

Notting Hill in Ye Olden Tyme

Murder in Notting Hill

Mark Olden

Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2011, 196pps, illus., notes and sources, p/b, £11.99.

The murder of the black carpenter Kelso Cochrane on the streets of Notting Hill by a white gang in 1959 has never gone away. Never gone away because it was without doubt a racist murder but, further, because nobody was ever arrested and charged, let alone convicted (so much for the vast resources of the Met Police!). So, miasma-like, it has just hung there until now.

With diligent research over many years Olden has tracked down and interviewed the Notting Hill faces of 1959 and names the former merchant seaman who fatally stabbed Cochrane. To use that current buzz word, this is closure of a kind, but not full closure as it still leaves the big question of why the Met didn't solve the crime; and here Olden points to a cocktail of reasons, namely the racism and incompetence of the police, with a dash of political interference.

Notting Hill is Olden's territory and he knows it well. He deftly describes its rise and fall; and, unlike much local history, he puts a human face to it. We see it through the eyes of the people who lived and worked there, grew up there, notably those to whom it was home in 1959. Thus *Murder in Notting Hill* is not just about a murder, it's also about a time and place.

Anthony Frewin