

# RIPPEROLOGIST

Magazine of the Cloak & Dagger Club

Founded in December 1994 by Mark Galloway

Number 19

EDITORIAL

October 1998

Editor: PAUL DANIEL  
Sub-Editor: ADAM WOOD

We would very much like to congratulate **Shirley Harrison**, our Speaker at the last Club meeting, along with her interviewer, the ever-redoubtable **Keith Skinner**, for attracting, dare we say it, more visitors even than **Paul Feldman**! It may seem boring always to be starting off the editorial page with somewhat self-congratulatory reports on the success of the last meeting, but in all honesty each one seems to be enjoyed more and more by our guests and members, if their comments are anything to go by. At the August gathering we had 43 Members in attendance, not to mention 18 guests - an unprecedented number - thus making a grand total of 61-63 including Shirley and Keith! And with reference to our comments below, this is clearly due to the interest in the controversy over the Jack the Ripper Diary and all that is connected to it.

While this month **Mohammed** (who handled bar duties in our Club room at the last meeting) was looking after the downstairs bar, ours was tended with efficiency (as usual!) by **Virginia**, a student from Spain studying politics who we had not had the pleasure of meeting before, and who catered to our liquid desires with cheerful agreeability! Landlord **Paul Bancroft** seems to have a knack of employing efficient and pleasant people to tend to our needs!

In commenting on the last Club meeting's events, it is only fair to also report on the negative side which came from a small minority who were disappointed with the seeming concentration on the so-called writings of Jack the Ripper (or possibly James Maybrick). I put it like this as there was much comment throughout the meeting as to whether what was originally put forward as *The Diary of Jack the Ripper* is actually a 'diary', a 'journal', notes, jottings, emotional outpourings or whatever. No one, including **Shirley Harrison**, could actually make clear what term an artifact of this nature might be given. Unfortunately, we have to accept the fact that in the last five or six years the 'diary' has, like it or not, become a very large part of the 'Ripper' scene. I would like to say that although we have had two recent speakers connected to the 'diary' in the two years I have edited *Ripperologist* we have given a minimal amount of space to this area. Apart from my early reportage on an evening I spent with **Paul Feldman** (February 1997, issue #9, pg 10), various comments on the controversy raged on the Internet and an interesting article in the last issue by **Trevor Spinage**, I can recall nothing else that we have published to do with this work. We would like to apologise to those who did not enjoy the evening, but it is quite clear that the issue outlined above is extremely fascinating and draws many visitors to the club (not to mention the interest shown by the questions put to Shirley and Keith after the interview). It is a disappointing fact of life that it is not possible to please everybody. We do our best and are sorry if we didn't completely succeed at the last meeting.

While on the subject of **C & D Club** meetings, we have had several complaints from attending Members and guests that at times they have been distracted from hearing the Speaker's talk by other Members talking in the background. We feel that now the Club is open from 7.00 and Members are able to stay until normal pub closing time of 11.00 there is plenty of time for vocal intercourse outside that set aside for our guest Speaker. We would like to ask those who find it hard to contain their comments, or who simply like to stand at the bar chatting, to please give the Speaker of the evening the respect and attention he or she is due for the time they are on the platform. We could point out that although we have been trying to make the Club more friendly and flexible, it was originally devised by our founder, **Mark Galloway**, to be based around a lecture by a guest Speaker with time set aside for questions afterwards. We have now cut that time down considerably in order for Members to be able to circulate and have discussion before, and after, the Speaker's talk. So we would ask our visitors to please show some courtesy towards the Speakers during their discourse and not carry on their own conversations at this time. If our Members are not happy with this situation, then perhaps they would be kind enough to let us know.



An amusing item spotted by Eduardo Zinna in *The Penguin Encyclopædia of Crime* by Oliver Cyriax concludes the entry on "Hanging, A Short History of". It reads: *It is widely believed that the victim of a hanging achieves instantaneous erection, which may account for the last words of Dr Thomas Neill Cream, executed on 15 November 1892. 'I am Jack...' he said as the hangman pulled the lever, suggesting that a confession to his true identity as the Ripper was imminent. But Cream was a well spoken man, and it is equally likely that he was commenting on the phenomenon of involuntary emission ('I am ejaculating.')*

Eduardo also informed us of a toy manufacturer called **Trophy Miniatures Wales Ltd**, who, he tells us, produce two items that might be of possible interest to certain readers. These are, of course, JTR, and Sherlock Holmes. They are models: and from the pictures I've seen the JTR one seems to be that dastardly fellow approaching a 'lady of easy virtue' in front of a low wall capped with wrought iron fencing. Quite how high these models are I cannot tell you as there is no indication in the advertisement I've seen; neither is there any knowing of whether the wall and ironwork comes with the figurines. I have to say that from the illustrations they do not appear to be particularly desirable, though in honesty, the pictures are dark photocopies, and Eduardo already possesses models of which he is highly endearing. For further information you can write to **MKL Models, Dept 963, PO Box 32, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 4XZ** - Tel: **01734-733-690**. This company also produces replicas of soldiers.

Movie Quotations - **Richard Dreyfuss** (as Hooper in *Jaws* by Peter Benchley and Carl Gottlieb): "Well, this is not a boat accident, and it wasn't a propeller, it wasn't a coral reef, and it wasn't Jack the Ripper. It was a shark." **William McNamara** (as Peter Foley in *Copycat* by Ann Biderman and David Mansen): "More books have been written about Jack the Ripper than Abraham Lincoln." From Eduardo, again!

won't embarrass the person who sent this joke in to us; simply repeat it: "What's homicidal and lives in the sea?" - "Jack the Ripper." Yes... exactly what we thought....

The Midnight Theatre Company Presents

## YOURS TRULY, JACK THE RIPPER

A musical concept by Frogg Moody. Narrative written by David Taylor

At Salisbury Arts Centre, Bedwin Street, Salisbury

Thursday 29th October & Friday 30th October at 8.00pm

Tickets £5 (£4.50 concessions and Art Centre Members) Box Office 01722 321744

'Highly Recommended' Stewart Evans 'Fascinating Musical' Donald Rumbelow



As performed at the National Conference, Norwich

*Now a fully extended show!*

01722 336328 (evenings)

Just in:-

A report from the BBC's website on 16th September is headed: "**Ripper Diary Has Historians Stumped**", and follows with a brief but concise report on the recent **International Investigative Psychology Conference** hosted by Prof. David Canter at Liverpool University where over a hundred delegates were gathered including police officers and psychologists from as far afield as Japan and South Africa.

The debate was to try to establish the ultimate truth about the authenticity of the diary. As might be expected, conclusions were not reached, and the only agreement being that the artifact was written by a 'disturbed mind', and even if it was not genuine, it was at least 'fascinating'.

Prof. Canter said the writing "does reveal some components that are remarkably subtle" and it was produced either by "a very skilled author or someone with detailed knowledge of the Ripper history". He went on to suggest that it also might have been someone with "enormous insight into carrying out these crimes" and that the person most likely to have written it would be the "person who did carry out those crimes".

Keith Skinner made the point that the diary carried errors in historical detail and was probably a very old forgery, while Shirley Harrison reported that tests had failed to conclusively date the ink to the 1880s but neither did they demonstrate that the ink was not Victorian. She added that she felt the diary deserved serious historical and academic consideration, although she had not been able to prove that it was genuine.



## Afterwards:

Brilliant engineering feat that it was, Sir Marc Brunel's Thames Tunnel was not a success. Originally designed to carry wheeled transport, the 'catch 22' situation of not having enough money to construct the spiral ramps which would have carried the traffic into and from the tunnel, it could not raise enough finance by pedestrian traffic alone, and so the ramps were never built.

The tunnel was in use by pedestrians only until 1864, and it is no surprise that the very nature of its convenience eventually attracted prostitution, vandalism and mugging.

On 25th September 1865 Brunel's masterpiece was sold to the East London Railway, and by 7th December 1869, four years later, the tunnel was opened to railway travel.

In the end, had Mary Kelly actually used this tunnel to visit her friends or family at St Saviour's, it would only have been if she had had enough money to afford the rail ticket to allow her to travel through the tunnel by train, for by 1888 the tunnel had been in use as part of the underground system for nineteen years, and the railway continues to use the tunnel to this very day.

Brunel's brilliant tunnelling shield and the mighty tunnel it helped create led the way to the construction of many others beneath the Thames - today the total stand at 32 tunnels of more than three feet in diameter, but this does not include the Thames Water Ring Main, which crosses under the river several times.

---

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLOAK AND DAGGER CLUB

---

---

## The Meeting held on 8th August 1998

---

Strange as it may seem in these cold and wet October days, the August meeting took place in brilliant sunshine - my notes for this column my only memory of a summer! As was the case for Paul Feldman's talk, the Diary again proved to be a crowd-puller, some 64 people turning up to hear Keith Skinner quiz Shirley Harrison on her part in the controversy and the latest developments. The audience included regulars **Stawell Heard, Peter Riffin, Wilf Greg, Kevin Crace, Harvey Clarke** and his Conference sparring partner **Roger Anderson**, along with **Bradley Geier** from Florida, and visitors **Sally Every, Doreen Montgomery** and **Robert Smith** - names familiar to anyone who has read Shirley's book *The Diary of Jack the Ripper*.

Outlining how she came to be involved in probably the most argued-about area in Ripper history, Shirley recommended readers look to her revised edition of the book, released on 1st October. Keith then asked a question many have pondered over since the Diary became public - had Shirley made a vast amount of money from her involvement? The answer was probably not surprising: while being able to maintain a standard of living, the £15,000 advance from Smith Gryphon to Shirley and Mike Barrett in 1993 had been used up with legal fees, commissioning of experts in areas such as handwriting analysis and ink testing.

The mention of Mike Barrett provoked Keith to ask a series of questions about him and his involvement. What were Shirley's feelings on Mike now? Shirley replied that she felt sympathy, stating that Mike was desperate to be the person who finally discovered who Jack the Ripper was - apparently

he gained this information from a chapter on Florence Maybrick in *Tales of Liverpool*. Shirley stated he had since confessed to forging the Diary, then more recently claimed his wife Anne wrote it, basically due to the unhappiness he had suffered since 1993.

The inevitable flurry of hands for questions including Adrian Morris, who tried (and failed!) to get an answer on the night to the point he had raised with Paul Feldman: why was the handwriting in the Diary non-Victorian? Shirley's answer, in true promotional style, was - read the book! Paul Begg, armed with questions from contributors to the *Casebook: Jack the Ripper* on the internet, asked whether it was known that Tony Deveraux was dying at the time he allegedly gave Barrett the Diary. "No" was the short reply. Andy Aliffe suggested that it was strange that Maybrick signed himself as JTR, when it was extremely likely that the name had been invented by Bullen and Moore for the Dear Boss letter. Shirley's answer to that was that Maybrick liked the name when he read of it, and adopted it. Finally, I asked whether there were any pages torn out at the back of the Diary, bearing in mind the 64 removed from the front. Robert Smith replied that after the signature Jack the Ripper there were simply 16 or so blank pages.

We would like to thank Shirley for her responses to Keith's informed promptings, and also for her excellent company, along with that of her husband Duncan, earlier in the day.

Adam Wood, Sub Editor