

Former police officer that led investigation into child murders during 1980s dies aged 86

Former Lothian and Borders Police Deputy Chief Constable Hector Clark, the man who led the investigation into the child murders of the 1980s has died aged 86.

Mr Clark was appointed as senior investigating officer to oversee the joint murder inquiry investigating the deaths of 11-year-old Susan Maxwell who was abducted from near to the Scotland England border near Coldstream on Friday 30th July 1982 and five-year-old Caroline Hogg who was taken from Portobello in Edinburgh on Friday 8th July 1983.



Based at Fettes Police Station, he led a large squad of detectives from Lothian and Borders, Northumbria, Staffordshire and Leicestershire police forces then three years later another case was added to the investigation.

On March 26, 1986, 10-year-old Sarah Harper went missing from Morley in Leeds after leaving her home to go to the corner shop to buy a loaf of bread and her body was subsequently recovered from the River Trent.

A Child Murder Bureau situated at Bradford in West Yorkshire with officers from throughout the UK back record converted all the information gathered onto the HOLMES computer system and every piece of evidence was re-evaluated.

The investigation would accumulate 189,000 witness statements, an unparalleled number in British criminal history and the case was one of the first to appear on the BBC's Crimewatch programme.

The killer, Robert Black was finally arrested in Stow in 1990 and four-years later he stood trial at Moot Hall in Newcastle for the murders of the three girls and the kidnapping of 15-year-old Teresa Thornhill in April 1988 from Nottingham. He was convicted and jailed for life with a minimum of 35 years.

After the verdict Mr Clark said: "The tragedy is these three beautiful children who should never have died. Black is the most evil of characters and I hope there is not now or ever another one like him."

Black was later convicted of the murder of Jennifer Cardy in Northern Ireland in 1981. He died of a heart attack on 12 January 2016 (aged 68) at HMP Maghaberry, Northern Ireland.

Mr Clark retired from Lothian and Borders Police having reached the rank of Deputy Chief Constable.

Chief Constable Iain Livingstone said: "Hector Clark was extremely well respected across policing in Scotland and our thoughts and condolences are with his family at this sad time."

Former colleagues have taken to social media to express their condolences to his friends and family.