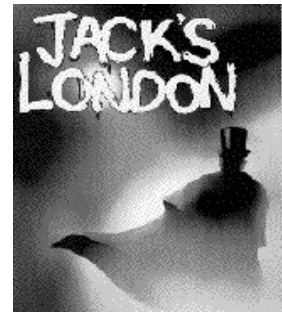


2. THE STORY OF POLLY NICHOLS



Mary Anne Nichols or 'Polly' as she was known to her friends was born on 26th August 1845 in Dean Street, Whitechapel. Her father, Edward Walker was a locksmith. In January 1864 she married William Nichols, a printer's machinist.



The couple went to live with Polly's father. They stayed there about ten years. In 1874 they set up home for themselves at 6D Peabody Buildings, Stamford Street. They had five children: Edward (1866), Percy (1868), Alice (1870), Eliza (1877) and Henry (1879). Despite all the years they spent together, Polly and William's marriage ended in 1880.

Polly lived in the Lambeth **workhouse** from 6 September 1880 until 31 May 1881. William paid Polly an allowance of **5 shillings** a week during this time until he found out that she had started living with another man. Polly's remaining years were spent in workhouses and **doss houses**. Between 24th April 1882 and 24 March 1883 she lived at Lambeth workhouse. There is a gap of four years when Polly lives with her father again, but they quarrelled because Polly was a heavy drinker. She left her father and lived with a blacksmith called Thomas Drew.

On 25th October 1887 she stayed at St Giles workhouse. Then, from 26 October to 2 December 1887 she stayed at the Strand Workhouse. On 19th December she returned to Lambeth workhouse but was thrown out ten days later. On 4 January 1888 she was admitted to the Mitcham Workhouse, but transferred back to Lambeth on 4 April 1888. She remained there until 12 May.

She left the workhouse and found a job as a **domestic servant**. She wrote a letter to her father telling him how she was pulling herself together. But, on 12 July 1888 she stole clothing worth **£3 10s** from her employer and left her job. She then shared lodgings with Ellen Holland in Thrawl Street. She left there a week before her death. On the night of 30 August she did not have enough money (4d [1.5p]) to return to Thrawl Street. She told the lodging house keeper "I'll soon get my doss money. See what a jolly bonnet I have." In the early hours of Friday 31st August Polly found herself in Bucks Row, Whitechapel where she met her killer.

TASK

1. What three words would you use to describe Polly?
2. Explain your choice.
3. Compare your answers to those of other people in the class.
4. On balance, do you think that Polly was a good or a bad person? Explain your answer.

3. THE OTHER VICTIMS OF JACK THE RIPPER



Born 1841. Father a servant, formerly a soldier. At time of death is suffering from Tuberculosis and Syphilis. Heavy drinker but not an alcoholic. 1869 marries a coachman, John Chapman. They live with her mother. Children: Emily, born 1870, Annie, born 1873 and John, born in 1881. John is a cripple and sent to a home. Emily dies of meningitis aged twelve. Annie leaves home in 1877 to work with a traveling circus in France. 1884 separates from husband due to her drunkenness; she moves in with a sieve maker called John Sivvey and makes money selling flowers. Husband dies in 1886 of liver failure and so his allowance stops coming in; Sivvey leaves her; she becomes a prostitute. June 1888 - living at a lodging house for 300 people. Sep 88 - has a fight with Eliza Cooper over a new boyfriend, Edward Stanley. Early hours of Sep 8th - leaves lodgings to earn some money. Is last sighted with a "customer" at 5.30am. Found dead early that morning.



Elizabeth Stride – 29th September 1888

1843 – born in Sweden. 1860 - is working as a servant. 1865 - registered by police as a prostitute. Mid 1865 - gives birth to a stillborn baby girl. October and November - treated for venereal disease. 1866 - moves to the Swedish parish in London in the service of a "Foreign gentleman". 1869 - marries John Thomas Stride, a carpenter. After the marriage John and Liz keep a coffee shop. 1875 - they sell the business. c.1878 – separates from her husband. 1881 - she is treated for bronchitis. 1882 – moves into a workhouse. 1884 – John Stride dies in workhouse; 1885 - she is living with Michael Kidney, a waterside labourer, who says that she was frequently absent when she was drinking and he even tried, unsuccessfully, to padlock her in. 1886 - she receives alms from the Swedish Church. 1887 - she charges Kidney with assault but then fails to appear at court. September 26 – seen at a lodging house by Dr. Thomas Barnardo. Sep 30th: Leaves a pub in the early hours with an unidentified man, and is found dead later on that morning.



Catherine "Kate" Eddowes – 29th September 1888

1842 – born in Wolverhampton. 1848 – Father leaves his job as a timplater worker to go to London. 1855 – Her mother dies. c.1860 – She returns to Wolverhampton and is educated by her aunt. c. 1861-1863 - leaves home with Thomas Conway, an old soldier. The couple sell cheap books in Birmingham. As a couple they had three children. Annie, born 1865, George, born around 1868 and another son born around 1875. c.1865 - They return to London. 1880 - Kate is refused entry to her aunt's house after "running away from the pensioner." 1880 – Kate develops a drinking problem. c.1881 she returns to London, moves in with John Kelly. Summer 1888 – working with Kelly picking hops. Sep 28 – Each of them rent a cheap bed for a night at different doss houses. Sep 29th – Kelly pawns some boots; he and Kate have breakfast together. 8pm – she is arrested for being drunk and disorderly (imitating a fire engine) and put in the cells. Sep 30th – released in the early hours of the morning. 1.45am – Her body is found 10 minutes away from the station.








Mary Jane Kelly – 9th November 1888

1863 – born in Limerick, Ireland. c.1870 - family move to Wales. c. 1879 - Marries a collier named Davies. 1882: Davies is killed in an explosion; Kelly moves to Cardiff and works as a prostitute. 1884 - arrives in London, works in a high class brothel in the West End. 1885 – develops a drink problem; moves to Mrs. Carthy's brothel in the East End. 1887 – moves into a one-roomed hovel with Joe Barnett, a riverside laborer and market porter. September, 1888 - Barnett loses his job and Mary Jane returns to the streets. September - fined 2/6 by the Thames Magistrate Court for being drunk and disorderly. October – Barnett leaves as Mary is letting prostitutes sleep in their room. November 8th (evening) – Kelly is last seen singing in the street, completely drunk. Nov 9th – Kelly's landlord, demanding her rent, breaks into her room and finds her terribly mutilated body on the bed.

TASK:

- Using the information above, complete the timeline which your teacher should have given you.
 - Use the completed timeline to answer the following questions.
- (a) What did all of these women have in common?
- (b) What are the strengths and weaknesses of this evidence for the historian studying the life of working class women in the 1880's?

WORKING CLASS WOMEN: THE LIVES OF JACK THE RIPPER'S VICTIMS

	POLLY NICHOLS	ANNIE CHAPMAN	LIZZIE STRIDE	KATE EDDOWES	MARY JANE KELLY
					
1840s					
1850s					
1860s					
1870s					
1880s					
1888:					
June					
Sep 28					
Sep 29					
Sep 30					
Nov					

Questions:

- Of these five women, whose life story do you find the most tragic? Explain your answer carefully.