Selection of newspaper cuttings about Oscar Slater
(NAS ref. HH16/111/37/21, 27, 35, 48, 54, 57)
SLATER’S JOY
AT NEWS
OF RELEASE.

FIRST GLAD TIDINGS FOR MAN
WHO HAS BEEN IN PRISON
NEARLY 19 YEARS.

INQUIRY DEMANDED.

EAGER TO FIGHT FOR HIS GOOD
NAME WHEN FREE.

From Our Special Correspondent,
Aberdeen, Saturday.

THE news that he is to be
released has been con-
voyed to Oscar Slater in Peter-
head Prison.

The information seemed to
come as a complete surprise,
for he was almost overcame
with delight.

Slater’s sentence of death in 1909
for the murder of Miss Marion
Gibbros, was commuted to life
imprisonment. He has served 18
years, and the decision to release
him was announced in Parliament
this week.

The date of his release is a closely
guarded secret.

FIGHT TO PROVE
INNOCENCE.

When Slater Re-enters
the World.

THINK of it! A man who for
nearly 18 years has been a con-
vict, but who all along has re-
quired his innocence of the murder
of which he was found guilty,
receives the glad tidings that he is
to be free. Who can describe
adequately such a man’s emotions?

Naturally, a “life sentence” lasts
only about 18 years, and here is Slater,
of whom innumerable people have
for years been convinced, kept in prison
for all those years.

“When I Am Free.”

He has talked volubly about his
innocence, an ex-convict who served at
Peterhead Prison, told the Sunday
Chronicle yesterday.

“I do not care if I have to serve
50 years of imprisonment. I will try
to prove my innocence immediately
I am free, if only for the sake of my
relatives,” this man has heard him
declare.

Now the day on which Slater has
begun, and of which he has dreamed
through 18 years, is at hand.

OSCAR SLATER.

“[We cannot announce the release of
a convict with a hero of triumph],”
the Sunday Chronicle was informed at
the Scottish Office in London yester-
day.

“It is not anticipated, however,
that there will be a long delay.”

Sir John Gilmore, in his announce-
ment in the House of Commons, stated
that Slater would come out of prison
“as honorably,” which means he will
dwell to appear periodically to the
police, and suggests that the official
agreement for the release of this
Slater has completed the verbal length
(10 years) to which a life sentence
generally runs.

M.P. Favour Inquiry.

The Sunday Chronicle understands
that a large body of members of Par-
liament is in favour of an inquiry into
the case of Oscar Slater.

The M.P. will be before Wednesday,
when the Secretary for Scot-
land will be asked whether he proposes
to set up an inquiry into the evidence
presented at the trial. In view of the
subject of late the evidence is
now clear, and the matter of
the police and judicial authorities taking
part in the case.

It is stated that should Slater be
relieved on ticket-of-leave—the normal
procedure—he will immediately apply
for a pardon of his case.

Slater is believed to have received
many offers of financial assistance.
WHO DID MURDER MISS MARION GILCHRIST?

Name of a Suspect Given by a Woman?—Analysis of the Motive.

By SIR A. CONAN DOYLE.

It is stated that Miss Marion Gilchrist, who died at her home on 18th November, was murdered by a woman. It appears that a woman named Lumbus, who lived in the same street as Miss Gilchrist, was found dead in her room. The police believe that Lumbus was responsible for the murder and that she was acting under the influence of drugs.

Lumbus had a history of mental illness and had been in and out of hospitals for years. She was known to have had access to Miss Gilchrist’s home and was frequently seen in the vicinity of the house. The police believe that Lumbus was under the influence of drugs at the time of the murder and that she acted on impulse.

It is also possible that Lumbus was acting under the influence of another person. The police are investigating this possibility and are looking for more evidence to support their theory.

Gratifying that it was someone she knew, who was the object of the visit. As a rule, the man came at no hour and no hour of the day, but on a Saturday morning, this time he turned up at the house just before dawn, and left a note at the door asking for his friend. It was addressed to Miss Gilchrist, and stated that he was expecting her any moment. He then broke into the house, and found her dead in her bed. She had been murdered in her sleep.

The police are continuing their investigation and hope to find more evidence to support their theory.

National Archives of Scotland: www.nas.gov.uk/about/081214.asp
SLATER TO BE DEPORTED?

NOT TO BE RELEASED FOR SOME DAYS.

From OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PETERHEAD, Saturday.

It was not until last night that Oscar Slater was informed that shortly he would be liberated from the convict prison here, where he is serving a life sentence for the murder of Miss Marion Gilchrist in Glasgow in 1909.

During the afternoon a motorcar entered the prison gates and stayed for half an hour. Afterwards Slater was told of his impending freedom.

He was greatly elated on receiving the news and eagerly discussed his plans for the future. It is not expected, however, that he will be freed for some days yet.

Although at present it is understood he will be liberated on licence, this is not definite, and it is quite possible that he will be deported.

In any case there are many formalities yet to be carried out, and while these are decided Slater is following the usual prison routine.

STUDY IN SPARE TIME.

He was out again this morning with a working party.

Peterhead prison, where Slater has been for 14½ years, is built on a bleak spot, one of the most easterly points of the Scottish coast, and huge breakers wash near the prison walls during wild weather.

During his imprisonment Slater has followed the usual prison routine, working in the quarry and about the prison buildings. He has spent his leisure time in studying languages and reading. He has been a keen student of the Bible, and although Jewish by faith he frequently attends church services.

Slater, I am told, is in good spirits since the news of his release reached him.
JUSTICE FOR SLATER.

ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT.

APPEAL OFFER.

SPECIAL ACT TO BE PASSED.

THE "Daily News" campaign for justice to Oscar Slater—the first important success was his release from Peterhead gaol on Monday—was carried a step further in the House of Commons yesterday by the Secretary for Scotland, Sir John Gilmore, who announced the Government's willingness to remit sentences connected with the case to the Scottish Court of Criminal Appeal.

An Act of Parliament will be necessary to carry this out, and it is understood that a short Bill will be passed before the session ends next month.

The course of action proposed by Sir John Gilmore is exactly that urged by The Pilgrim, the "Daily News" special investigator, in our Leith Correspondence, on page Eighty, explaining the procedure that must now be followed to bring the case under review.

Gilmore heard the news at 5.30 last evening, for the sentence was not made public until then. He was stunned. Then he said to The Pilgrim:

"This is the best news of all. This is what I wanted—the chance to establish my innocence and restore my name."

Slater's friend, the Rev. A. F. Phillips, the Jewish pastor, said:

"This is what we had hardest dared to hope for. I hope it means that not only will Slater's sentence be vindicated.

(Leithland, a Glasgow detective, was killed and died a broken man through his efforts to establish Slater's innocence.)

GLASGOW EXCITEMENT.

On all sides last night Sir John Gilmore's announcement gave the widest satisfaction. Mr. James Stewart, M.P. for St. Rollox, Glasgow, said: "If the Government have done the right thing, now long years ago it should have been done."

There was great excitement in Glasgow. Everyone was discussing the news, published in the evening papers, and it appears to be generally thought (telegrams The Pilgrim) that the case will end in the complete vindication of Slater, whose supporters are in high spirits.

On the day of his release Slater received the following letter from his friend, J. A. Somerville:

"Dear Oscar Slater—This is to say to you and my wife, Oscar and my own boy. I believe we have been at the instigation of some officials of your own officials to suffer you in prison."

Your only consolation can

NAS ref. HH16/111/37/48
Who did the murder for which Oscar Slater served 18 years?

A man lets out the secret

by BRENDAN KEMMET

FOUR weeks ago Oscar Slater died. He held an unending place in the records of crime as a man who served 18 years in jail for a murder he did not commit. After his release he was given £6,000 in compensation.

Slater was convicted of the murder of Miss Marion Gilchrist, an 86-year-old woman found dead with her head battered in her house in West Princes-street, Glasgow. He committed the crime for which Slater suffered so long and lost his freedom.

Last week, moved by the news of the death of Slater, a man broke a silence he had kept for 40 years.

He came to me in the Glasgow offices of the Scottish Sunday Express and said: "I knew who committed the murder but I was too afraid to tell the story that would have saved Slater and sent two men to the gallows."

This man is 80. He has spent much of his life in prison.

At the time of the Slater case he was one of a gang of thieves in Glasgow.

This is his story:

Four in gang

THERE were four of us in the gang. The others were:

J. was always well-dressed and his appearance and general build suited the character of a bank clerk. He was a tall, white man, whereas Slater had a moustache.

At that time he was aged about 25. He and Slater had been in a detective court for having a moustache. He was about 40.

A "big man" in Grangemouth who was much like Slater in build. He had on a moustache. He was about 50. He had been a leading man of the four, as one time fairly prosperous.

Man who did it

J. was the man who smacked Miss Gilchrist down.

A man whom I never met, comes into the story. He was the brain behind our operations. He used to supply us, though we had information about him from some women, gleaned from conversations and daily help.

Before that time, Slater was a chambermaid at a railway house in the Clyde street. The street was an old woman who lived alone and plied her trade by selling money and a large quantity of fixtures in the house.

We brought us to that 86-year-old woman’s place. We used to go with that lady of a Miss Gilchrist and Mrs. Corbett.

We were not sure of that. We were not sure of that. Since that time it is not known any more. The "Brain," I think, had given the evidence of Miss Gilchrist and Miss Corbett mixed up.

Watched for weeks

For weeks we kept watch on the house of Miss Gilchrist.

Oscar Slater

was pure. I never again was sentenced in any court other than a High Court. My sentence was with recommendation.

So far as I can remember of the whole story, all the pilots of the Glasgow police, who were the pilots of the Glasgow police, were the pilots of the Glasgow police. They were all taken care of by the murderers of this man.

In 1921 I met Ogar in a public house in Glasgow. Ogar was more alarmed than pleased to see me. He was arrested throughout all of the below.

But that’s another story."

Slater’s outburst

I used to wonder whether he would have thought his own life over when he knew that he had committed the murder.

Slater said that he was not responsible for the death of Miss Gilchrist. He was the pilot of the Glasgow police. He said: "I have never seen any day of our life."

The murder was a very sad day for Scotland..."}

Judge convinced

I firmly believe that the only reason why I was not called to give evidence was that the witness who gave evidence was called on as a witness. He was called up as a witness.

Witnesses who were not called were never called to give evidence.

The verdict hung on identity.

Five witnesses said that it was the same man who was seen leaving the scene of the crime with the same person who left the place.

In the end, the case was consolidated.

The Glasgow police, after the murder had been submitted, met three questions and never of the case being reopened.

NAS ref. HH16/111/37/54

National Archives of Scotland: www.nas.gov.uk/about/081214.asp
Man who did it

J— was the man who struck Miss Gilchrist down.

A little man whom I never met, comes into the story. He was the brain behind our robberies. He used to supply us, through W—, with information about the contents of houses, gleaned from charwomen and daily help.

Before the Gilchrist murder a charwoman, "Miss Brain," at 5 West Princes street, was given a woman who lived alone, with a large sum of money and a large quantity of jewellery in the house. We brought up that news, as the charwoman gave us as good a chance as if we had met a fellow agent. We worked quietly and Miss Gilchrist went on as usual, with no sign of suspicion. I have since sought reason to believe, was poorly off.

"The Brain." I think we had got the addresses of Miss Gilchrist and Miss Crooks mixed up.

Watched for weeks

For weeks we kept watch on the house of Miss Crooks. Never once were we lucky enough to catch her leaving the house undetected.

Each of us took turns of visiting, on the pretence of another, but on each occasion Miss Crooks answered the door.

I posed as a window cleaner; J— and G— as insurance agents.

During those weeks of watching the name of Miss Gilchrist was never mentioned. I did not understand her existence until she ceased to exist.

A few months before the murder G— and I were arrested on a charge of theft, removing stolen goods. He got six months, I got twelve. After our arrest, "The Brain" seemed eager to have discovered his error or for some reason suggested switching to Miss Gilchrist's house.

The murder was committed while I was in prison.

The first I heard of it was when a Glasgow detective named Gordon came to see me in Barlinnie prison.

On right track

Gordon, had he not known it, was on the right track. He had information, he said, that I, "and others unknown," had been watching and planning a robbery in the vicinity of the crime. Who were the others? he demanded.

I told him only what the police had told me, and said that I had no information about the affair.

Some months after my release, the first instalment of rate's "bill of costs" for my silence was presented.

Gordon pounced on me for housebreaking, and brought several other charges against me. I was sent to a High Court, and received a five years' sentence.

I was 21 years old. A sentence of that type on a man of my age

I firmly believe that the only person who was thoroughly convinced of Scotland's guilt was the judge who sentenced him. And he was misled by the police, who called only a few hand-picked witnesses.

Wittiness who really did matter were never called to give evidence. The verdict hinged on identity. Fire witnesses and the mail they saw fleeing from the scene of the crime were disbelieving. Latter had a mouth, in spite of that. Whose was convictions and sentenced. The Glasgow police, to whom the facts related here have been submitted, say there is no question whatever of the case being solicited.

NAS ref. HH16/111/37/54
OSCAR SLATER’S DEATH RECALLS FAMOUS MURDER TRIAL

Glasgow Herald

2 FEB 1948

OSCAR SLATER’S DEATH RECALLS FAMOUS MURDER TRIAL

Oscar Slater, who served 18 years in prison for a murder of which he was wrongly convicted, died on Saturday at 25 St Philans Avenue, Ayr, at the age of 76.

In 1969 he was convicted of the murder of Miss Marion Glischat at her home in West Princes Street, Glasgow. He was serving a sentence of 15 years for burglary when he was released in 1971, and he later moved to Ayr with his wife, Miss Glischat’s sister, and her daughter. After his release, he was found that there had been a misunderstanding between the families.

Since his release from prison he had lived quietly and was respected by his neighbours for his work as aGlischat. His death was sudden and unexpected.

BORN TO MISFORTUNE

Oscar Slater was one of the most famous in the history of the Scottish legal system. He was innocent of the crime for which he was convicted, and it is a sad reflection on the justice system that he was denied his freedom for so long.

Slater was born in Ayr in 1872. His parents were Miss Glischat’s sister and her husband. Slater was brought up in the family home, where he was known as “Jobby” to his friends. He had a reputation for being a good worker, and he was known to be honest.

When Slater was 15, he was arrested for stealing a horse. He was found guilty and sentenced to hard labour. He served 10 years in prison, during which time he was often beaten and mistreated.

When he was released, he went to work as a labourer in a shipyard in Glasgow. He eventually found work as a shop assistant in a chemist’s shop, where he met Miss Glischat’s sister.

The couple were engaged to be married, but the engagement was called off when Slater was arrested for the murder of Miss Glischat.

The trial

The trial of Oscar Slater was one of the most famous trials in Scottish legal history. It was a trial that was watched by the whole of Scotland, and it remains one of the most talked about trials in Scottish history.

Slater was accused of the murder of Miss Glischat, and the trial lasted for two months. The defence was led by Oscar Slater’s lawyer, Mr. John Mair, and the prosecution was led by Mr. James Hunter, the Lord Advocate.

The trial was held in the High Court of Justiciary, and the trial judge was Lord Justice Clerk. The jury was made up of 12 men, and they were instructed to decide whether Oscar Slater was guilty of the murder of Miss Glischat.

The jury took 14 hours to decide that Oscar Slater was not guilty of the murder of Miss Glischat. The decision was hailed as a victory for justice, and it was seen as a sign that the Scottish legal system was working.

Inquiry Sought

Following the acquittal of Oscar Slater, there were calls for an inquiry into the murder of Miss Glischat. The inquiry was held in Glasgow, and it was led by Mr. Francis T. Mair, the Lord Advocate.

The inquiry heard evidence from many witnesses, and it was clear that there was no evidence to link Oscar Slater to the murder of Miss Glischat.

The inquiry recommended that there should be a further investigation into the murder of Miss Glischat, and it was seen as a sign that the Scottish legal system was working.
Used Alias

A minor but important piece of evidence which with the manner in which Slater had left for New York. The fact that he had registered on the Lustrean as Otto Sando was adduced by the prosecution as a proof of guilt and interpreted by the Lord Advocate and the Judge as a flight from justice. But Mlle. Anitole said she was afraid that Mr. Slater off their track. One more part of the case must be noticed. Slater’s servant maid admitted that Mlle. Anitole entertained men at her house both in London and in Glasgow with Slater’s knowledge. Again, the Lord Advocate and the Judge made much of this evidence, and the most important results.

The case thus rested on four main points—identification of Slater, the hammer and the waterproof, the flight from justice and Slater’s way of life. Mr. McClure did not lead Slater into the witness box, though he always wished to give evidence on his own behalf.

The Lord Advocate’s speech to the Jury was: a repetition; statement of facts and interests, and it was one of the best of the kind ever heard in that Court. The tone of the speech was very well expressed in the opening—

Up to yesterday afternoon I should have thought that there was one serious difficulty which confronted you—the difficulty of conceiving that there was in existence a human being capable of doing such a dastardly deed. Gentlemen, that difficulty, I think, was removed yesterday afternoon when we heard from the lips of one who seemingly knew the prisoner better than anyone else, who had known him longer and known him better than any witness examined, that he had followed a life which descends to the very lowest depths of human degradation, for by the universal judgment of mankind the man who lives upon the proceeds of prostitution has sunk to the lowest depths and all moral sense in him has been destroyed and has ceased to exist. That difficulty removed, I say without hesitation that the man in the dock is capable of having committed this dastardly outrage, and the question for you to consider is whether or not the evidence has brought it home to him.

Fortunately for Slater, the appeal Judges 20 years later had a more accurate or more scrupulous knowledge of psychology.

Skilful Attack

Mr. McClure was less impressive than the Lord Advocate, but he examined the various parts of the Crown’s case with considerable skill and made some excellent points. (a) That Slater had first been suspected on a false clue; (b) that if he were the waiter outside the house, and

NAS ref. HH16/111/37/57