

25. Sept. 1888.

Dear Boss

I keep on hearing the police have caught me. but they wont fix me just yet. I have laughed when they look so clever and talk about being on the right track. That joke about Leather Apron gave me real fits. I am down on whores and I shant quit ripping them till I do get buckled. Grand work the last job was. I gave the lady no time to squeal. How can they catch me now. I love my work and want to start again. You will soon hear of me with my funny little games. I saved some of the proper red stuff in a ginger beer bottle over the last job to write with but it went thick

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Yours truly

Jack the Ripper

Don't mind me giving the trade name

PS Wasn't good enough to post this before I got all the red ink off my hands curse it. No luck yet. They say I'm a doctor now. ha ha

1. What does this letter tell us about Jack the Ripper?
2. The police released the letter to the public – was the right decision?
3. What does this tell us about the quality of the police?

The Dear Boss Letter

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

Fac-simile of Letter and Post Card received by Central News Agency.

Dear Boss
25 Sept. 1888

I keep on hearing the police have caught the first they sent for me just yet I am puzzled when they look to come and find about being in the road back. But the about another person give me word till I am down in about and I don't quit saying them till I do get back. I would wish the best for you I give the lady in time to sign it. How can they catch me now. I love my work and want to start again. You will soon hear of me with my funny little game. I saw some of the paper red cloth in a ginger jar bottle over the last job to write with but it went thick like glue and I can't see it. I did not see it enough I hope the next job I do I had clip the lady's ears off and send to the

Police officers just for jobs wouldnt you. I am a bit nervous about then you it's not straight. My sister is now and I don't want to go to work right away if I get a chance.
I find luck
yours truly
just the letter
Don't mind me giving the name.

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Any person recognising the handwriting is requested to communicate with the nearest Police Station.

Metropolitan Police Office,
3rd October, 1888.

Printed by W. Compton & Co. Limited, "The Armoury," Southwark.

The Police released the letter to the public in the hope that someone could provide information on the possible location of the killer.

Soon the police and other agencies were swamped with letters all claiming to be from the killer. Some teased the police for their incompetence.

Others identified a time and place future murders would happen. One even suggested he would strike again...in Birmingham!

What made Whitechapel a difficult place to police?

To know the responsibilities of a policeman in the 1880s

To understand the problems the police force had with the
Whitechapel area.

To be able to predict the reasons why the police force found
it difficult to capture Jack the Ripper.

Published in the satirical (humourous) magazine Punch 22nd September 1888

What do you already know about the police force at this time?

What is the purpose of the source?



What is message of the source?

Can you give details to prove it?

What do you already know about the type of crimes police faced at this time?

What do you think the title of the source is?



What differences can you see between a policeman from 1880 and from the present?

What might be some of the problems/limitations they faced in the 1880s?

How does this link the Punch source?



Thinking back...

Turning point: Introducing Sir Robert Peel and the Metropolitan Police Act 1829...



Peel was responsible for many reforms to crime and punishment.

For hundreds of years, policing had been the responsibility of ordinary people in the local community.

In 1829, he persuaded the public and parliament to let him set up a new Metropolitan Police Force.

Can you remember any of the problems with the Force?

How did policing develop after 1829?

1835 – Municipal Corporations Act gave borough councils powers to set up a local police force. Only 93/171 had done so by 1837.

1842 – Metropolitan Police set up **the first detective force** to gather evidence, investigate and solve crimes after they had been committed.

1870 – Police helmets introduced.

1884 – There were 39,000 police in Britain and over 200 separate forces.

1839 – Rural Constabulary Act – Allowed the counties to organise a paid police force in their area. JPs given the power to appoint chief constables and employ 1 police constable per 1000 population. Only 36/54 counties had done so by 1850.

1856 – Police Act. Forced the entire country to set up local police forces. They varied in size, wages, hours and conditions of work. By this time the police were regarded with respect and not suspicion by the public. 3 national Inspectors of Police tried to enforce a national standard. Forces that they judged 'efficient' received a government grant of 25% towards their costs. In 1856 only 120/239 passed, but by 1890 all of them did.

1878 – The Metropolitan Police detective force was reorganised into the **Criminal Investigation Department (CID)**. Over the next few years this was rolled out across the country.

Were the Metropolitan Police Commissioners ineffective?

Police Commissioner:

The chief police officer, appointed by the Home Secretary.

We are going to find out about 2 cases of Police Commissioners being forced to resign from their jobs between 1870 and 1900.

It will help us to understand people's attitudes towards the police and why there was a crisis at the head of the Metropolitan Police in the late 1800s.

– why were people suspicious of them? Were they doing an effective job?



Case Study 1: Commissioner Edmund Henderson, 1870-1886

Appointed in 1870 and forced to resign in January 1886 following a string of scandals!

Scandal 1:

He was accused of having relaxed police discipline – he had allowed officers to grow beards and reduced the amount of military drill practice they had to do.

Scandal 2:

In 1877, a scandal called 'The Trial of the Detectives' was uncovered, involving corruption in the Detective Branch. A group of detectives were found guilty of accepting bribes in return for protecting a gang which had stolen thousands of francs from French gamblers in an international betting scam.

Scandal 3:

In December 1880, a man called Thomas Titley was arrested. However, the methods used by the police to arrest him were heavily criticised. The police had posed in plain clothes as customers wanting to buy a chemical which would cause a woman to have an abortion. The jury suggested that Titley should receive a lenient sentence and the following year 3,800 people signed a petition against Titley's 18 month sentence.

Scandal 4:

In 1884 and 1885 Irish terrorists exploded a series of bombs, including 2 that damaged the Houses of Parliament. This was especially humiliating as the **Special Irish Branch** had been set up in 1883 to stop these types of plots.

Scandal 5:

A riot in Trafalgar Square which had gotten out of control was the last straw. Henderson was forced to resign.



Commissioner Charles Warren, 1886-1888

Warren was appointed by Home Secretary Hugh Childers in February 1886. However, Childers was replaced by Henry Matthews in July 1886. He disliked Warren.

Warren wanted to improve the standards of the police after Henderson. He increased military drill practice and had higher expectations for new recruitments. He also brought more ex-soldiers into the police force.

Why might the public be worried by this?

The public started to worry that the force was becoming an army which would be used to control the people. The press reacted badly when, in November 1887, another riot in Trafalgar square was put down with what seemed like excessive force.

In November 1888, at the height of the Ripper murders, Warren wrote an article in a popular news magazine in which he said that the *'Government have not had the courage to make a stand against the more noisy section of the people'*.

In the same month, Warren resigned.

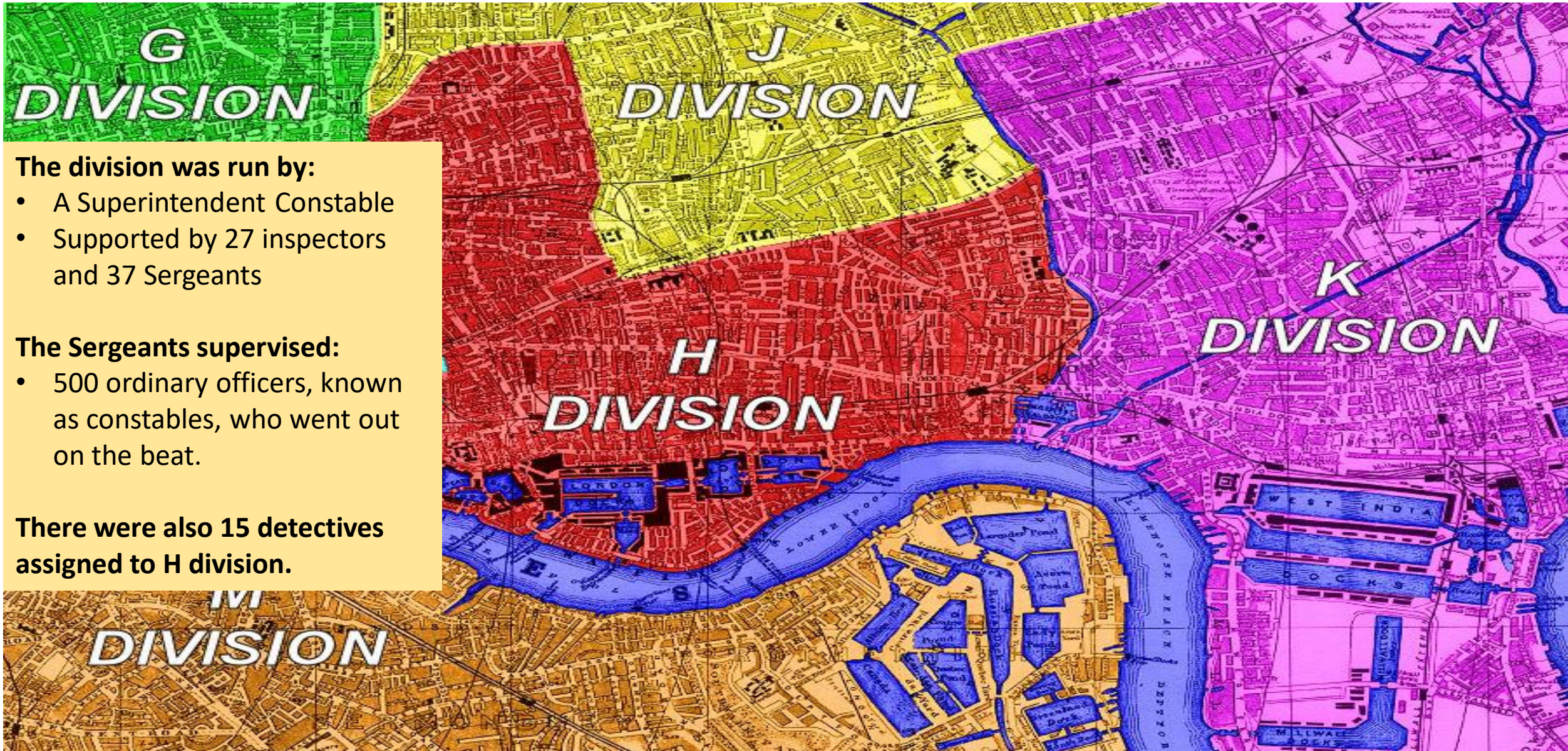
So, thinking about these 2 commissioners:

- 1) **Why were people suspicious of them?**
- 2) **Were they doing an effective job?**

What impact do you think Warren's views had on the relationship between

- a) The police and the public
- b) The police and the government (such as the Home Secretary)?

The Metropolitan Police force was divided into 20 divisions. Each was responsible for policing a different area of London. **Whitechapel was covered by H division.** In total around 505 policemen covered the Whitechapel population of 176,000. A ratio of 1 in 300. ***Why might this be an issue?***



The division was run by:

- A Superintendent Constable
- Supported by 27 inspectors and 37 Sergeants

The Sergeants supervised:

- 500 ordinary officers, known as constables, who went out on the beat.

There were also 15 detectives assigned to H division.



Custodian helmet
– designed to
deflect blows

Oil-filled bulls-eye lamp,
gave heat as well as light

Truncheon to defend
themselves under attack
and hand cuffs to bring
unwilling citizens to the
station

Black and white
armband showed
they were on duty

Uniform a distinct
blue so that they
stand out and
deter crime.

Shoes with wooden
soles -8 hours of
walking the 'beat'
per day!

A Day on the Beat

1) Read their orders of the day which listed wanted criminals and what had happened before their shift.

Why was this necessary?

3) The constable followed a set route and was expected to complete his beat at a specific time every 30 minutes (15 at night)

5) After one month a constable would be moved to a different beat.

2) The police squad would march out to Whitechapel in single file. When arriving at his local beat he dropped out of the marching column.

4) At certain times they met with their sergeant to discuss what had happened so far – this was recorded in his diary.

Why didn't they keep them in the same place?

Source E From the *Candidates and Constables Instruction Book*, 1871.

He is to walk at a gentle pace, about 2½ miles an hour, keeping the outer or kerb side of the street by day, and walking close to the houses by night. He must not loiter or stand in an idle and listless manner, or gossip. He is not on any account to receive drink from any one. If he requires refreshment, he can obtain the permission of his Sergeant to purchase it.

What does this source suggest about the life of a constable?

Is this a useful source for learning about the quality of policing at this time?

Can you think of any advantages & disadvantages of the beat system?

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constables would get to know a local area very well so they would know if there were new people and suspicious behaviour••••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The job was very boring and long – constables would be tempted to slack off and not do their job properly.••••

Advantages & Disadvantages of the beat system

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constables would get to know a local area very well so they would know if there were new people and suspicious behaviour• The police were very present in the area which might deter people from committing a crime• The constable and sergeant kept records of any suspicious behaviour so that it could be passed on to the next constable. Therefore there was effective communication.••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The job was very boring and long – constables would be tempted to slack off and not do their job properly.• A criminal would be able to work out the route and commit his crime when the policeman was in another section of the beat• Constables could be bribed by locals – for example, a pub landlord might leave a pint of beer for a constable as he walked past, in return for a good word when he had to renew his pub licence.• The police were on their own and had very limited weapons so would not be much use if he challenged a gang or violent crime.• It would be particularly difficult to see crimes at night time due to the limited light they had.• People would be less likely to confide in policemen they did not know due to rotation

The Disadvantages.....

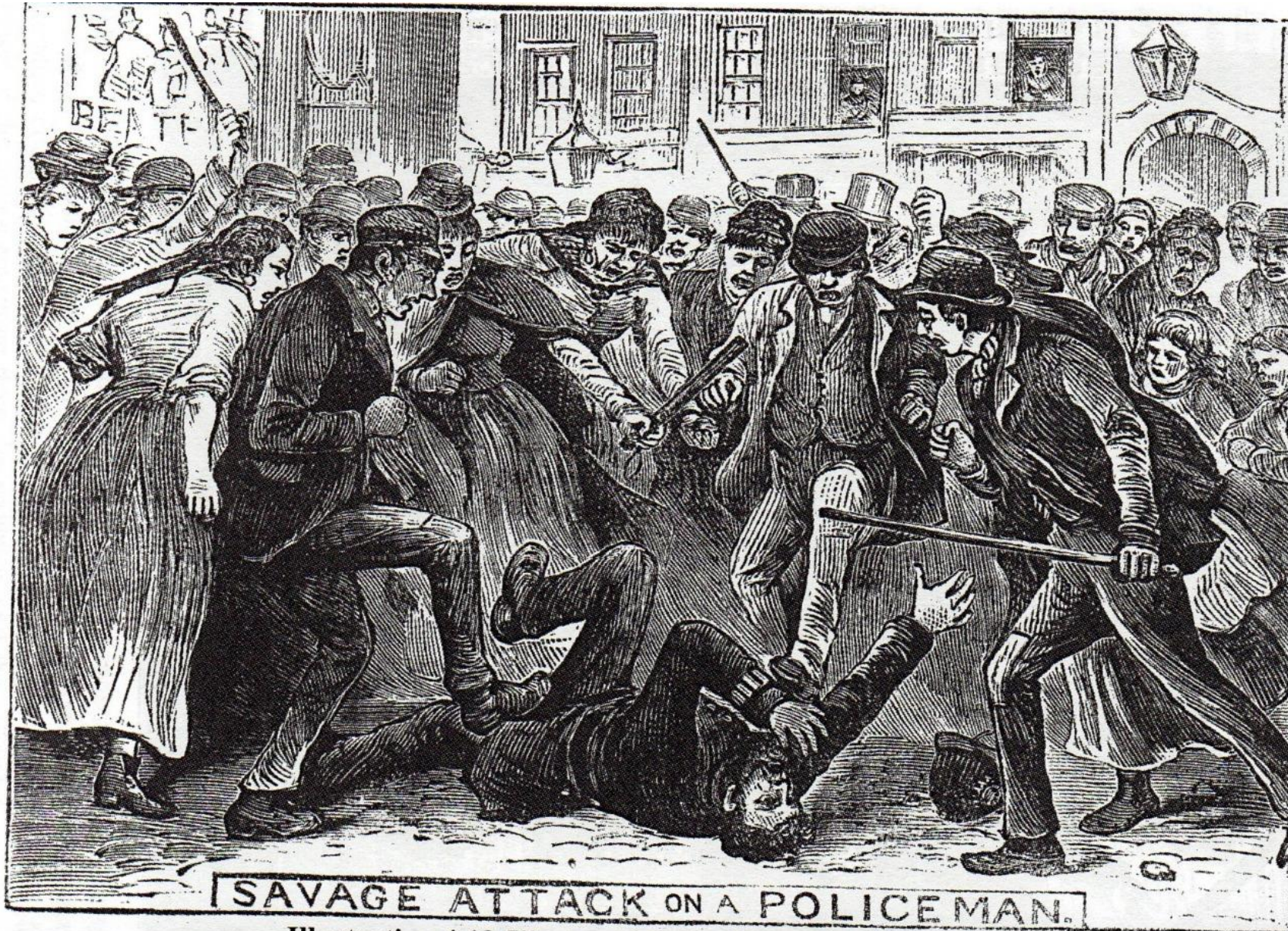


Illustration 4.12 *Illustrated Police News*, 2 June 1883, p. 1

As constables worked alone they were easy targets for attacks by violent gangs. In 1883 in one such case a policeman tackled a criminal called John Harris. He was surrounded by Harris' gang who beat him with stones and hit him with sticks. They left him unconscious as they made their escape.

Attacks like this were particularly common in the Whitechapel area. The police were seen in a more negative light because of the economic depression and widespread poverty in the 1870s and 1880s. When there were protests against the government, the police were used to break them up, which added to this resentful feeling.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID)

Early days...

Much of the public was suspicious of the idea of police 'detecting' crime as they saw it as 'snooping'.

When a detective force was set up in 1842, it was only a small unit which worked at the Metropolitan Police's Headquarters, Scotland Yard.

In 1870, Commissioner Henderson decided to recruit more detectives and move them out to the divisions, so they could work with the constables and use their local knowledge.

However, the 'Trial of the Detectives' ruined their reputation and they were reorganised.

The detective branch was then reorganised into the Criminal Investigation Division (CID), based at Scotland Yard.

Howard Vincent was given the of leading the CID.

What changes did he make?

- Increased the pay of detectives – **why?**
- Encouraged detectives to more plain-clothes operations – **why?**
- Encouraged them to investigate crimes when they suspected they might happen, rather than waiting for them to be reported

However, detectives still worked in local divisions so that they knew their patch, its people and the policemen well.



Charles Edward Howard Vincent
Head of CID 1878-1884

Criminal Investigation Department (CID)

The day-to-day work of the detective

- They wore plain clothes so that they could 'shadow' suspects
- Each day they would receive a report from the chief inspector in each division which listed unsolved crimes and ongoing investigations
- From 1878, they looked out for 'habitual criminals' and these were kept in a 'Register of habitual criminals' at Scotland Yard
- They supervised prisoners who had been released early for good behaviour

Their main job was to observe and gather information.

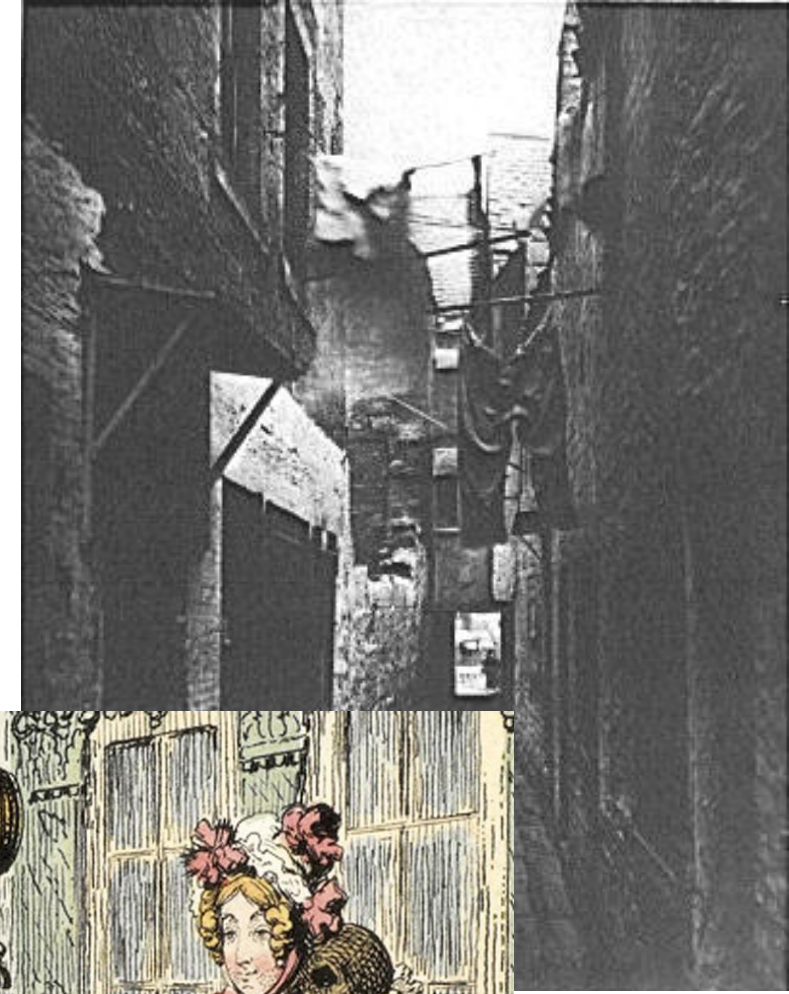
Why was this so difficult in the 19th century?



Charles Edward Howard Vincent
Head of CID 1878-1884



Why did the police struggle in Whitechapel?
List as many ideas as you can.



Thinking forwards....

Can you **apply** what you have learnt to the case of Jack the Ripper?



Use your knowledge to identify which disadvantages, difficulties and problems may have contributed to the failure to catch Jack the Ripper.