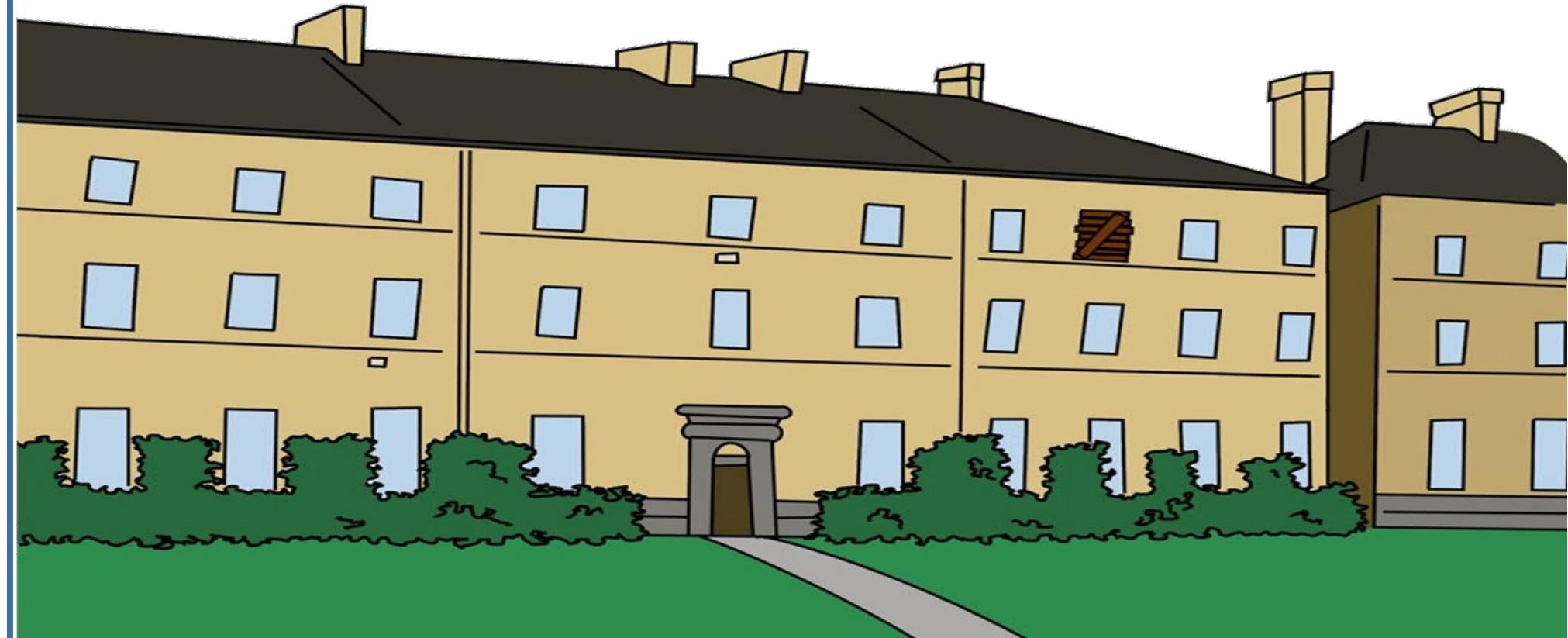


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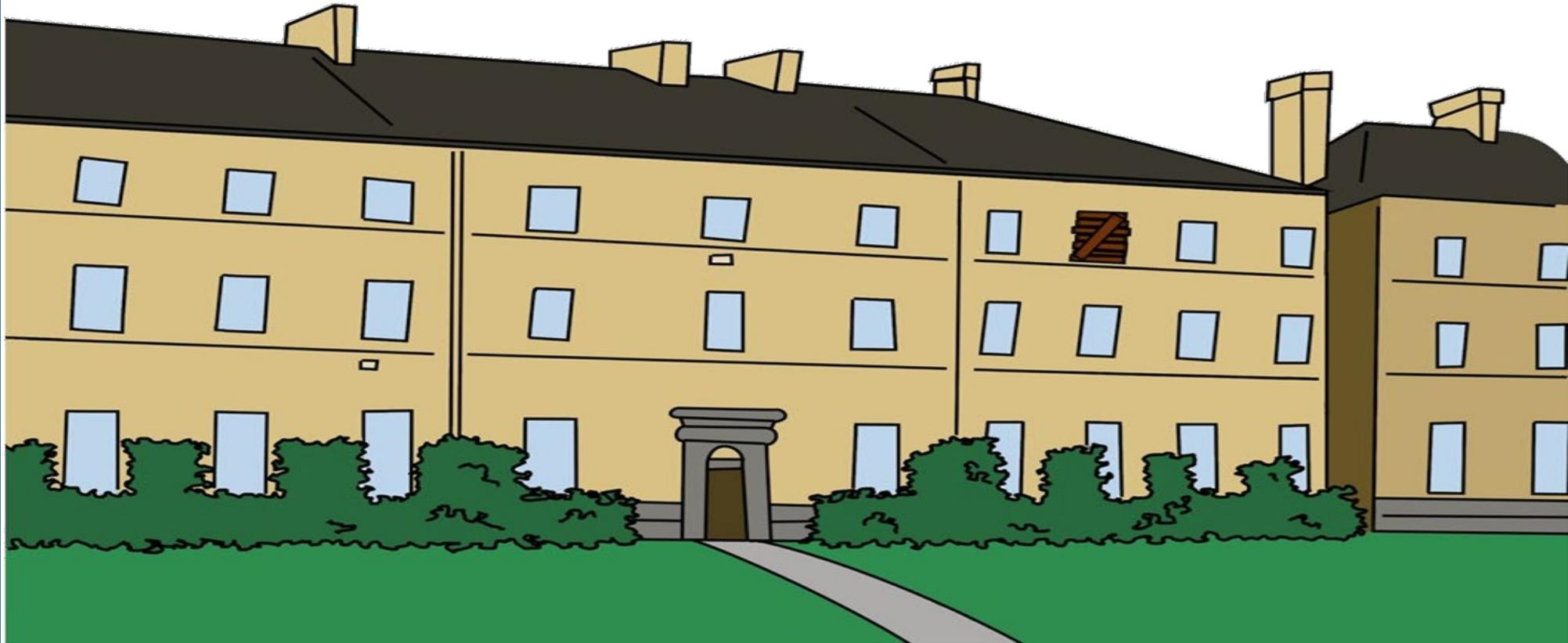
Presents

"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



Baker Street Elementary

*The Life and Times in Victorian London
012 - Clubbing, Victorian Style - January, 2022*

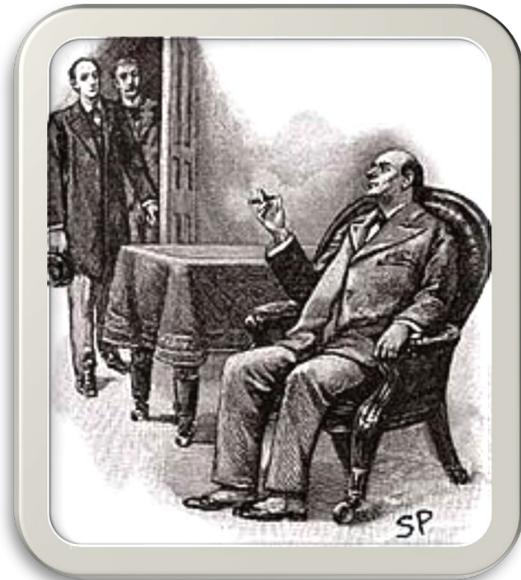




Welcome to topic # 012... today we will be looking at social gentlemen's clubs, which are the rage during Victorian times.



In "The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter," you introduce readers to the Diogenes Club, "the queerest club in London."



While gentlemen's clubs were first established in the 1700s, they reached their hey-day in the 1800s when more than four hundred such establishments existed...



...as gentlemen sought out the company of like-minded men to relieve the stress and routine of daily life in surroundings they would not have been able to afford on their own.





The first members-only private clubs (notably, White's, Brooks' and Boodle's) offered aristocrats a place for legal gaming...





...but gained in popularity as more and more men were allowed the vote under the Reform Acts and could then call themselves "gentlemen."



With the first clubs having a wait list of sometimes twenty years or more, those unable to join the established organizations often created their own based on similar interests.



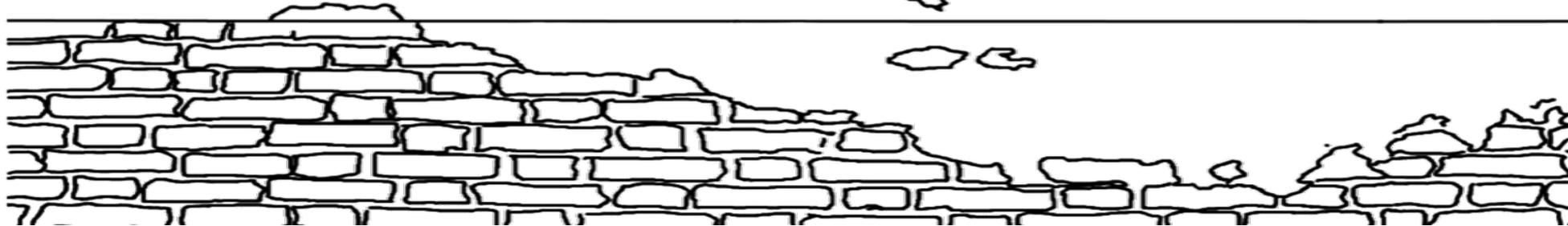
Some of the most well-known included the Athenaeum, "for men of science, literature, and art;" one for supporters of the Reform Act and another for its detractors (Carlton)...



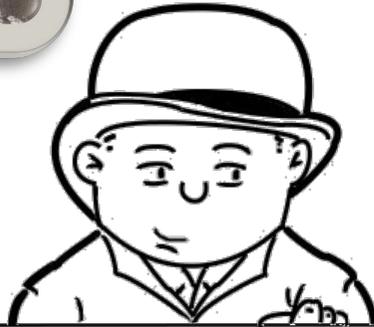
...clubs for travelers (Travellers Club), the military (United Service Club), and performers (Eccentric and Savage).



Most of these were found in "clubland," an area around St. James and Pall Mall streets, which began as a suburban promenade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



These organizations provided members with an opulent, but home-like, atmosphere, having often been designed by the same architects who built large country estates.



In addition to the "comfortable chairs and the latest periodicals," offered by the Diogenes Club, other clubs offered amenities...



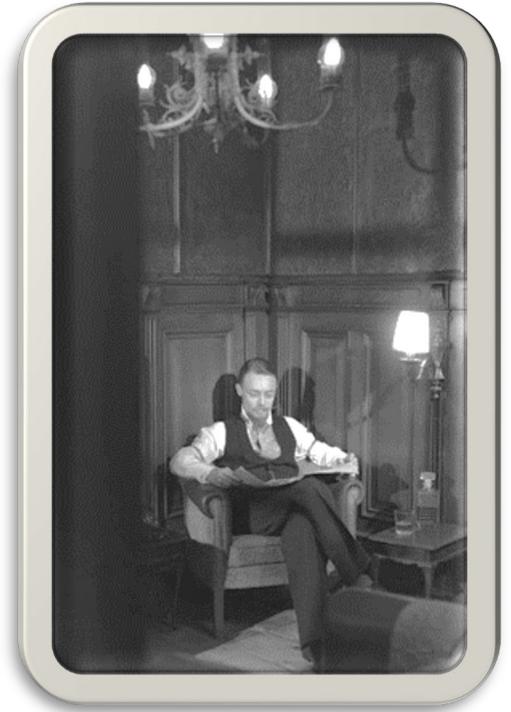
*...such as dining halls,
libraries, game rooms,
studies, bathrooms and
washrooms.*



*Some even provided
rooms for overnight
guests.*



*The domestic ambience
recreated in the clubs offered
the privacy and comradery not
available elsewhere.*



The upper class Victorian home was on display as social conventions required them to entertain guests at formal dinners, teas, and parties, which often then appeared in newspaper reports.



For members, these clubs became sources of "men-talk" and other behavior, gambling and excessive drinking, among others, not considered appropriate in mixed society.



THE TRUE GENTLEMAN

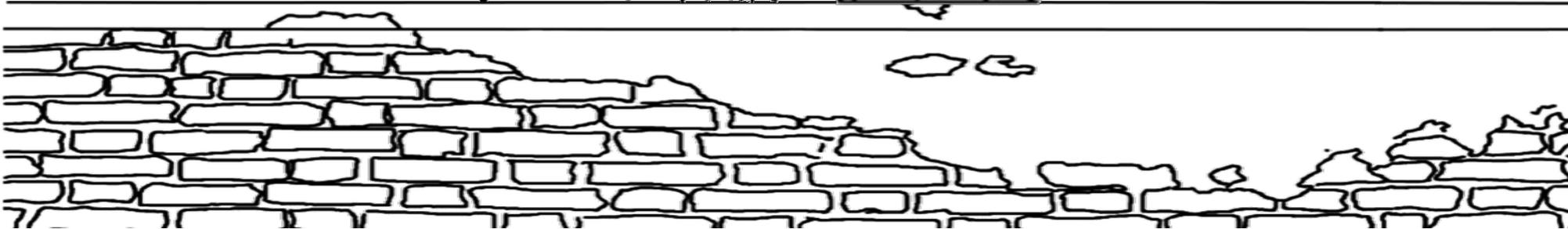
The True Gentleman is the man whose conduct proceeds from good will and an acute sense of propriety, and whose self-control is equal to all emergencies; who does not make the poor man conscious of his poverty, the obscure man of his obscurity, or any man of his inferiority or deformity; who is himself humbled if necessity compels him to humble another; who does not flatter wealth, cringe before power, or boast of his own possessions or achievements; who speaks with frankness but always with sincerity and sympathy; whose deed follows his word; who thinks of the rights and feelings of others, rather than his own; and who appears well in any company, a man with whom honor is sacred and virtue safe.

- *John Walter Wayland*
(VA-OM 1899)

***Discretion governed the clubs,
with rules about gossip and
reporting of behavior or events
occurring within their walls.***



*Until the 1950s, non-members
were restricted from entering
the club except for one or
two rooms...*



...such as the "Stranger's Room" in the Diogenes Club, to ensure members from prying eyes.



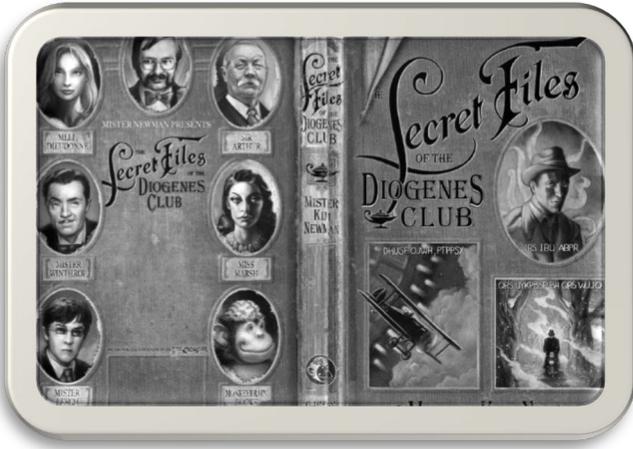
The Diogenes Club reflects the common characteristics of Victorian clubs taken to the extreme—a “home away from home” that caters to the tastes and preferences of its members...

THE DIOGENES CLUB
EST. 1893

The following Rules apply to all members:

1. No member is permitted to take the least notice of any other one.
2. Save in the Stranger's Room, no talking is, under any circumstances, allowed.
3. Three offences, if brought to the notice of the committee, render the talker liable to expulsion.





...in this case, the absence of all distractions for the shy or misanthropic who "have no wish for the company of their fellows."





By 1900, there were approximately 200 such clubs in London, revealing their overwhelming popularity.



*Yes, but we'll be
back with another
topic soon...*

*So we have completed
topic # 012 in our
series...*



References for this topic:

- Doyle, Arthur Conan (2012-12-13). The Complete Sherlock Holmes: with an introduction from Robert Ryan. Simon & Schuster UK. Kindle Edition.
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentlemen%27s_club
- <http://www.victorianweb.org/misc/usp.html>



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"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

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JOE FAY

LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE

RUSTY MASON

&

STEVE MASON

