

# London Metropolitan Archives

Information Leaflet Number 44

## The Whitechapel or Jack the Ripper murders



## **Introduction**

This leaflet summarises the sources relating to the Whitechapel or Jack the Ripper murders. Between August and November 1888 five murders, thought to be the work of one person, were committed in the Whitechapel and Aldgate areas of London. The murder of Catherine Eddowes (also known as Catherine Conway or Kate Kelly) occurred in Mitre Square in the City of London on 30 September 1888. As a result, the Coroner's inquest on her death was held by the Coroner for the City of London and the City of London Police investigated the murder. London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) holds some records of the City Police and the coroners' inquests into the deaths of Catherine Eddowes and Marie Kelly who was murdered in Spitalfields.

## **Inquest Records**

The inquest upon the death of Catherine Eddowes was opened before the Coroner for the City of London on 4 October 1888. The records of the inquest include evidence given by witnesses, other evidence and the formal inquisition recording the verdict of the court (CLA/041/IQ/3/65/135). A master photocopy has been made of the inquest papers, which readers can consult at LMA. The original inquest papers are not produced for conservation reasons.

Substantial extracts from the inquest papers can be found in *The Jack the Ripper A to Z* by Paul Begg, Martin Fido and Keith Skinner (1991, revised ed. 1996) (ref: 21.12 BEG) and *The Complete Jack the Ripper* by Donald Rumbelow (Penguin 1988) (ref: 21.12 RUM).

The inquests on the other murders which occurred outside the City were held before Coroners for the districts of Middlesex, but there is a very poor survival rate for these records. The inquest papers into the death of Marie Kelly are the only papers surviving within the Middlesex Coroners' records (MJ/SPC/NE/376/1-11). Photocopies of these inquest papers are kept in our Information Area with the catalogues of the Middlesex Sessions Papers relating to coroners' inquests MJ/SP/C.

## **City Police Records**

There is also a collection of letters from members of the public to the City of London Police, c.1888-1889 relating to the murder investigation, including a few letters of acknowledgement. Some letters also contain items such as newscuttings, visiting cards and original envelopes. Some letters are signed "Jack the Ripper".

A published microfiche edition of these letters, with an index of correspondents, has been made. A copy is available in our Information Area. If you would like to buy a set of the microfiche (which also includes the inquest papers upon Catherine Eddowes),

please contact the publishers: World Microfilms (23 North Wharf Road, London W2 1LA).

LMA holds the minute books and papers of the Police Committee of the City of London Corporation, which has authority over the City of London Police. However, these records give very little direct information about the Whitechapel Murders.

## **Other Sources**

Mary Ann Nichols (the first victim) and Catherine Eddowes were buried at the City of London Cemetery, Ilford, which is owned and maintained by the City of London. A microfilm of the burial register for 1888 (Ms.10445/33) containing references to Nichols (register entry no. 210752) and Eddowes (no. 211190) is available. There are also other records relating to the City of London Cemetery, but these do not give any information about the murder victims.

The other murder victims were buried in cemeteries across London: Elizabeth Stride at East London Cemetery, Annie Chapman at Manor Park Cemetery, and Marie Kelly at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Leytonstone. Greater London Cemeteries and Crematoria compiled by Patricia Wolfson, revised by Clifford Webb (2007) lists where these cemeteries' records are held.

Archives of the Metropolitan Police (which investigated all the murders except that of Eddowes) and the Home Office (which has overall control of the Metropolitan Police) are at The National Archives, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU, telephone 020 8876 3444, in the Home Office records (TNA ref: HO/144/220) and in the Metropolitan Police records (TNA ref: MEPO/3). For a list of these records and a bibliography, see *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper* by Philip Sugden (1994) (ref: 21.12 SUG).

Contemporary newspapers give accounts of the murders and inquests. Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, London EC2P 2EJ, telephone 020 7332 1868, holds microfilms of the City Press (succeeded by the City Recorder) from 1857 and The Times (1785 to date, with published quarterly indexes, as well as a cumulative index 1790-1945, 1970-1980 on CD ROM). LMA and Guildhall Library have access to The Times on line from 1785-1985. For published works on the murders see 21.12 in the LMA library catalogue and L42.021 in the Guildhall Library catalogue.

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