

MARY JANE KELLY

A SPECTROPHILIA ARCHIVE PROFILE

Mary Jane Kelly's life is preserved largely through testimony gathered after her death. The surviving record offers a small number of firm facts alongside biographical claims that remain uncertain.

FULL NAME	Mary Jane Kelly; also recorded as Marie Jeanette Kelly
BORN	Around 1863; her precise origins remain uncertain
AGE AT DEATH	Approximately 25
RESIDENCE	Room 13, Miller's Court, off Dorset Street, Spitalfields
PARTNER	Joseph Barnett; they separated shortly before her death but remained in contact
DIED	9 November 1888
DISCOVERED BY	Thomas Bowyer, who had been sent to collect overdue rent
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE	Widely regarded as the fifth and final canonical victim attributed to Jack the Ripper
DISTINGUISHING CIRCUMSTANCE	The only canonical victim killed inside her home

A necessary qualification

Most accounts of Kelly's childhood, marriage, Welsh connections and time in France came through other people - particularly Joseph Barnett - and cannot be independently verified. They should be presented as reported testimony rather than settled biography.

Editorial perspective

Kelly should be presented as a person rather than as an accessory to the legend of her unidentified killer: a young woman whose identity has been obscured by folklore, contradictory testimony and more than a century of sensational retelling.

SELECTED SOURCES

Mary Jane Kelly's Inquest, Casebook: Jack the Ripper
University of Michigan, Whitechapel and Jack the Ripper Archive
The National Archives, post-mortem catalogue record