumblety’s multicolumn ads. We know Tumblety read the *New Era*, as evidenced by the following editorial comments in the *New Era* on October 3, 1857, when Tumblety’s abortion case was in full swing. In the previous issue of October 1, 1857, the *New Era* stated that they would hold off on discussing Tumblety’s case and hold off on his advertisements until the experts analyzed the contents of the bottle Tumblety gave to the prostitute for an abortion. The *New Era* reported that if it came back as to induce abortion, then they will report this. Tumblety was not happy with how the paragraph portrayed him. The October 3, 1857, issue, an editorial stated:

“Dr. Tumblety was on Thursday admitted to bail by Mr. Justice Guy. A friend of the accused has called to ask us to qualify our paragraph of Thursday, in relation to this case. This we must positively decline. –When the trial is over, and the sentence found, we will then, as we said, exercise our right as journalists in an impartial review of the complete evidence. Till then, we have nothing further to say.”

The very last sentence in the October 1, 1857, editorial stated, “Pending the trial, we felt it due to ourselves to omit his advertisement from our columns, since last week.” Ever since he arrived in Montreal, Tumblety had an advertisement in the *New Era*, and the very last issue that published this ad was on September 22, 1857. This definitely got Tumblety’s attention. This also suggests that Tumblety met McGee at the end of August at his office, which was located 42 St. Francois Xavier Street. While McGee has a man named Frederick Dalton do the actual printing, he was the proprietor, meaning, he controlled the content and would have had to approve Tumblety’s ads. It also shows that Tumblety’s quack reputation did not precede him, as far as McGee was concerned.

Historians who have assumed that a group of concerned Montreal citizens did indeed attempt to nominate Tumblety in opposition to McGee also suggested that these citizens were the very group who publicly opposed McGee at the outset. This is highly unlikely based upon Tumblety’s own background, since the very reason why the group opposed McGee can also be applied to Tumblety. The group rejected McGee because he hailed from the US and that is exactly where Tumblety advertised his origins in the massive multi-column advertisement, Rochester, New York, he published beginning on September 24, 1857.

Further evidence is it is his MO. He will do this again, where he not only takes advantage of communicating with the locals using newspaper announcements after he has been wronged but he also adds the event in his

autobiographies. After he was wronged and arrested in St. Louis and received bad publicity, "complimentary notices" from important people coming to his side made it in the same papers. After he was released from the Old Capital Prison and came to New York, the editor of the Sunday Mercury made a huge, gushing announcement.

There is evidence that the gold medal Tumblety claimed to have received from the citizens of Montreal was considered a scam by the Montreal mayor at the time. After Tumblety was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy in the Lincoln assassination in May 1865, a Philadelphia reporter recognized this was the same person who opened up an office in their city in May 1863. An article in the *Philadelphia Press*, May 9, 1865, titled, "The Philadelphia Adventures of Dr. F. Tumblety," stated:

*"On the 21st of May, 1863, the doctor [Tumblety] entered the Central Station, and made the following affidavit, recorded in Mr. Bulkley's blotter: "Dr. Tumblety, of Washington – 333 Chestnut street – **Stolen, this morning, a gold medal, presented to deponent by citizens of Montreal, Canada; name on it; valued \$800; Taken by a man named St. Clair, stopping at Girard House; was showing it to him; he ran off with it. –F. Tumblety, M.D.**" A warrant was issued by Alderman Beltler, and placed in the possession of Messrs. Callahan and Carlin. St. Clair was arrested on the succeeding day, and arraigned on the day following at the Central Station. The defendant gave the name of Joseph Aspinwall alias St. Clair. Dr. Tumblety, upon being sworn, testified as follows: "The defendant called to see me and said he had seen me in Montreal: I said yes, I had been there; I showed him the gold medal at the time; a party came in to see me; I went into the hall; when I came back the defendant **and gold medal were gone; medal worth \$800; it was presented to me by the citizens of Montreal.**" The case was duly reported to Benjamin Franklin, Chief of Police, and there being a lingering doubt in the mind of officer Callahan as to the true character of the doctor, the chief wrote to the proper authorities of Montreal, and an answer was received that no such medal had ever been presented by any of the citizens, and that the doctor was an impostor, a charlatan, and a suspicious person. Before this answer was received, the doctor called at the office and said that he had recovered the medal; someone had placed it beneath the door of his office. The prisoner, who had been committed on the charge of stealing, was at once liberated. As soon as the answer was received from Montreal by Chief Franklin, he sent for the doctor, who responded in a short time. The Chief opened on him in the most unmistakable terms; charge him with being an impostor; has sent an innocent person to prison, &c. The Doctor became impudent, whereupon Dr. Blackburn, the Fire Marshal, came to the assistance of the Chief, and denounced the impostor in language respectful but decidedly emphatic. He was given twenty-four hours to leave, as he was an impostor and probable rebel emissary. He did leave, and proceeded to Brooklyn..."*

According to the *Union Record*, January 24, 1889, a reporter from the *Cincinnati Enquirer* asked a resident about his experience with Tumblety and he replied that he met him in Pittsburgh in the spring of 1870 and showed him, "a heavy gold medal which purported to have been presented to him by the citizens of Sault Lake, Utah." Before considering that the Cincinnati resident was misremembering where Tumblety claimed to have received the gold medal, there is further evidence that he would change the story. In February 1881, Tumblety told young Richard Norris his gold medals came from the British government. Being deposed under oath Norris stated:

"He then opened a large trunk (but in the meantime ordered some more ale) and he pulled out a velvet vest which had, I judge, four – three or four medals on each side – they looked to me like gold medals. He told me they were awarded to him by the English Government."

One month later on the same trip to New Orleans, Tumblety was arrested in a possible pick-pocket case. This time, Tumblety claimed his gold medal came from the citizens of Montreal and gave the exact date of receipt. In the *Times-Picayune*, March 25, 1881, it states:

*“In the doctor’s room was found a number of decorations –whether genuine or not remains to be seen. **He has a gold medal, alleged to have been presented by the citizens of Montreal, Canada, for services rendered and for skill and science, presented March 4, 1858, on the obverse side of which was the inscription, “To give light to those that sit in darkness,” what purported to be a cross of Legion of Honor, the Iron Cross of Prussia, a cross from the Emperor of Austria, and one presented by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.**”*

Recall, on November 17, 1857, Thomas D’Arcy McGee published an announcement in *The New Era* expressing his satisfaction that Tumblety received a major character blow by the Catholic bishop, who denounced his pamphlets as immoral. Tumblety would have known that the medical board would never approve of his medical license after the bishop denounced his pamphlets as immoral.

The gold medal may have had its origins in McGee’s playbook. Recall, in November 1857, McGee had his \$2,000 writing desk, a gift from Montreal citizens, published. Tumblety likely recognized this as a very positive story that promoted his electability, so he copied the idea.

Coincidentally, on that very day, Tumblety’s morality was showcased in police court involving an event at the Theatre Royal. Tumblety was known to love the theater and regularly attended performances at respective local theaters, and he would even buy a ticket for his dog. Montreal was no exception. On Monday night, November 16, 1857, Tumblety was attending a performance at the Theatre Royal when a large commotion ensued. According to the *Toronto Globe*, November 21, 1857, a young man named John O’Brien was performing a “burlesque on Dr. Tumblety” in the pit, which caused indignation by those attending the performance. One witness stated that the noise was “unusual.” Apparently, many in the audience began to throw objects at O’Brien’s so-called performance of Tumblety. As the crowd began to leave the theater in disgust, an employee, Mr. Buckland, rushed into the pit to stop the obscene activity. O’Brien then struck Buckland in the eye. A police constable then took O’Brien into custody. O’Brien was fined the next morning £5 and cost or two months in prison. The morning of November 17, 1857, also saw three men, a Blake, Prior, and McDonald, arrive at Tumblety’s office, threaten to knock down his door, break his head, and then cowhide him. They did not, but also found themselves in police court. The magistrate ordered Blake, Prior, and McDonald to pay £50 bail each, to be held for six months as an incentive to keep the peace for that length of time.

Further details of the incident arose thirty-one years later. The man named Prior, was James P Prior, and was actually interviewed by a reporter on November 26, 1888, just after it was discovered that Tumblety was arrested on suspicion for the Whitechapel murders. According to an article in the *Boston Daily Globe*, November 27, 1888, James Prior recalled this event at the Theatre Royal and added additional details. He stated he “appeared in a burlesque of the eccentric doctor” and saw Tumblety’s dog near him. Prior stated that as the burlesque was going on, he sang to Tumblety’s dog “a topical song of which the doctor himself was the subject, The first stanza went something like this: I am the famous medicine man, My name is Tumble Tie, And I can cure all diseases, In the twinkling of an eye.” Prior stated that Tumblety was so indignant of the insult that he “hired toughs to waylay” him one night. Prior added that he was not alone and he and his friend “gave the sluggers a slugging.” Prior then claims “arrests followed” and shortly afterward Tumblety vanished from Montreal.

It now makes more sense as to why Prior, along with Blake and McDonald, were upset enough to visit Tumblety’s office the next day in addition to having the magistrate concerned enough to issue such a long cool-off period. In the 1888 interview, Prior knew Tumblety was the person who ordered the beating, so it stands to reason he brought along two others the next morning to give Tumblety a good beating. It also explains why Tumblety had enough sense to have the door locked before they arrived, when walk-in businesses

generally required an unlocked door. When Prior stated later that arrests (in plural form) followed, as opposed to “Tumblety was arrested,” suggests he and his friends got arrested just as what occurred. Incidentally, this impromptu burlesque show in the theater pit seems to be the very first time we have evidence of Tumblety’s sexual activities with young men.

Tumblety did leave soon after, as Prior claimed, but he returned in March 1858. The fact that Prior did not know this, yet he was still in Montreal, means Tumblety’s return was much more subdued and he did not aggressively advertise. There may have been a good reason...

There were numerous other incidents that made the newspapers of Tumblety seeking revenge in the form of physical harm against those he believed embarrassed or slandered him. On one occasion in 1871 or 1872 in New York City, Tumblety challenged an editor/reporter to a duel, meaning, he was willing to cause a person’s death for him being wronged:

“Sixteen or seventeen years ago the Doctor had a difficulty with Editor Ralston, of Frank Leslie’s Weekly. The result of this trouble was that certain doings of Tumblety when in Nova Scotia were fully exposed. Some days after the exposure he met Mr. Ralston in the barroom of the Fifth Avenue Hotel. The editor at the time was chatting with Supervisor Briggs and Central Office Detective J.T. Golden. Tumblety assaulted Ralston, and they had a lively fight in which the Doctor got the worst of it. Tumblety afterward wanted Ralston to fight a duel, but the latter said he was not really worth fighting. Detective Golden arrested Tumblety for assault, but Ralston declined to make any complaint.”¹⁰

Another police court event that occurred just two days later, on Thursday, November 19, 1857, again involved Tumblety, albeit indirectly. In police court on Saturday, November 21, 1857, yet again presided by Charles Joseph Coursol, Esq, there was an assault and battery case involving a porter named George Hunter and a young man named Joseph Palmer:

“George Hunter, porter, was charged with assaulting Joseph Palmer, a student of Dr. Tumblety. Palmer, being sworn, deposes as follows, to wit: - I am a student of Dr. Tumblety. A dog, which the doctor had received as a present a day or two before, happened to run out of the office, and I ran down stairs after it. Defendant, who was at the foot of the stairs, asked me where I was going so fast. I told him it was nothing to him; whereupon he struck me with his fist on the back of the head, and made two or three attempts at me, and said he would make a foot-ball of me.

Cross-examined. – This occurred at the foot of the stairs. There were several persons there at the time; defendant’s wife was there. When I ran down stairs, I was running after the dog – not after Mrs. Hunter. The dog is not mad. My professional teacher received the dog that morning. I had no dress on at the time.

Question by Counsel. – What? Were you naked?

Answer. –No; I had on my trousers.

This closed the case for the prosecution. Dr. Tumblety intended to appear as a witness on behalf of the prosecutor; but, when called upon, did not appear.

On behalf of the defence [sp], Edward Burke, carter, was sworn, and saith: - “On the 19th inst., I saw Mr. Palmer; I also saw defendant. There were no blows whatsoever given. Whilst I was there, Mrs. Hunter went up the stairs, and came running down again.

This closed the case. The judgment of the Court was, that the defendant pay a fine of 6d and costs.

¹⁰ New York Herald, December 4, 1888

*Mr. Smythe, of counsel for prosecution. Mr. Devlin for defence [sp].*¹¹

Knowing Tumblety's mania for young men, even three days earlier in the pit at the Theatre Royal, it is not a surprise that young Joseph Palmer was in a state of undress, or "no dress," as he rushed out of Tumblety's office. The fact that Tumblety was supposed to be a witness meant he was in the office with half-naked Palmer. It is also not a surprise that Tumblety did not attend court to help defend Palmer.

Reviewing Tumblety's advertisements that he placed in the *Toronto Globe* and the *Montreal Gazette* from December 1857 to March 1858 for evidence that he was actually at his office, with statements such as, "Call upon the Doctor," as compared to when he might not have been at the office, with statements such as, "Tumblety's Vegetable Compound for Sale at Tumblety's office," reveals a pattern. Tumblety was likely in Montreal throughout December 1857 until January 15, 1858, and in Toronto from January 15 to just before March 6, 1858. He was then back in Montreal, claiming to have received the gold medal on March 6, 1858. Tumblety was clearly travelling back and forth between Toronto and Montreal in the winter months. Between March 4 and May 21, 1858, the month that Tumblety originally claimed he was leaving Montreal to return to Toronto, Tumblety placed an ad titling it, "Certifications," where were selected testimonials.

ASSAULT AND BATTERY.
George Hunter, porter, was charged with assaulting Joseph Palmer, a student of Dr. Tumblety. Palmer, being sworn, deposes as follows, to wit:—I am a student of Dr. Tumblety. A dog, which the doctor had received as a present a day or two before, happened to run out of the office, and I ran down stairs after it. Defendant, who was at the foot of the stairs, asked me where I was going so fast. I told him it was nothing to him; whereupon he struck me with his fist on the back of the head, and made two or three attempts at me, and said he would make a foot-ball of me.
Cross-examined.—This occurred at the foot of the stairs. There were several persons there at the time; defendant's wife was there. When I ran down stairs, I was running after the dog—not after Mrs. Hunter. The dog is not mad. My professional teacher received the dog that morning. I had no dress on at the time.
Question by Counsel.—What! Were you naked?
Answer.—No; I had on my trousers.
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On behalf of the defence, Edward Burke, carrier, was sworn, and said:—"On the 19th inst., I saw Mr. Palmer; I also saw defendant. There were no blows whatsoever given. Whilst I was there, Mrs. Hunter went up the stairs, and came running down again.
This closed the case. The judgment of the Court was, that the defendant pay a fine of 6d and costs.
Mr. Smythe, of counsel for prosecution. Mr. Devlin for defence.

With all of the incidents Tumblety was involved in, in Montreal, he may not have shown good character in the eyes of the medical licensing board and not receive a Lower Canada license to show the Upper Canada Licensing Board. How coincidental that Tumblety shifted strategies by calling his office spaces a medical institute. Tumblety maintained his headquarters in Toronto, and a major change occurred in his Toronto advertisements beginning on April 20, 1858; now having had an office open in Montreal for nearly nine months. He copied a new practice he used in Montreal and began using MD at the end of his name calling himself "principal" in charge of "the Medical Institute." His place of operation was still at the same location where he had his office; 111 King Street:

Special Notices.
Everlasting fame belongs to the "MEDICAL INSTITUTE," No. 111 King-street east, Toronto, and its successful principal F. Tumblety, M. D., who, it is acknowledged, has done and is doing more for his fellow creatures than all the other followers of Aesculapius together.
Mr. John Burke, of the Montreal Telegraph Co., Toronto, after suffering three years with a distressing dyspepsia, with pain and wind in his stomach, great debility of body and depression of mind, which none of the Doctors could cure, applied to Dr. Tumblety a few weeks since, and to-day, through the invigorating effects of his Herb Medicines, he is perfectly cured and well. If there is anything that can induce those afflicted with disease to try and get cured with safe and ever reliable medicines, it must be the myriads of facts which Dr. Tumblety has from time to time laid before the public.
Toronto, April 20, 1858. 2506-11 460-11

*"Everlasting fame belongs to the "MEDICAL INSTITUTE," No. 111 King-street east, Toronto, and its successful principal F. Tumblety, M. D., who, it is acknowledged, had done and is doing more for his fellow creatures than all other followers of Aesculapius together."*¹²

The *Toronto Globe*, April 20, 1858, advertisement continued on with a testimonial from Mr John Burke, who after years of going to regular doctors without success he, "applied to Dr. Tumblety a few weeks since, and to-day, through the invigorating effects of his Herb Medicines, he is perfectly cured and well." Tumblety changed the name of his Indian herb doctor offices to the Medical Institute. A medical institute is a place of learning, preparing students to be physicians, meaning, his medical institute was a medical school. It is likely not a coincidence that Tumblety had claimed he was an eclectic physician and the very first eclectic medical school was named the Cincinnati Eclectic Medical Institute, thus, using the very same title. There are additional pieces of evidence that confirm his Medical Institute was meant to be a medical school. First, Tumblety now called himself a principal, which is the administrator of a place of learning. Second, the statement involving Mr. John Burke being cured at the Institute specified that he "applied to," suggesting the Institute acted like a teaching hospital, where a person applies to the program and allows students to treat them under the supervision of a qualified medical

¹¹ *Montreal Gazette*, November 24, 1857

¹² *Toronto Globe*, April 20, 1858

doctor/professor. Third, Tumblety himself expounded upon his intentions with the Medical Institute in his advertisement when he stated, "...and its successful principal F. Tumblety, M. D., who, it is acknowledged, had done and is doing more for his fellow creatures than all other followers of Aesculapius together." Aesculapius was the Roman god of health and father of medicine, taken from Asklepios, the Greek god. He was the symbol of the healer and for centuries physicians were known as followers of Aesculapius. Hippocrates referred to himself as a follower, and all physicians today bind themselves to the Hippocratic Oath. Tumblety is letting the readers know that he, as the administrator and a fully qualified medical doctor, is supervising the training of followers of Aesculapius while simultaneously healing applicants, something a quack doctor would never do.

Lastly, records of a Dr Charles Jones make it clear that he not only was a student of Tumblety's but was a student of his in Toronto in the mid - to late - 1860s at a "Medical Institute." In the Biographical Sketches section of the History of Wyndot County, Ohio:

*"[Charles P Jones] was educated in the public schools of Cleveland, abandoning his studies at eighteen. He subsequently engaged in a mercantile establishment as a salesman, attending school at intervals, and began the study of medicine at Toronto, Canada, in 1856, under the instruction of Dr. F. Tumblety, remaining with him nearly four years. In 1857, he entered the Toronto **Medical Institute**, graduating in 1859. In 1860, he began the practice of his profession at Chicago, Ill., where he remained one year, when, on account of failing health, he was compelled to suspend his practice for about one year. He subsequently resumed his practice of his profession, and in 1865 located at Nevada, where he had since engaged. He has a good practice, and has accumulated considerable property as a result of his labors... Dr. Jones is a member of the Northwestern Medical Association; Medical Examiner of the Knights of Honor, of which order he is also a member; member of the Lutheran Church, and a Republican in politics."* [Author emphasis added] ¹³

There was no Toronto Medical Institute in Toronto in the mid-nineteenth century, with the exception of Tumblety's Medical Institute. Jones had a very respectable career, as evidenced by the local community adding him to the biographical sketches. He even acted as a coroner.

Because Dr Jones was a coroner for a certain period of time, he must have had a working knowledge of the human anatomy, which suggests that Tumblety's Medical Institute was focused upon more than just the practice of medicine, specifically, botanical medicine. Jones made it a point to add his training and education under the tutelage of Tumblety for a reason. In Tumblety's 1866 autobiography, he actually published what he believed medical schools should be giving young physicians a solid foundation in - human anatomy:

"The only sure foundations of medicine are an intimate knowledge of the human body... The anatomical and clinical schools, therefore, are those in which the young physician should be formed."

Tumblety's medical institute would have been considered a proprietary medical school. There were two types of medical schools in Canada and the United States in the nineteenth century. The first type was directly affiliated with an accredited University or hospital, such as the Faculty of Medicine at McGill College in Montreal, and according to the Medical Act of 1827, a diploma meant they were automatically licensed to practice medicine.¹⁴

The second type, the proprietary medical school, was an independent commercial enterprise and was more common, but priority was generally profit and not quality medical education in the interest of the public. Because they were not accredited, or granted a charter, graduates still had to go through the province's medical licensing board after graduation in order to receive a license to practice. Sometimes proprietary medical

¹³ Biographical Sketches section of the History of Wyndot County, Ohio, Chicago: Leggett, Conaway & Co., 1884, p. 709

¹⁴ Romano, T.M., Professional Identity and the Nineteenth-Century Ontario Medical Profession, 1993, History of Medicine, Queen's University

schools had an excellent reputation and would work with local hospitals or universities. For example, the University of Toronto opened its medical school in 1843, but in 1853, it was forced to close, so the university transferred their teaching duties to three proprietary schools in Toronto, Trinity Medical College, the Toronto School of Medicine, and the Women's Medical College. Proprietary schools could not grant recognized degrees, so the University of Toronto held exams and then issued their own degree. According to Romano, "...their affiliation with universities meant that their graduates, no matter how poorly trained, were automatically licensed to practice medicine."

By the mid-nineteenth century in Upper Canada, receiving a medical diploma was becoming more significant. Romano states, "Although a medical degree [in Upper Canada] was never required for practice, by the 1860's the cachet of an MD had become important. In the 1850s and 1860s, many long-time practitioners obtained their first medical degree." In view of this, there is another interpretation of the biographical comments on Charles Jones. If the biographer had mistaken the Toronto School of Medicine for the Toronto Medical Institute, then Jones entered medical school at the Toronto School of Medicine a few months to a year after he began studying with Tumblety. Still, Jones claimed he stayed with Tumblety as a student for four years. It also means that Jones was studying with Tumblety *before* he renamed his office a Medical Institute. With Tumblety's great interest in anatomy and surgery, especially so he could pass the local exam in the future, it stands to reason that Jones practiced anatomy and surgery with Tumblety at his office. Because he was practicing anatomy and surgery, as well as "eclectic" medicine, Tumblety may have decided to call himself a principal and his office a Medical Institute in order to convince the board that he was an eclectic physician, as opposed to a quack.

An anatomy course for training prospective physicians cannot be just taught out of a textbook and requires actual specimens for illustration in lecture and for students to receive hands-on training. In view of this, it now makes sense why Tumblety was an opportunist and attempted to steal Portmore's heart and liver off the examination tray in St. John during Tumblety's manslaughter case.

Tumblety's Medical Institute advertisements continued through the summer and into August 1858 and ended. Tumblety continued to maintain his office, and according to Dr Jones, his training continued "for four years" up to 1859. Tumblety began calling his Toronto office an Institute nine months after he left to open up an office in Montreal, and as we will see, he had students in Montreal, as well.

BE PROFITED BY IT.

THE time has come that all who will, can escape the iron grasp of Mercury, and other mineral poisons, by calling without delay to see the well known and justly celebrated Herb Doctor, F. TUMBLETY, Principal of the "Medical Institute," where he will administer those only true and safe medicines from Nature's Garden which his for his author the great and ill-wise physician above.

The following diseases can be cured by Dr. T. in the most obstinate stage of their existence, viz.:—Diseases of the Lungs, Heart, Liver, and Throat. Also, Dyspepsia, Dropsy, and all diseases of the blood, such as Scrofula, Erysipelas, Salt Rheum, Fever, Sores, and all other chronic complaints of years' standing.

P.S.—The Doctor will also give particular attention to all diseases peculiar to females and children.

The poor will be liberally considered.

Below we give a few of the many thousands of cases of Chronic Diseases, cured at the MEDICAL INSTITUTE, No. 111 King street east, Toronto, under the management of its successful principal, Dr. F. TUMBLETY, (the renowned Indian Herb Doctor). The names and addresses of the persons are given in full, so that it will afford an opportunity to many who may desire to ascertain, personally, the facts of the cases mentioned:

Cough and Paralysis Cured.

Mr. JOHN KENNY, Toronto.—Cured of a very dangerous cough and smothering on the chest. He had also lost the use of his arm from a paralytic stroke, but by the scientific application of remedies obtained at the "Medical Institute" 111 King street east, he has completely recovered the power of it, and it is now as strong as ever.

Tumblety's very last newspaper advertising campaign in the *Toronto Globe* began on November 5, 1858, and lasted into February 1859. They had significant changes from his summer advertisements. First, his suite of offices changed from 111 King Street to 140 King Street, and second, he no longer used Medical Institute.

There is an eyewitness account as to why Tumblety switched offices. In the *San Francisco Examiner*, November 27, 1888, an eyewitness who knew Tumblety in Toronto in 1858 stated, "His [Tumblety's] eccentricities were so pronounce that he was once "frozen out" of a hotel in Toronto in which he had engaged rooms."

Note that it was April 20, 1858, when Tumblety began calling his Toronto office "the Medical Institute," and maintain this advertisement until August. Supporting the notion that Tumblety spent most of his time in Toronto in the late spring and summer of 1858 is on May 21 (to July 23), his Montreal advertisement not only called his office a "Medical Depot" merely offering medicine, but it also changed locations to 212 Notre Dame Street. Between July 23 and August 1858, Tumblety changed his Montreal ad, which was titled, "\$500 reward," but it was still located at 212 Notre Dame Street and was called Medical Depot.

Tumblety published a significant announcement in the *Montreal Gazette* beginning in August 1858, which demonstrates he was leaving Montreal and not maintaining an office:

“A Rare Chance to Make \$3000 Per Annum, without Risking Your Life By Going to Fraser River.-Dr. Tumblety is about to retire from the practice of his profession, in consequence of not finding persons competent to manage his real estate, consisting of upwards of 3000 acres of good land in the vicinity of the G.T.R.R. [Grand Trunk Railroad], U.C. [Upper Canada] The Doctor will sell out at a bargain his institution on Notre Dame Street. Parties desirous of purchasing, call without delay. P.S.-Rent is paid in advance. No difficulties of any kind to contend with, as the Doctor owes no one a trente-sous.” [Author emphasis added]

Notice that Tumblety did not call his rented office spaces Medical Depot, but called it his institution. How coincidental that he was calling his Toronto office the Medical Institution between April and August 1858, but there is one difference. Tumblety never published his Montreal office as an institution in his ads as he did in Toronto. It was not the brick-and-mortar building he was selling, since he was renting, so it must have been the contents he was selling. With respect to medical institutes, Tumblety continued his business for two more decades, so he was likely not selling his private patented medicines. In every city he left, he never sold his “institution.” If this truly was set up as a medical institution, then he likely purchased medical equipment; items possibly too large to bring with him. Is there any evidence that Tumblety treated his offices in Montreal as a place of learning as he was in Toronto? The answer is yes. Recall, the Montreal assault and battery case involving Joseph Palmer. Palmer stated under oath that he was a student of Dr Tumblety and not an office boy. He also referred to Tumblety as “my professional teacher.”



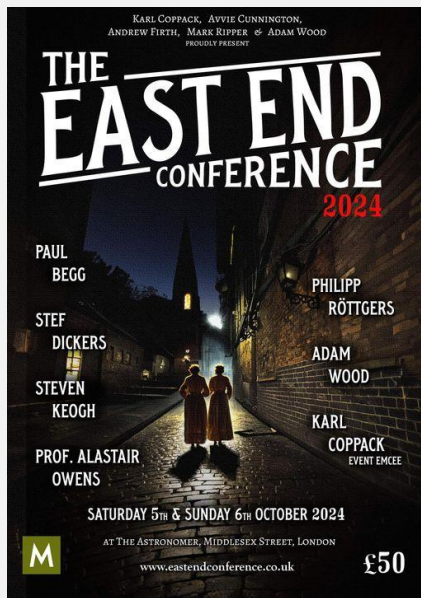
The Gazette, August 4, 1858

Tumblety then left the Provinces and spent the entire next year of 1859 and half of 1860 opening up offices in the US; away from the requirement of operating with a medical license. Still, he was not done with the northern neighbors and in June 1860, Tumblety opened up an office in St. John, New Brunswick, a city that at the time boasted a population that even rivaled Toronto. Medical licensing was even easier in the Province of New Brunswick. In part 3 of this article, we will see Tumblety’s plans to continue operating out of the Canadian Provinces come to an abrupt end when one of his patients dies. This event also reveals his desire to obtain anatomical organs and how callous he was in obtaining them.

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH A RIPPEROLOGIST

For this edition we’ve invited esteemed researcher *extraordinaire* **Debra Arif** to answer our five standardised questions. If you recall from our last edition, answers can only contain a maximum of two words, so here’s Debra’s responses for you to cogitate over:

1. How many people did ‘Jack the Ripper’ kill? *Indeterminate number*
2. Who is your preferred suspect? *Local man*
3. Who has influenced you the most in this subject? *Paul Begg*
4. Will the case ever be solved? *Definitely not*
5. How would you describe the current state of Ripperology? *Moving backwards*



Poster courtesy of Andrew Firth

The East End Conference 2024 – A Review

By

Suzanne Huntington

Anyone familiar with the East End Conference knows of its unique standing within Ripperology circles. Having sold out in a couple of hours, it's a mix of old and new, and social and academic. In a world where messenger chats and Zoom calls prevail, here's an opportunity to actually meet the people you have debated the subject matter with and get to know them better.

The origins of this important get-together can be found in the early Jack the Ripper conferences from two decades ago but it's evolved considerably since then to encompass a variety of themes, all of which are, in some way, linked to Ripperology. The management team of Karl Coppack, Andrew Firth, Mark Ripper and Adam Wood will be familiar to

many and this year we saw Avvie Cunningham added to the list of organisers. All are volunteers, a fact of vital importance when it comes to understanding the motivation and ethos behind this arrangement. No money is made from the delegates or the speakers, this is an event by aficionados for aficionados and conference costs are deliberately kept to a minimum to ensure as many people as possible are able to afford the ticket price. That said, the East End of London is not a cheap place these days and a weekend away will leave a hefty hole in anyone's pocket, so be prepared to spend up to £300 for three nights' accommodation in a Travelodge, £7 for a pint at the Hoop and Grapes and a whopping £18 for fish, chips and mushy peas. If you factor in the travel, food, drink and books (*oh God, the books...*) you can easily be looking down the barrel of £500 - £600 if you're travelling from elsewhere in the UK.

The question therefore must be asked: is this not insignificant outlay value for money? Well, for me it's a resounding 'yes', because I'd much rather spend my cash on a weekend with likeminded individuals, debating and socialising than I would go on holiday and get sunburnt and sweaty. But that's just me. I'm not even that bothered beforehand about who is doing the talks, I want to go regardless and if it's a talk that's particularly good or on a subject I find particularly interesting then that's a bonus in my book. So if you think this is a biased review, it is, unashamedly.



Mark Ripper – photo courtesy of Tony Dennard



Adam Wood – photo courtesy of Tony Dennard

The chosen subjects for this year's conference were as eclectic as ever, ranging from a 21st century police perspective of the Ripper crimes to the lives of the Peculiar People, a Christian sect which originated in Essex. I should point out that Mark Ripper, who presented the talk, managed to produce a fascinating forty-five minutes with less than forty-eight hours' notice, following the withdrawal of speaker Stef Dickers because of a family emergency. We send Stef our best regards in this unavoidable of circumstances.

Adam Wood opened the conference with a deviation from his usual patois and spoke about the Fenians. Ever the consummate speaker, he managed to incorporate witty dialogue and visuals on a heavy subject matter and provided everyone with a comprehensive guide to the Fenian attacks which culminated in the 1885 bombing of the Tower of London.

Adam's talk was followed by Philipp Röttgers, who detailed the Press reporting of the cases in Germany at the time. It was his codicil of an account of a 'Polish Jew' suspect however that created the most attention and more than a little Googling afterwards. Philipp and his mother Dorothee, also a noted author in her own



Philipp Röttgers –
photo courtesy of
Tony Dennard

right, took the delegates on a tour of the area on Saturday night which culminated at the Princess of Prussia pub off Leman Street. The pub, which you can see from the photograph below, is beautiful, and more importantly, from the perspective of a group, sufficiently quiet and comfortable to be able to engage in conversation with fellow delegates (or not, as the case may be).

The best talk of the conference, for me anyway, was Steven Keogh's informative speech on how the Metropolitan Police of today would approach the Whitechapel crimes. I could have happily listened for another hour, and so could others as I saw him later having lunch with a very engaged Paul Begg, Steven Blomer, Jonathan Tye and Adam Wood. His views on the senior police officials in 1888 raised a few eyebrows and more than a few nods of heads, when he stated that anyone above Swanson was '*borderline corrupt*', something that was never more apparent than the confirmation bias which accompanied the Rose Mylett investigation. He was, however, full of praise for the lower echelons of the Met, and in particular Edmund Reid and Donald Swanson. He summed up his approach to the murders by asking the following of any potential suspect:

- *How did they feel to warrant committing a murder?*
- *How did committing a murder make them feel?*
- *What were the benefits of them committing a murder?*

It's a logical starting point, and one which rang true with much of his audience.

The penultimate presentation was by Professor Alastair Owens of Queen Mary's University, who provided details of the archaeological digs in Limehouse. Entitled 'Tales of the Privy' it wasn't quite as faecal as everyone expected, instead detailing the infilling of household detritus when privies were no longer required. Whilst his talk was absorbing, for me it was a bit too generic to properly engage me. I wanted him to go into more detail but then to be fair to him he was constricted by time and his Q&A at the end was excellent.



Professor Alastair
Owens – photo
courtesy of Tony
Dennard

I was drawn into the subjective use of the term '*the poor*' throughout, which I felt was somewhat unquantified. As we all know from our East End studies, the ownership of jugs, plates and Victorian inspirational verse mementos to decorate a house (as found in the archaeological dig) was a poverty that was a far cry from that experienced by lodging house dwellers and an alternate population living a hand to mouth existence within the area. Whilst I acknowledge that the communities which left their unwanted goods in the privies of Limehouse were far from rich, they were far more stable income-wise than some of their counterparts who lived around them. Booth was used to explain the differing levels of impoverishment and I'm probably being far too pedantic, but I would have liked to have seen a stronger differential rather than an all-encompassing, rather vague terminology.

We have, of course, conference in-jokes that regulars will be familiar with, Mark Ripper's colourful shirts for instance always raise a comment or two, as do the abundance of photographs of the Goulston Street arch which rear their heads in the photography competition (although this year there were none strangely), but I think it's important to understand that this isn't a closed group of nerdy introverts, newbies and the curious are made very welcome into the fold.

There's always room for improvement at any event and I think the organisers are the first to admit The Astronomer has outlived its usefulness as a venue going forward. It's too small, too dark and it's too inaccessible. With quite a number of the attendees having additional needs, a more inclusive location is



Steven Keogh – photo
courtesy of Tony
Dennard



Princess of Prussia –
photo courtesy of
Andrew Firth

required, but, as they know, things don't come cheap in Whitechapel and you can't really have an East End Conference anywhere else. It's a Catch-22 situation and not easy for them to resolve. Any new venue would need to be the *right* fit. The organisers have worked hard to establish the *right* atmosphere, the *right* level of seriousness, the *right* level of sociability, so it would be sad if all of this was lost to some soulless IKEA-shite conference facility in a business park in Slough¹⁵.

Not everything of course is Location, Location, Location, and the strength of the brand identity is in no small way down to *Mr Graphics*, Andrew Firth, whose stunning conference booklets are now collector's items in their own right. Equally, Karl Coppack as emcee, provided us with a warm, funny and self-deprecating front



Karl Coppack interviewing Paul Begg – photo courtesy of Tony Dennard

man and interviewer. This leads me onto the last of the talks, which, with the greatest of respect to all the other speakers, I don't think anyone would argue was the highlight of everyone's weekend. The Godfather himself, Paul Begg, undertook a Q&A with wit and wisdom and, as an added bonus, stopped the entire weekend to socialised with everyone. It therefore came as no surprise when Adam Wood presented him with the Katherine Amin Outstanding Contribution Award at the end of the conference.

Without wishing to gush, (OK, I'll gush) Paul is not only a thoroughly lovely man, his influence spreads far and wide. In a testament to this we arranged for a photograph to be taken of him with anyone who had ever written an article, produced a book or who'd presented or appeared in a documentary or podcast related to Ripperology. The number of people who came forward was quite remarkable and demonstrates his importance to this subject matter: Gary Barnett, Steven Blomer, Karl Coppack, Avvie Cunningham, Andrew Firth, Mark Galloway, Samantha Hulass, Philip Hutchinson, Amanda Lloyd, Frogg Moody, Ruby Vitorino Moody, myself, Sue Parry, Steve Rattey, Mark Ripper, Philipp Röttgers, Dorothee Schröder, Gordon Stoker, Jonathan Tye, Toby Virgo and Adam Wood. It was a lovely way to end things and left everyone, I think, waiting in anticipation for next year's event.



Paul Begg and accompanying cast of thousands – photo courtesy of Lisa Clarke

Suzanne Huntington is a researcher and author of the soon to be released *'The Thames Torso Murders: Fact or Fiction'*

UNJAM THE ANAGRAM

Horned Rest To Tinseltown

Clue: Title of a book about a notorious location in Spitalfields

Answer is at the end of this edition

¹⁵ They would never do that...

Six Questions with...

Amy Cecil

Interview with Madeleine Keane

I really enjoyed the concept of the entire Ripper book series. What was the inspiration for this story?

My inspiration for my Ripper series was an idea from my husband, Kevin. I've always been intrigued by the mystery of the Jack the Ripper murders and intrigued to know who he was – or at least guess. He approached me one day with the idea of a prostitute meeting a handsome stranger in a dark alley on the night Polly Nichols was murdered. While said prostitute falls in love with the handsome stranger, she begins to see similarities between her lover and what she has read in the papers about the alleged Jack the Ripper. She begins to question everything. From that point, the mystery aspect of the story was enough bait to get me started. I began my research immediately. I had gotten halfway through the story and hit a block. I had no idea where to take the story next and I was frustrated. That is when the entire last chapter came to me, unbelievably, in a dream. It totally changed the course of the story, gave the main character a face and an identity I had not planned on. Needless to say, I had to go back to what was already written and do a major rewrite.

What's your research/creative process like?

My research for this story was really unlike anything I had ever done before. I was trying to write fiction based on fact. Everything else I had published before this was all fiction, so I had to learn a whole new process of researching a story. By doing that, I had to learn all I could about Victorian England and the Jack the Ripper murders, the victims, the bystanders, the inspectors, and the suspects. After several months of digging deep into reading everything I could find on the subject, searching the web and trying to figure out what theory to build on, my office turned into a detective's office of today. Post-it notes were everywhere, photos of the victims, the murder scenes and maps of Whitechapel filled my walls. I went down a very dark road during this process, I learned so much during this process and discovered that I had my own theory, and it had to be incorporated into the story.

One thing I really noticed while reading the book was that you really captured the sense of time and place and really were able to show the difficult circumstances of Marie's life. How did you go about preparing for this?

As with all my characters in my books, and I believe this of any writer, you must know your characters. With that being said, Marie became a part of me. I studied her life, her likes and dislikes, her personality became my own. When I mentioned the dark road, Marie was the one that took me there. Through my research I was able to see how she lived, her dire circumstances and how she had to do what she did to survive.

Out of all of your novels, which one would you consider your favorite?

Definitely Ripper. I'm not saying that just because this is a Ripper publication. Ripper always has and always will be my favorite work. I love the story, the surprises, the suspense and I believe it is my best writing as well.

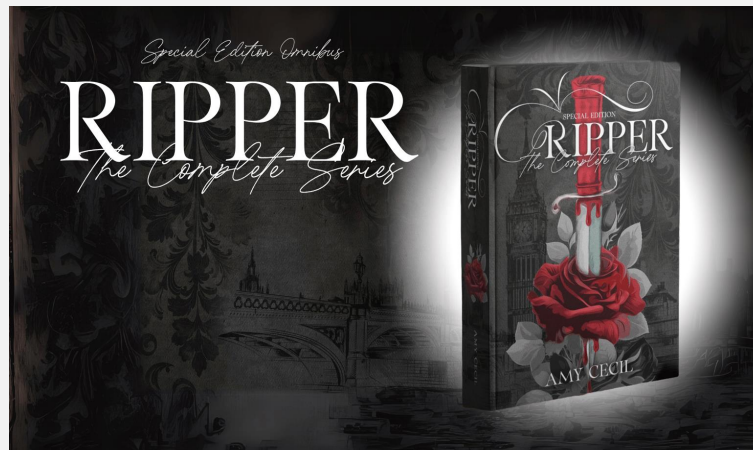
What current projects do you have in the pipeline?

I just finished the third story in the Ripper series, *Whispers from the Grave*. It is technically a prequel to the story, but really needs to be read last. Currently it will only be available as part of a Special

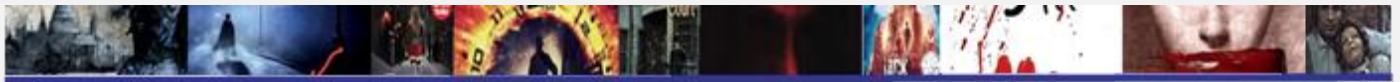
Edition Omnibus of the three books in the trilogy. As far as what is next, it has been a while since I have released something new. And it's about time I do. Therefore, I'm excited to share with you two new books coming in 2025. The first will be a bad-boy romance filled with lots of love, angst, spice, and intrigue. The second will be my first shot at a full-length paranormal romance. I could go on and on and tell you more about each book, but I must keep a few surprises under my sleeve. Be sure to follow me for upcoming news and teasers for both these stories.

Anything else you want people to know about you?

I am a huge Harry Potter fan. I fell in love with the books when they were first published, I love the movies and have tried to see every Potter-related event out there. I mean I literally plan vacation around something Harry Potter. I love to build Lego, do crafts, and read romance novels; however, I can't read a novel while I am writing one. My brain just doesn't work like that. I have four dogs, an Alaskan Malamute and three Siberian Huskies. These spoiled rotten beasts are my babies and next to my husband, I love them most in the world. And speaking of my husband, he is my biggest supporter and best friend. He is also my muse. Many of my story ideas, like Ripper, come from him. All it takes is a sentence or two and I can see the story develop in my mind.



Illustrated Police News, 28th September 1889



Fiction Reviews

By Madeleine Keane

Flowers for the Devil

V. Kahany

Vlad Kahany, 2022

Hardcover, paperback, eBook, audiobook



The gothic romance novel *Flowers for the Devil*, by V. Kahany, has been marketed as “Bridgerton meets Jack the Ripper,” but it’s more like Bridgerton meets Arrow or V for Vendetta. It has everything you could think of in a mashup like this: a masked hero who stands up the poor in the East End, a Russian countess with a tragic past, a society gentleman with a painful secret, and a chance encounter in a dark alley.

Countess Alina Bronskaya and her parents have moved to London after the death of her husband. Alina balances her social obligations with philanthropic work at a medical clinic in one of the poorer areas of the East End. On her way home one dark winter night, Alina is saved from an attack by Harlan Krowe, the Gentleman-Devil, the mysterious vigilante whose mission it is to deliver justice on behalf of the poor and downtrodden. Alina is intrigued by Krowe, and Krowe feels compelled to see Alina, whom he likens to an angel, again. The two start a written correspondence and rendezvous with one another when they can. They bond over the tragedy they’ve both experienced in their lives and their efforts to help the poor and disenfranchised, and the friendship deepens into love: “That kiss was a confession. There was no villain or countess. No saints or sinners. No titles or etiquette. Only a man and a woman bound by passion.” At the same time, Alina begins a courtship with the Duke of Ravenaugh, one of the most sought-after eligible bachelors in London. Soon Alina is living two different lives, one at night and one during the day, with two different men. Her heart breaks as she realizes how impossible it is to keep up with it, as she believes she is lying to both men. But she is unaware that both men are carrying secrets just like she is, and that all is not lost as she believes it might be.

I was expecting a villain romance with *Flowers for the Devil*, but it is so much more than that. It explores the social issues plaguing Britain at the time and how those with more power work both within and outside the system to make a difference, however small, in the lives of those at the bottom of the class hierarchy. But it’s also your basic masked-hero romance with high stakes. If you’re looking for a fiction book that really gets into the historical details of Victorian London but is also an emotionally satisfying read, then this is it.

Blood and Moonlight

Erin Beaty

Farrar, Straus, and Giroux

(BYR), 2022

Hardcover, paperback, eBook, audiobook



Under the light of the full moon, young Catrin, an architect’s assistant, is surveying the construction of the new Sanctum on behalf of her guardian, the master architect. From high on her perch, she hears the voice of someone calling for help and descends to answer it, only to discover the body of a murdered young prostitute who had had a confrontation with her guardian only hours before. Her efforts to protect the master architect lead her to involvement in the investigation, headed by the local comte’s nephew, Simon of Mesanus. As the murderer claims more victims and the crimes escalate, Catrin discovers that she can see the murders as they occur through visions brought about by blood magic. Combining her abilities with Simon’s skill at investigation, the two discover that the upper classes of the city of Collis are concealing secrets...and that the murderer is closer to them than they think.

Blood and Moonlight, by Erin Beaty, is a YA retelling of the Jack the Ripper murders, set in the fantasy city of Collis. The book explores the possibility of the science of criminal profiling being available to investigators and what it might mean for the investigation. Beaty seamlessly blends this plot point with the typical tropes of a YA fantasy,

especially blood magic, which has been a popular trope in the genre over the past few years. As the heroine learns about magical abilities, she uncovers the secrets of her origins and finds out who she is and what she is capable of. Of course, we can't forget the romance subplot, which unfolds along with the investigation. Simon and Catrin are a believable couple, and the author does an excellent job of balancing the dynamics of the relationship. Their relationship evolves into an equal partnership as they work on the investigation and face danger together.

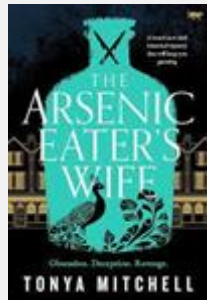
All in all, I enjoyed this novel, and I would recommend it to anyone who is looking for a fantasy romance with a Ripper-inspired plot point. While the author has altered some details of the murders to make them more palatable to a younger audience, the descriptions can be graphic. This is definitely a book meant for an older YA audience and for the many adults who consume YA literature. The sequel, *Silence and Shadow*, which continues Catrin and Simon's story, is now available.

The Arsenic Eater's Wife

Tonya Mitchell

Bloodhound Books, 2024

Hardcover, paperback, eBook, audiobook



The Arsenic Eater's Wife, by Tonya Mitchell, is a historical fiction novel based on the murder trial of Florence Maybrick for the supposed murder of her husband, James. The author posits the question of: "What if Florence Maybrick's story went differently?" In doing so, she created a captivating story that is impossible to put down.

American-born Constance Sullivan is a young wife and mother living in Liverpool in the late 1880's. Her life seems to be a dream come true: her husband, William, is a successful cotton merchant, they have two adorable children, and they live in a beautiful home in one of the city's best neighborhoods. But underneath the lovely façade, not everything is as it appears. Constance's marriage is falling apart; William has a propensity for drinking too much alcohol and seeking out the affections of other women. William's spending habits and the efforts to keep up an appearance of prosperity put pressure on the family finances.

William urges Constance to approach her mother for more money, but she refuses to do so, which puts more of a strain on their marriage. As her relationship with William falls apart, Constance seeks out the affections of another man. She resolves to divorce William and has even confided in one of her friends about it, but her plans change when William falls dangerously ill. When he dies, Constance is accused of poisoning him with arsenic, despite her insistence that he took arsenic and strychnine as restoratives. Constance is charged with the murder and bound over for trial. Despite the best efforts of her attorney, all of Constance's secrets are brought to light for the public to see, and she is convicted of William's murder. As Mitchell writes:

She is more than what the witnesses say, more than what they think they know. She can't simply be defined by the words they utter, the lies they declare as truth. She is multifaceted, like a diamond. But they only see the parts of her that reveal the story they want to tell.

Constance serves her time in prison. When she's paroled, a young man named Mr. Topp, a protégé of her late defense attorney, vows to help her uncover the truth about what happened to William. Constance, determined to prove her innocence and to see her children again, jumps at the chance to get her life back. As she gets close to the truth, she discovers that she was an innocent caught up in a shocking web of secrets, betrayal, and deception.

The Arsenic Eater's Wife is a satisfying "what-if" story that seeks to give Florence Maybrick the chance for a possible happy ending that she never got. It's a bittersweet reminder that we don't always get to the truth of a situation until years after it occurred, and that sometimes the only healing balm we can offer someone like Florence is a happy ending in stories.

Ripper

Amy Cecil

CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018, 2024

190pp

Hardcover, paperback, eBook, audiobook



A chance meeting in an alley after a murder changes a prostitute's life forever in the novel *Ripper*, by Amy Cecil. London's East and the Whitechapel murders serve as a backdrop for Cecil's story of suspense and love found in the most unexpected of places.

During the autumn of 1888, Marie is doing the best she can to eke out an existence as a prostitute in the poverty of London's East End. She and her friend, Long Liz, spend their evenings plying their trade at Madam Grace's, a brothel located on the upper floor of the Ten Bells pub. In the early morning hours of August 31, 1888, Marie runs into a mysterious man in a dark alley. The next day, she discovers that a woman named Polly Nichols was murdered in the same area just a few moments before she met the stranger. She sees him again while working at Madam Grace's, where he introduces himself properly as Jackson Kent, or Jax, a young man of some means who lives in London's West End. He gives Marie an offer she can't refuse: if she agrees to become his mistress and to spend her evenings with him, she'll earn more money than she's ever dreamed of. There's only one caveat: don't count on falling in love. Marie agrees to the offer and become Jax's mistress, leaving the East End behind her.

Over the next few months, as Marie and Jax's relationship deepens, the murders in Whitechapel escalate. All the while, Marie is left to wonder about Jax's long absences at night. When her friend Long Liz is murdered, she finally begins to question if Jax himself is the Ripper: "Would he? Could he? Did he?"

Ripper is an engaging read, one of those that I had a hard time putting down, especially at the most suspenseful parts of the story. The romance between Jax and Marie is believable, something sweet that grows out of what is basically a business arrangement. Cecil conducted a lot of careful research, and she incorporates much of this throughout the story. She provides the background stories of the victims in the foreword of the book so that readers have a good understanding of the actual events. Perhaps the most touching detail is the dedication to the victims. Even though the book is a work of fiction, it's quite clear that the real women

were never far from Cecil's mind as she wrote the book.

Ripper ends on a cliffhanger, so be sure to pick up the novella *Mind of a Killer* to continue the story. Later this year, Cecil is releasing a second novella, *Whispers from the Grave*, which is a prequel to *Ripper*.



Book Recommendations from *Off the Shelf*

The Murders of Annie Hearn

Jonathan Oates

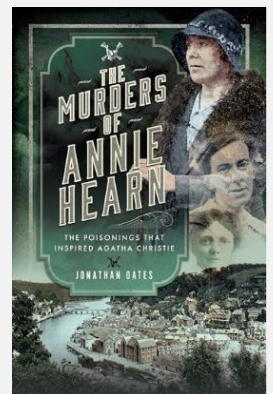
Pen & Sword Books, 2024

240pp

ISBN: 9781399056564

Hardcover £16.86, Kindle

eBook £9.99



Swimming into the vanishing slipstream of my own *The Case of the Salmon Sandwiches* (Mango Books, 2021) comes Jonathan Oates: family historian, archivist, and renowned internet troll. In 2023, Oates was exposed as 'Junius', a 'reviewer' of books on the Amazon platform with a particular vendetta against the works of Professor David Wilson. He continues to use the pseudonym, complaining most recently that *The Case of Mary Bell*, by the peerless Gitta Sereny, is 'wholly unillustrated'. Since the book was first published in 1972, and since Sereny died in 2012, it is not clear that the objection will have much effect. In the meantime, 'Junius' remains pleased as punch with Oates's 2022 book entitled *The Second Battle of Preston, 1715*, although he notes, oddly, that the 'only glitch I could see was that John Hall is referred to as being executed but on the page next to this, a list of executed Jacobites, his name does not feature therein'.

This an example of Oates's strange tactics – it

was his book, his list, and responsibility for its accuracy lay with him – but it is also an example of his generally eccentric approach to punctuation and syntax. *The Murders of Annie Hearn* is riddled with bizarre punctuation decisions, and there are passages which seem to go nowhere fast, or which duplicate (or contradict) information already given. This has the effect of making the book a disengaging read for the pedant, but, on the whole, those who can get over such things more easily will find Oates's style unostentatious and transactional.

It is in keeping with this modest – some would say unambitious – approach that *The Murders of Annie Hearn* often holds back analysis in favour of quotation from sources, and this sometimes occurs to the point where the author becomes almost imperceptible. But whether the Annie Hearn case is one in which the author should be invisible against the historical backdrop is another question. Her weird mischief demands interpretation, and the historiography of the case varies across time in interesting and important ways. It is therefore disappointing to see a historian of experience electing quite so decisively to take the back seat. I left the book wishing that Oates had told me more about obsession, deception, misdirection and identity. These are all prominent themes of the case, and he could have consulted 'Junius' – an undoubted expert in such matters – if he was unsure.

To his credit, Oates draws the reader's attention to the existence of a source (a series of articles carried by the *Weekly News* in 1933) which had eluded me. I will probably never stop wishing that I had found it myself, although it may have had little material effect on my book, and Oates's coverage of it lasts for a little over three pages in a nearly 300-page text. Beyond that, I found practically nothing of any relevance that had not been seen before (at least by any reader of *The Case of the Salmon Sandwiches*). This is a shame, but Oates's great advantage in *The Murders of Annie Hearn* is the rich, complex and enduring mystery of the case. The riddle of a series of suspicious deaths (perhaps by poisoning) in darkest Cornwall in the twenties and thirties is almost the stuff of popular crime fiction, and the case itself, which is full of delicious detail, promises to keep us guessing for years to come. It is a neglected classic of its period, and, as someone once said, people who like this sort of thing will find

this to be the sort of thing that they like, although they may never again look at a salmon sandwich in quite the same way. With the above caveats, the book can be cautiously recommended.

M.W. Oldridge

Behold the Monster

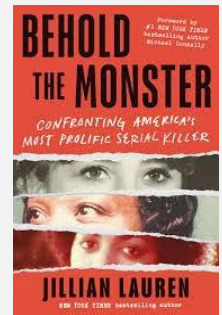
Jillian Lauren

Robinson, 2023

516pp, illust

ISBN: 9781472148025

Hardcover £24.17, paperback
£8.52, eBook £3.99, audiobook
£6.98



Jillian Lauren's book *Behold the Monster* is a gripping, harrowing read, that chronicles her work helping law to identify the victims of serial killer Samuel Little so that law enforcement could bring him to justice for his crimes. While being partly a memoir and partly an attempt to piece together a timeline of Little's life, it's mostly a work dedicated to bringing Little's victims to the forefront of the story.

Lauren opens the book with a snapshot of a time in her life when she was struggling with addiction and escaped a relationship with an abusive man. Her own experiences as a survivor have helped shape her fascination with true crime. Her research for a book leads to her introduction to Los Angeles cold case detective Mitzi Roberts. The conversation turns to one the man convicted of one of the murders Roberts solved, a man named Samuel Little. Roberts states that she believes that Little has killed more women, but that she's had a difficult time getting other jurisdictions to review their cold cases to see if they have any matches. The reason why, Roberts tells Lauren, is because Little killed mostly sex workers, whom most jurisdictions viewed as "less dead" and whose cases didn't get the attention that others might. Thus begins Lauren's mission to help identify Little's victims and hold him accountable for his crimes.

Lauren deftly balances the stories of her interactions with Little and the stories of the victims and their families. We're given enough information about Little to understand the whys and wherefores of his crimes, but most of Lauren's narrative about him revolves around her efforts to gather information about the crimes he committed so she

can locate and identify any possible victims. Lauren works with different law enforcement jurisdictions to match murder victims to the information Little has provided. Throughout the book, Lauren tells us some of the victims' stories, though she is careful to note that she has taken some creative license as she only had scant details from Little to work with. We learn not only about the victims, but their families, as well as members of Little's family, whom Lauren recognizes as his victims, too. While Lauren was able to help law enforcement identify some of Little's victims, many of them still remain unidentified. Lauren provides a list of both identified and unidentified victims in the book, along with their locations, in hopes that someday, these women's names and stories will be restored to them.

I found the book to be both haunting and heartbreaking. Lauren is very open about being a survivor of addiction and abuse. I believe her own experiences allow her to tell the victims' stories with sensitivity and compassion. Lauren did not portray these women as martyrs, but simply as people who had fallen upon hard times and were vulnerable. Over and over again, the message is the same: no matter what these women's circumstances were, they were human beings with their own stories who in no way deserved their horrible fate at the hands of Samuel Little. No matter what, Samuel Little bears the sole responsibility for his crimes.

I first heard about Jillian Lauren on season one of the podcast *Bad Women: The Ripper Retold*. Lauren was one of the guest experts whose perspective really stood out, and it was very clear that she hadn't taken on this endeavor to make a name for herself. Based on what I saw in the documentary *Confronting a Serial Killer*, her efforts to assist in the identification of Little's victims are coming from a place of sincerity. I hope she continues to use her platform to advocate for women like Little's victims so that their stories are heard.

Madeleine Keane

A Dirty, Filthy Book. Sex, Scandal, and One Woman's Fight in the Victorian Trial of the Century

Michael Meyer

W.H. Allen, 2024

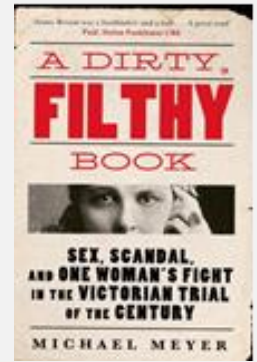
www.penguin.co.uk

390pp; illus; notes; biblio;

index

ISBN: 9780753559925

Hardcover £25, Kindle eBook £13.99



One of the generally forgotten scandals of the Victorian age was caused by the republication in 1877 of a birth control pamphlet bearing the snappy title *The Fruits of Philosophy*.

It was written in 1832 by Charles Knowlton, a New England doctor. A British edition appeared soon after, but it attracted very little attention until the mid-1870s when it was published by Charles Watts, the secretary of the National Secular Society (NSS), an organisation that still exists (<https://www.secularism.org.uk/>). A bookseller in Bristol named Henry Cook added illustrations that the authorities deemed obscene, and he was sentenced to two years in prison with hard labour. As no copy of Cook's illustrated edition appears to have survived, we don't know how obscene the illustrations were, but the authorities decided that the non-illustrated edition was also obscene, and they prosecuted the publisher, Charles Watts. He admitted that he'd published an obscene book and received a suspended sentence.

The President and Vice President of the NSS, Charles Bradlaugh and the formidable Annie Besant, furious with Watts, set up the Freethought Publishing Company at 28 Stonecutter Street - where *The Star*, first published on 17 January 1888, had its offices - and republished the pamphlet, with some added medical footnotes, for 6d. It sold 500 copies in the first 20 minutes of going on sale. The figure would go up to roughly 125,000 copies in the three months following publication, and, of course, Bradlaugh and Besant were arrested and duly appeared in court. It was the chief counsel for the prosecution, the Solicitor General, Hardinge Giffard, who remarked during his closing speech, 'I say this is a dirty, filthy book, and the test of it is that

no human being would allow that book to lie on his table; no decently educated English husband would allow even his wife to have it...'

In *A Dirty, Filthy Book*, Michael Meyer charts the extraordinary story of what is sometimes referred to as 'the Knowlton case'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, his focus is the remarkable Annie Besant, who was only 30 years old when prosecuted for publishing the pamphlet and who skilfully represented herself in court, one of the first women to do so. Bradlaugh and Besant were found guilty, but the verdict was overturned on appeal. Besant was closely involved with fighting for the poor and under privileged. She was one of the speakers who addressed the crowds who gathered in Trafalgar Square on 14 October 1887, who supported the match-girls, and who, in later life, having oddly adopted Theosophy, was an associate of Helena Blavatsky.

Meyer's book is well written, as one would expect from such a distinguished author. In telling this extraordinary story, it provides an insight into another aspect of Victorian society.

Paul Begg

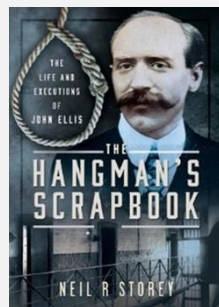
The Hangman's Scrapbook. The Life and Executions of John Ellis

Neil R Storey

Pen and Sword History, 2024
224pp; illus; appendices; select
biblio

ISBN: 9781399031660

Hardcover £20



John Ellis is probably the least well-known of Britain's hangmen, yet he was the 'turn off' man, as executioners were sometimes known, in some of the most infamous cases of the first quarter of the twentieth century: Crippen, Seddon, Sir Roger Casement, and, on 9 January 1923, Edith Thompson.

Ellis performed more than two hundred executions before resigning in 1924. Sadly, he was troubled by the executions he'd performed, particularly that of Edith Thompson, and fearing retribution by the IRA for his execution of Casement, Ellis committed suicide (rather gruesomely) in 1932.

During his career, Ellis had kept an annotated scrapbook concerning the executions he'd performed, often writing lengthy observations about the execution and his life and experiences. Neil Storey writes of this in the introduction to his book.: 'What happened to John Ellis's scrapbook immediately after his death is unknown. Perhaps it was given away or sold along with some of Ellis's effects. Or perhaps it was put away in a case in an attic, as can happen with family memorabilia, where it was forgotten about and then sold on years later when the attic was cleared. The scrapbook is believed to have once been in the collection of popular true crime author, Bernard O'Donnell. After O'Donnell died in 1969 much of his crime collection was rapidly disposed of and the Ellis scrapbook was lost again for over forty years until it was purchased with a number of other crime books and ephemera by a book dealer and subsequently sold to me.'

Neil Storey has now made this singular and valuable purchase available to us. *The Hangman's Scrapbook* is literally John Ellis's personal observations on his life and the executions he carried out. It makes for a sad but fascinating reading; appreciation must go to Storey for making it available.

Paul Begg

The Peepshow: The Murders at 10 Rillington Place

Kate Summerscale

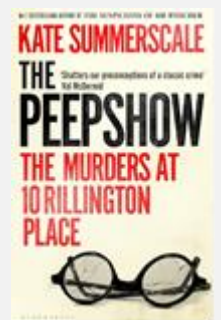
Bloomsbury, 2024

317pp

Hardcover, Kindle, Audiobook

Kate Summerscale's latest book *The Peepshow* examines the infamous murders committed by John Reginald Christie in his downstairs flat at 10 Rillington Place between the years 1943 and 1953. Rather than relate the sordid crimes head-on (which has been done already in numerous books, film and television adaptations) Summerscale tells the tale through the perspectives of journalist Harry Proctor, true crime author Fryn Tennyson Jesse and, most informatively, social researcher Rosalind Wilkinson.

To briefly summarize Christie's deeds - he would lure vulnerable women into his flat with promises of



aid-such as performing an abortion, and once his victim was seated in a kitchen chair, he'd have them inhale from a glass jar that was connected via a tube to the flat's gas tap. Once the women became unconscious, he would rape and then strangle them. Instead of disposing of the bodies elsewhere, like in one of the many bombed out buildings peppering his rundown neighborhood in Post-War London, he stored them in and around his house, and this would be his downfall. Three bodies were discovered in an unused coal cellar hidden behind a wall, two he buried in his back garden, and his wife he placed underneath his kitchen floor.

1943: Ruth Fuerst, age 21

1944: Muriel Eady, age 31

1952: Ethel Christie, age 54

1953: Kathleen Maloney, age 26

1953: Rita Nelson, age 25

1953: Hectorina MacLennan, age 27

But there was a problem: in 1950, Timothy Evans, also at tenant of 10 Rillington Place in an upper floor flat, had been tried and executed for the murder of his wife, Beryl, and their 13-month-old infant daughter, Geraldine, and in the last of his many changing confessions, Evans had pinned the murder of his family on Reg Christie.

Harry Proctor, a popular journalist with the Sunday Pictorial newspaper, was one of the first reporters on the scene at 10 Rillington Place for both Evans murder case-at which time he interviewed Christie - and now the murders committed by Christie himself. Summerscale splits the focus in the book with Proctor, who feels guilt at letting Christie deceive him in their first meeting, and through his story she delves into the reading public's obsession with crime and murder and the London newspaper's fierce competition for scoops, which necessitates journalists like Proctor to give gifts and favors to Christie in order to gain exclusive access.

Parallel to Proctor's perspective is that of Fryn Tennyson Jesse, an ailing true crime author whose best days are behind her, but who happens to land a coveted assignment - to write the opening essay for the prestigious *Notable British Trials* volume that will cover both the Evans and Christie cases. Summerscale expertly uses Proctor's and Jesse's

quest to discover the truth of the Evans murders and potentially expose a damaging miscarriage of justice as the vehicle to attempt to puzzle out how a bland and ordinary man like Christie can be capable of such depraved evil.

Mixed into these perspectives, and in my opinion the most interesting material in the book, is the social research conducted by Rosalind Wilkinson on London sex workers in the early 1950s. Wilkinson planted herself amongst prostitutes for several months and conducted extensive interviews with dozens of them, and the stories, perspectives and data she compiled led Wilkinson to view the sex workers "less as victims of personal damage than as rational beings making the best of an imperfect world." The material Summerscale pulls from Wilkinson's research is fascinating and deserving of a book on its own.

The author's setting is a post-war London covered in grit, grime, fog, rubble and desperation. Racism, sexism and economic depression are front and center. The author also illustrates the myriad of ways that crime, especially murder, affects families and communities. All of these elements combine to make *The Peepshow* a real page-turner. This is the fourth Kate Summerscale book I've read, and like the others, it's very good.

Jonathan Menges



Who Was Jack the Ripper?

Unsolved Mysteries Vol.4,
Ep.1

Netflix, 2024

45 min.



'Unsolved Mysteries' is an America docuseries that's been bouncing around on several different television networks since the 1980s. It's now landed on Netflix and kicked off its 17th season (or as Netflix calls it, 'Volume 4') with "Who Was Jack the Ripper?"

It features four crime historians well-known in the field of Ripperology: Paul Begg, Richard Jones, Lindsay Siviter and Adam Wood, who talk the viewer through each of the canonical five murders, the Ripper letters, police investigation, and ending on a few of the suspects. Paul Begg provides the historical context while the other three discuss the crimes. Pretty standard stuff for a Ripper documentary. But as you might expect from Netflix, the real star of the show is the production value. The realistic, atmospheric recreations, along with the use of maps and contemporary illustrations makes this documentary stand out from the rest. The show *looks* great. The experts are allowed to give their own opinions (rather than reading from a prepared script as so often happens in these kinds of shows) and they don't always agree. That makes it refreshing. My only mild complaint is the program leaves out the Goulston Street Graffito when discussing Eddowes' apron and it does not include any of the non-canonical victims, not even Martha Tabram. Maybe nitpicky, maybe not.

Those items didn't affect my enjoyment however. It's the best documentary to come out in years. Recommended.

Jonathan Menges

**Jack the Ripper:
A Definitely
Ascertained Fact?**
T S Films, 2024
YouTube
2 hr 12 mins.



This documentary uploaded to YouTube stars four well-known Ripperologists: Steven Blomer, John Malcolm, Patricia Marshall and Adrian Morris. I know from being acquainted with the talking heads that it was actually filmed around three years ago but took a very long time to be edited and readied for release. Even with that production time the documentary runs for over two hours.

The volume of photographs or any other cutaway graphics is sparse, so what you get is the four participants edited tightly together, back and forth and back and forth for long stretches of time, sometimes edited so closely that they're practically finishing each other's sentences. This would be fine

if it was a much shorter documentary, but after a couple of hours it becomes exhausting.

Given its length and format, the documentary is absolutely bursting with information and opinions. They spend nearly 15 minutes at the beginning discussing poverty in Whitechapel before even mentioning a murder in any detail. The show includes discussion of all of the victims in the Whitechapel Murders file starting with Emma Elizabeth Smith, through to Tabram and the Canonical Five, then on to Rose Mylett, Alice Mackenzie, the Pinchin Street Torso and finally Frances Coles.

When promoting the documentary the creators and participants made no secret that they'd focus their attention on the suspect 'Kosminski'. Indeed the very title of the documentary 'A Definitely Ascertained Fact?' refers to Sir Robert Anderson's comment on the strength of Kosminski's candidacy, and so we receive a detailed examination of all of the evidence supporting Kosminski as the Ripper.

I tend to think this documentary's audience would be a person already somewhat familiar, but not overly familiar, with the Whitechapel murders, mainly because of its length and format. I don't see either a newcomer or an expert getting much out of it. The YouTube release would have benefited enormously if it had embedded Chapters to allow one to skip ahead to a certain section they're most interested in. For instance if I'd like to rewatch the section on Kosminski I'd like to just go directly to it rather than fast-forward through 100 minutes of film.

All in all you can tell the creators laboured tirelessly on this project in the editing room and did their very best to make a great documentary, but I think it should have been edited down even more. I do applaud their effort, and it's free so we can't really complain.

Jonathan Menges

Letters to the Editor

Ally Ryder



Dear Sir or Madam

I'm writing to you in the hope to assist me. I'm currently researching information about Jack the Ripper and wonder where I can obtain the issue before 62 of your magazine. Is this by any chance in the British library? If you hold these, how much is each issue?

Craig Hunter

Hi Craig, and thank you for your interest, unfortunately issues prior to 62 were all printed and PDFs were not saved before we transitioned to online archiving. What we can do is put out an appeal to our readership, many of whom are collectors/completists, who might have back copies and see if we could get 3 or 4 who would be willing to participate in a project to scan the old issues. Perhaps if there are 3 or 4 people out there, each willing to do a dozen or so, we could preserve the lot. We shall throw it out there in the next magazine and see if there's any volunteers.

So, Dear Readers, over to you....

Dear Sir or Madam

With respect to the title of your esteemed magazine, it is high time that the title is changed for one more fitting to such a leader in the field. In this day and age, "Ripperologist" is terribly insensitive to the memory not only of the victims, but also the people of that era.

I would urge everyone involved in the production of the magazine to reflect upon the reasons why study of the social conditions of the late Victorian age is so important. That the magazine, its contributors and readers be taken seriously, has a particular urgency in light of recent events of disorder within Britain. Are we in danger of repeating the mistakes of our near ancestors? Clearly, in a post-modern context, social conditions are not an exact replica. Yet there are striking parallels that must not be ignored. This magazine can provide contextual details of social development from government framework

that would be helpful. Please do consider this as a change in the right direction.

Yours sincerely

While we at Ripperology appreciate hyperbolic, pearl clutching, "Think of the Children" appeals as much as anyone can, as well as haughty declarations as to what we need to do to move in the "right" direction, we find it genuinely baffling how anyone could possibly claim that they are the authority on what is insulting to anyone other than themselves. We find it especially condescending and manipulative, when one attempts to equate recent social unrest aimed at immigrants with the title of a magazine, that has literally nothing to do with the current situation. If you are this easily offended, and prone to emotional appeals rather than reason, I suggest the field of True Crime is not for you. The magazine title will remain as is.

Dear Sir or Madam

I have written a short one act comedy play which is a prequel to how Jack the Ripper got his name. It's attached. Could you read it and give me a promotional quote?

Sure! "We at Ripperologist believe that people who think the murder of five women is a light-hearted lark, suitable for comedy routines, ought to be starved for 3 months, then sodomized with a nightstick, then disemboweled with a rusty trowel so they can properly appreciate the true hilarity of being murdered and mutilated. Unfortunately, it doesn't appear the authors of this play have sufficiently lived the humor, to tap into it. I can only hope they rectify that soon. "

Best of luck with your play!

Unjam the Anagram Solution: The Worst Street in London (Fiona Rule)

Solution to the Crosswo

	B	L	O	T	C	H	Y		A
B					A				S
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I			O			R			R
C	O	L	E	S		I			O
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S			E		A		A	R	M
P	O	L	L		T				E
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