

Jack the ripper essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. Describe law and order in London in the late nineteenth century. The Law and Order had significantly improved during the Nineteenth century, although there were still a few problems. The idea of a Police Force had been set up in the beginning of the Nineteenth century; there had been two different police forces in Britain. One was the Bow Street Runners and the other had been the Thames River Police, which just begun two years into settling in. Before 1829, Britain's towns and cities had been actually patrolled by watchmen and parish constables, this being a good idea, as they knew the area and local people well, still little is known about them.

The main turning point came in 1829, when the home secretary, sir Robert Peel set up the Metropolitan Police Force. Peel's making still survives today and he has left his mark on it. Furthermore, Peel gave the police their nickname. They became known as 'peelers' or more commonly known as 'bobbies' after their founder.

A key problem that the Metropolitan Police faced was that the early police recruits had been either unsuitable and unfit, most often due to drunkenness and had soon resigned or been sacked. There was also a lack of training, which made the police's job not very successful. This had remained a problem throughout the nineteenth century. Before 1829 the officers couldn't really deal with big turbulences like riots and those were common in many parts of Britain.

For example in 1780 law and order in London broke down wholly during the Gordon Riots. The rioters had broken into Newgate Jail and attacked the Bank of England. The bank was fortunately saved by the Mayor and the

Grenadier Guards. In 1819, 50, 000 people met at St Peter's Fields in Manchester to listen to Henry Hunt in an act of kindness to the reform of parliament. The Manchester Magistrates panicked at the sight of the crowd and ordered special constables to arrest Hunt. The magistrates called on the usual army units, which cleared the area rapidly.

In 1829, probable uncertainty between the police force and the army was a major concern. British people had traditionally always disliked seeing 'redcoats' (the colour of the army's uniform) on streets. As the army was used a lot by the government to keep order and suppress popular demonstrations it wasn't trusted. Conversely the navy had a 'hero' status as the defenders of Britain.

Therefore blue was more of an adequate colour. So, the Metropolitan Police Force was given a blue uniform. The bobbies had been armed with a 'truncheon' although the constables had the right to carry cutlasses, but firearms had been forbidden at first. The new police force was mainly unpopular because of its rules of crowd control.

The most common method was called the baton charge and this was used in 1833 at Cold Bath Fields in London. One constable, PC Culley, was killed during the riot. Incidents like this stayed common until the First World War. Another reason was that the Metropolitan Police Force wasn't used anywhere else in Britain.

The main role for the police in London was to prevent crime but they also began to try and solve crimes. The first detectives were from the Metropolitan Police in 1842 however it wasn't until the 1860s where

detective work started to be prepared. Detective methods developed slowly. In 1879 there were 216 detectives and in 1884 the number of detectives increased to 294. In addition to this in 1879 there were 13, 128 arrests and in 1884 there were 18, 344.

The Detective Department had been re-organised in 1878 and the Criminal Intelligence Department (CID) had now been set up. From doing this we can now see the results of putting on more detectives allowing there to be more criminals caught. The police had learnt the worth of footprints in the early nineteenth century and the standard method in detective work was to go after suspicious characters. This was the same as the techniques used by bobbies. A number of forensic progress was made but in 1884 a man called John Toms was convicted of murder because the torn paper used for his pistol wadding looked the same as the paper left from the wound in the head of his victim.

In 1892 a new method of identification was founded, it involved measuring parts of the human body on the theory that no two individuals would be exactly the same. This was called the Alphonse Bertillon method. In 1901 the use of fingerprinting had evolved. The first conviction involving fingerprints was in June 1902. Until this time, criminals could only be identified based on eyewitness accounts, which are still known to be unreliable.

The foremost role by the late 19th century was still to prevent crime by patrolling the streets and breaking up crowd disturbances. This made it seem as if they were against working class people. So for example they became unpopular for the way they were used in the 1889 dock strike. The

police were also seen as only helping the middle and upper classes, which was unfair to the poor and working classes. This made the work of the police in poor and working class areas very problematical. This would mean that Whitechapel and other areas in East London would be difficult for policing.

2. Why did the Whitechapel murders attract so much attention in 1888? The Whitechapel murders were incredibly famous and to this day Jack the Ripper continues to be in our mainstream imagination. Books have been published on Jack the Ripper and even movies have been made on this horrific mass murder case. This awful event in London's history even fascinated countries outside of Britain. Even in 1888, events in Whitechapel were reported around the globe. Whitechapel at this time was over populated with Jews and immigrants.

This area was filled with prostitutes. 1, 200 prostitutes worked at Whitechapel to increase their weekly earnings. Most people who lived there were living in soul-destroying conditions, more than half the children born in East End died before the age of 5, and some of the ones who survived were handicapped or mentally ill. There were approximately more than 200 lodging houses, which could sleep almost 9000 people in long rooms with rows of beds. This area was so horrid and full of prostitutes, Jack the Ripper had just the best working environment for murdering people. People were horrified and also fascinated by the area even before the murders as it was so different because of its extreme poverty.

Before the Whitechapel murders of 1888, murders were easier for Scotland Yard to solve because the motive behind the crime was clear (i. e.:

inheritance, revenge, jealousy). But these crimes provided a challenge to Scotland Yard, because a motive wasn't clear, the victims seemed to be randomly chosen from a particular class of women, and every prostitute in East London could be a victim.

This created attention, as prostitution was so common and many women were scared. Jack the Ripper was not the first serial killer, but he was one of the first most recognised serial killers, which interested numerous amounts of people. Jack the Ripper had killed his victims in a unique way, which therefore made them more interesting than other mass murder cases. The activities of Jack the Ripper were reported daily in the newspapers, as were inquiries and methods in use by the police. Newspapers were competitive towards each other to sell more copies of their paper they found the Ripper case granted vast chances to publish attention-grabbing stories.

The papers started to create several myths about the Ripper in order to keep their public interested. The media played an immense part in sensationalising the Jack the Ripper case and this grabbed people's attention. It was also believed that the press were setting up a hoax and were behind writing letters to the police claiming to be Jack the Ripper. This was because the media wanted to continue the story along to make money with false reports. These crimes, which were sensationalised and even dramatised in the papers, had drawn interest from all over the world.

These letters perpetuated fear, and kept the killing spree in the spotlight. This made people keep buying newspapers. The Education Act of 1870 was very important as well, as it contributed to the publicity of Jack the Ripper.

This act made basic schooling compulsory for all, which a large population became interested in the Ripper stories as they were able to read and the exciting stories in the newspapers.

The police also drew attention to the murders by leafleting 80000 homes. This caused families to panic and also worried women and made them nervous to walk the streets at night. Jack the Ripper was a sexual serial killer and he terrified the people of Whitechapel and caused the whole world to notice him because he made no attempt to hide the corpses, he killed and mutilated in situations that were risky from the point of view of his being apprehended. Furthermore, the fact that all of his victims were prostitutes seems to have further heightened the interest of people. The fact that the ripper was never caught has created a puzzle that people want to solve. It was human nature to be interested in such a case.

People are often interested in crime and became fascinated with this case as it also includes sex and prostitution, which were Victorian taboos. The Ripper also appeared during a period of tremendous political mayhem in Britain. Political parties like the Liberals and the Radicals, who were trying to break onto the political scene tried to use the crimes for political achievement by blaming the government for the high amount of poverty that had existed at this time. The Irish Home rule partisans also tried to use the murders for their own ends.

They would highlight the appalling conditions of Whitechapel. Even though murders were common at this time the way in which Jack the Ripper struck at his victims was extremely monstrous and this created plenty of attention,

but the fact that many people could read meant they were able to read about such crimes for the first time and is thus the main reason that the murders attracted so much attention. 3. Why were the police unable to catch Jack the Ripper? There are a number of reasons on why Jack the Ripper was not caught. Life in Whitechapel during the time of 1888 was known to be worthless, and cheap.

Therefore the streets of Whitechapel were dangerous and risky. Murders to be with abuse, drinking, robbery, money or fights between gangs was very common and nothing out of the ordinary, especially for the street of Whitechapel where incidents like this occurred on a daily basis. Jack the ripper was a brutal, motiveless and the first serial murderer who wandered the streets of East London at night murdered prostitutes who to this day is unknown. I am going to try and explain the factors that prevented the police from catching him. There were general problems with policing, problems with these crimes and how they were dealt with and there was also a lot of attention from the press, which didn't help. Until after the death of Polly Nicholls the police were unaware that they were dealing with a serial killer.

The police had no idea of how to track a serial killer, it had never been done before, and they had no idea of where to start and what was the best way of finding him. They didn't know what methods were successful and which methods weren't. Finger printing had not yet been invented and photographing had only just been introduced. There was no such thing as forensic evidence back then either, just the clues that they found in the locality of the crime and on the body. The Home Secretary didn't know the seriousness of the situation and he refused to offer a reward after the first

murder. The lack of rewards didn't make anybody give information as nobody was really bothered and there were very few reliable witnesses.

There was also a misuse and lack of evidence. The witnesses were unreliable. Witnesses often see more than they realize, but will only report information they feel is significant to the case. Also, witnesses will regularly embellish their stories as time progresses. He was described by all of the witnesses as having a dark complexion and being of a foreign looking nature. One witness named Israel Schwartz reports seeing a man push Elizabeth Stride to the floor and call a second man by the name of Lipski over.

This information is too vague and would make it difficult for the police to know exactly what the witness has seen. The police also made mistakes when the murder of Catherine Eddowes had occurred the police searched the area for clues and found part of the dead woman's apron in Goulston Street in Whitechapel. Above the apron, written in white chalk, were the words: ' The Juwes are The men That Will not be Blamed For Nothing'. Before the words could be photographed the commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Charles Warren, ordered them to be obliterated. He thought that if the writing had been left there a lot of people would be against the Jews and lives would have been lost. If these words really were a clue then they would have been quite likely to have been written by the murderer and therefore would have been in his handwriting.

This evidence was lost. Most people in Whitechapel, and the police officers who were investigating the murder assumed that a local killed Polly Nicholls. The previous attacks on Emma Smith and Martha Tabram made several

people believe that somebody to do with prostitution was to blame for the murders. However, as there was a high level of immigration this related in a lack of people knowledge therefore the Police were unsure of whom the Ripper could be. Pressure on the police also led to mistakes, a lot of mistakes were made, as there was a lot of police incompetence.

Policemen used to dress up as prostitutes but still wore their police boots and were very noticeable. Furthermore, Whitechapel was a dangerous and grimly area and police were frightened to police it. The press had also sensationalised the story and this made the Ripper aware of the Police's actions. This also put pressure on detectives this made them nervous and their findings were inaccurate. The fact that the press had sensationalised the case meant that the public sent in many letters that tried to help the police but ended up overwhelming them. The detectives had very little to work with, the killer left behind no clues, not even footprints.

The police believed that the killer knew exactly what he was doing and that no ordinary man with no medical knowledge would have been able to carry out killings like he did. They believed that he did it in a very clean way and in an accurate manner; he cut the body in a very professional way and knew exactly what part of the inside of the body that he wanted, and how to get to it. Jack the Ripper struck at random which made it difficult for police to take action. He worked so quickly that his victims were unable to put up any sort of a fight.

He was utterly cold-blooded and clearly some sort of a sexual psychopath. Before the police believed that the killer could be some sort of a doctor, the

police visited most of the slaughterhouses in Whitechapel. Seventy-six butchers and slaughterers were questioned. This wasted the police's time, as it was popular belief the Ripper had medical knowledge. Furthermore, they wrongly arrested 'Leather Apron' who was also known as John Pizer.

He already had the reputation of demanding money from prostitutes under the threats of violence. Three days after the murder of Annie Chapman 'Leather Apron' was arrested. He was found to have alibis for both of the murders and he was released. Again, a good deal of police time had been wasted. More than 90% of murders are done by people who are known to the victims, but, in the case of the Ripper murders, it looks like killer and victims were complete outsiders.

The killer only chose his victims as a result of a possible meeting. This would make it complicated for the police to catch the Ripper, as he didn't plan out whom he was going to kill. They were also at night, and with Whitechapel having lots of back alleys where there was no lighting it made it hard for him to be seen. This also meant that he could escape easily. In conclusion I think that the most important reason for why Jack the Ripper didn't get caught was the fact that he is an efficient killer.

It only took him five minutes to kill his victims and he didn't leave much evidence. Also the fact that there was no forensics made it difficult to suss out who the killer could have been.