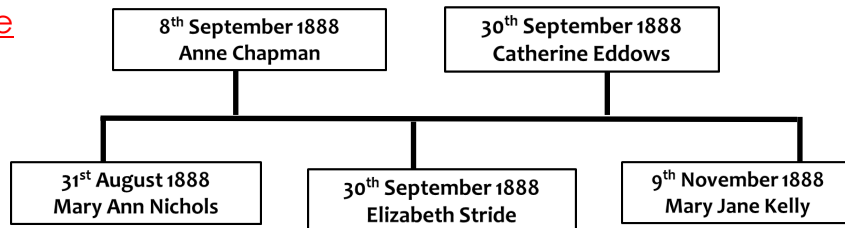# Technology + revolution: How did Jack the Ripper become a 'worldwide symbol of terror'?

Background information

Jack the Ripper was a Victorian serial killer, striking in the Whitechapel area of London. Despite never being caught, the Ripper is notorious for his selective and savage killings leaving his victims to be found mutilated. The Rippers crimes highlighted the blind approach of the police and the poor living conditions that allowed him to evade capture.

Timeline

8th September 1888 Anne Chapman	30th September 1888 Catherine Eddows

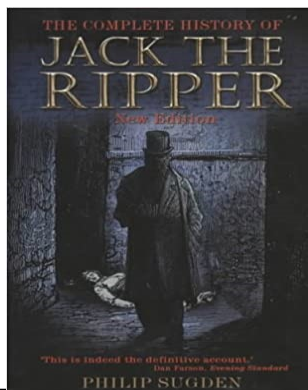| 31st August 1888 Mary Ann Nichols	30th September 1888 Elizabeth Stride	9th November 1888 Mary Jane Kelly

Secondary interpretation/ debate about period

'JACK THE RIPPER! Fewer names in history are instantly recognisable... Silent, cruel death, personified in the cape-shrouded figure of **a faceless prowler of the night** armed with a long knife and carrying a black Gladstone bag.

The Victorian murderer who slew a handful of women in London 's East End has become a **worldwide symbol of terror**. '

Philip Sugden - author of 'The Complete History of Jack the Ripper'

Key knowledge 1:

Factors that allowed the Ripper to succeed

- London suffered from heavy pollution being an industrial city. Streets were covered in smog, often resulting in poor visibility in many areas.
- Poverty was the norm for working class Londoners, women especially found it difficult to find work and were forced into prostitution to survive. Alcohol abuse was a common form of escapism.
- Lacklustre policing and investigative techniques resulted in vague descriptions of the killer being given to the press and public, anybody could have been the Ripper using such descriptions.

Key knowledge 2:

Who were the Ripper victims?

- The majority of Ripper victims were prostitutes, all were known to be heavy drinkers and most were found brutally mutilated.
- Attacks were carried out around the Whitechapel area, usually late in the evening or in the early hours of the morning. Victims were most likely intoxicated leaving pubs or meeting men.
- The Ripper would attack in the narrow alleys and backstreets where there was less chance of disruption.

Key Knowledge 3:

Who was Jack the Ripper?

- Letters were sent to the police from the Ripper mocking them on their failure to capture the killer.
- There were few suspects at the time however Jack the Ripper disappeared and the killers identity was never revealed .

Keywords

- Poverty
- Whitechapel
- Prostitute
- Mutilated
- Forgeries
- Jack the Ripper