

Baker Street *Elementary*

PRESENTS
"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"



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THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON
109 - POVERTY IN VICTORIAN TIMES - FEBRUARY, 2022





**WELCOME TO TOPIC # 109... TODAY, WE WILL BE
LOOKING AT CONDITIONS IN THE POORER PARTS
OF VICTORIAN ENGLAND...**



IN THE 19TH CENTURY, RAPID CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND SOCIAL WELFARE BROUGHT ABOUT A HUGE CHANGE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES.



THE PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT LED TO MANY WORKERS LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY AND EVEN DYING ON CITY STREETS OF STARVATION IN VICTORIAN TIMES.



**THE POPULATION OF GREAT BRITAIN ACTUALLY
TREBLED DURING THE 19TH CENTURY.**





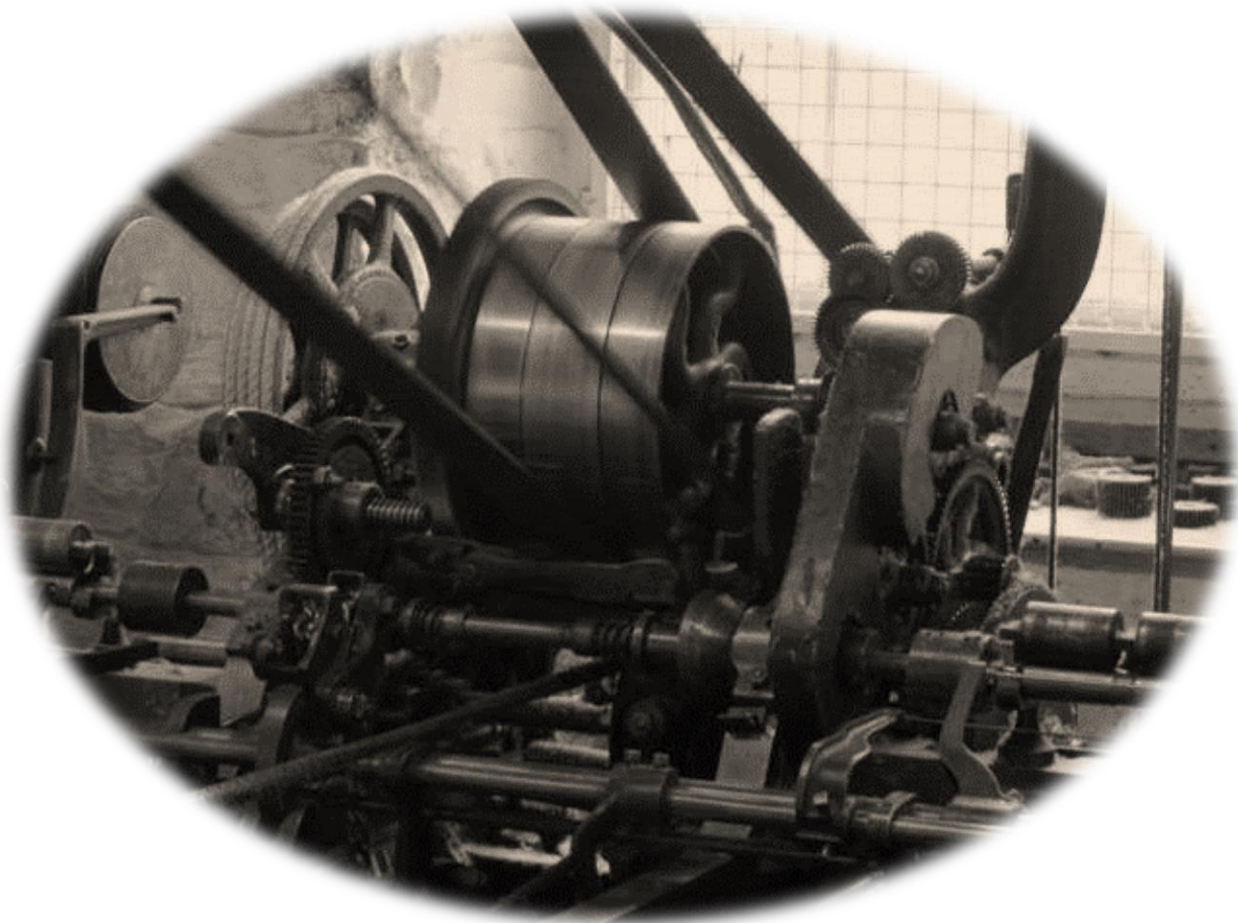
PEOPLE WERE LIVING LONGER, HAVING
LARGER FAMILIES, INFANT MORTALITY WAS
DOWN AND IMMIGRANTS...



...ESCAPING FROM THE POTATO FAMINE IN IRELAND ALL ADDED UP TO A HUGE POPULATION EXPLOSION IN VICTORIAN TIMES.



MOST EMPLOYMENT WAS TO BE FOUND IN THE NEWLY INDUSTRIALIZED CITIES, SO MANY PEOPLE ABANDONED THEIR RURAL ROOTS AND CONVERGED ON THE URBANIZED AREAS TO SEEK WORK.



SKILLED AND UNSKILLED WORKERS ALIKE WERE PAID SUBSISTENCE-LEVEL WAGES.



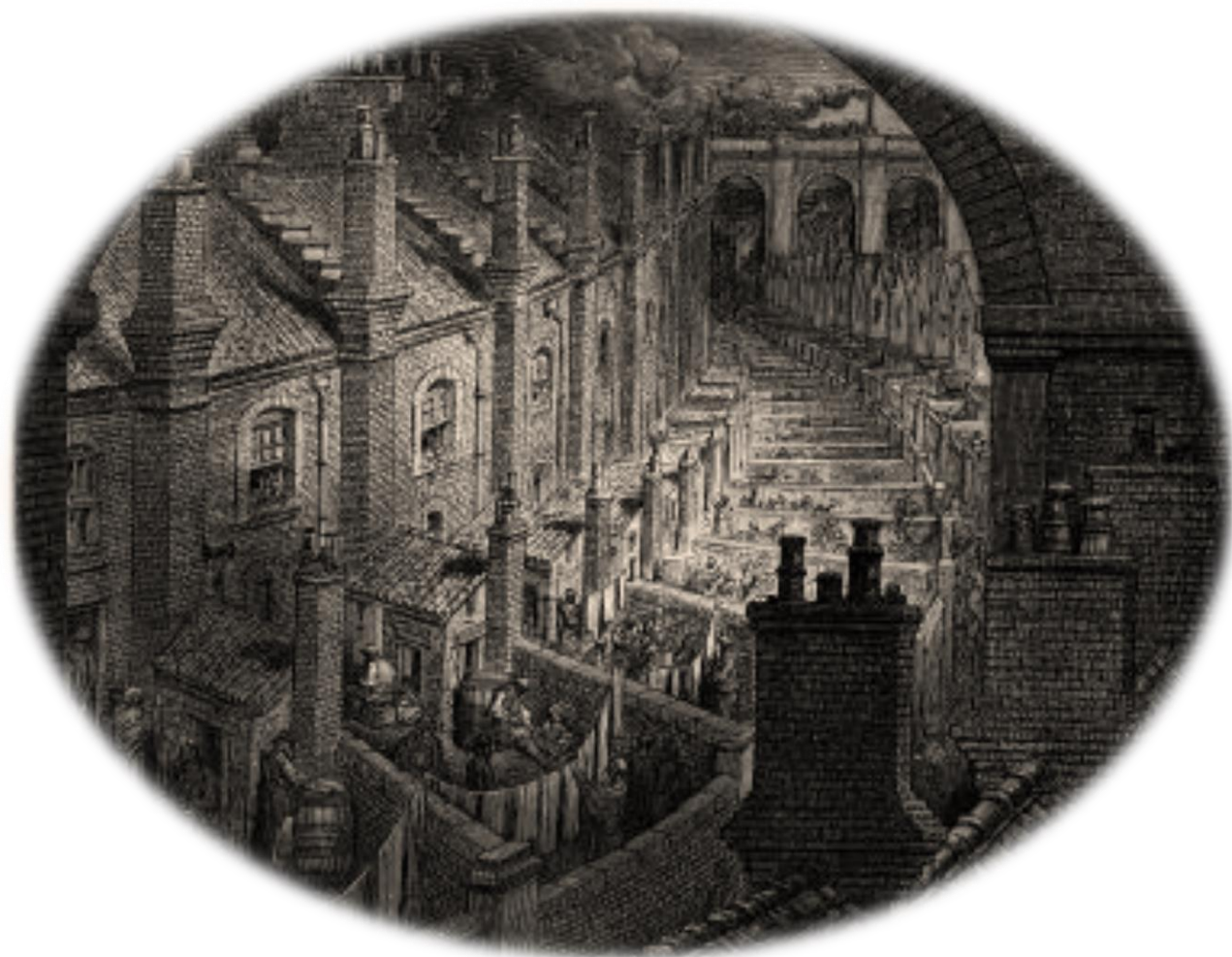
**IF THE WORK WAS SEASONAL OR DEMAND
SLUMPED, WHEN THEY WERE LAID OFF THEY HAD
NO SAVINGS TO LIVE ON UNTIL THE NEXT JOB
OPPORTUNITY COULD BE FOUND.**



*POOR VICTORIANS WOULD PUT CHILDREN TO WORK
AT AN EARLY AGE, OR EVEN TURN THEM OUT ONTO
THE STREETS TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES.*



IN 1848 AN ESTIMATED 30,000 HOMELESS, FILTHY CHILDREN LIVED ON THE STREETS OF LONDON.



**BOYS BECAME CHIMNEY SWEEPS, WORKED THE
NARROW SHAFTS IN COAL MINES OR WERE
EMPLOYED BENEATH NOISY WEAVING LOOMS
RETRIEVING COTTON BOBBINS.**



**OTHERS WOULD SHINE SHOES OR SELL MATCHES
TO EARN A CRUST.**



**PEOPLE WORKING LONG HOURS IN VICTORIAN
TIMES HAD TO LIVE CLOSE TO THEIR
EMPLOYMENT AND AVAILABLE HOUSING BECAME
SCARCE AND HIGHLY-PRICED.**



TENANTS WOULD THEMSELVES LET THEIR ROOMS FOR 2D TO 4D A DAY TO OTHER WORKERS TO MEET THE RENT.



**HIDEOUSLY OVERCROWDED, UNSANITARY SLUMS
DEVELOPED, PARTICULARLY IN LONDON... THEY
WERE KNOWN AS ROOKERIES.**



**STREETS WOULD HAVE A FLOWING FOUL-
WATER DITCH INTO WHICH THE SEWERS AND
DRAINS EMPTIED.**



IN SOME CASES, THIS WAS THE ONLY SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER TOO.



**AS WELL AS DISEASE, THESE MISERABLE
VICTORIAN POOR SUFFERED
STARVATION AND DESTITUTION.**



**IN MANY CASES, THEIR ONLY CHOICE WAS TO
TURN TO CRIME - ANOTHER MAJOR PROBLEM IN
THE CITIES.**



**IT BECAME CLEAR TO MANY THAT SOMETHING
HAD TO BE DONE ABOUT POVERTY IN VICTORIAN
ENGLAND, BUT THERE WERE OPPOSING THOUGHTS
AND OPINIONS.**



THE SHEER SCALE OF THE PROBLEM MUST HAVE SEEMED OVERWHELMING TO EVEN THE MOST WELL-MEANING BENEFACTOR.



SOME VICTORIANS THOUGHT THAT EDUCATION WAS THE ANSWER AND RAGGED SCHOOLS WERE SET UP TO PROVIDE BASIC EDUCATION.



*OTHERS ARGUED THAT CRIME WAS NOT CAUSED BY
ILLITERACY; IT WAS JUST ENCOURAGING A MORE
SKILLFUL SET OF CRIMINALS!*



*OTHERS STILL THOUGHT THAT ANY MONEY GIVEN
TO THE POOR WAS SIMPLY SQUANDERED ON DRINK
AND GAMBLING AND DID NOT SOLVE THE
UNDERLYING SOCIAL PROBLEMS AT ALL.*



OVERALL THE VICTORIAN TIMES PRODUCED ONE
OF THE MOST INTENSE PERIODS OF
PHILANTHROPY AND CHARITY...



*...TO HELP THE PLIGHT OF THE POOR, THE
DESTITUTE AND THE STREET CHILDREN.*



MANY MODERN-DAY CHARITIES, SUCH AS THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY, BEGAN THEIR WORK COMBATTING POVERTY IN THE VICTORIAN ERA...



*...AND CONTINUE TO ADDRESS MORE
MODERN CONCERNS OF POVERTY EVEN IN
THE 21ST CENTURY*



SO, WE HAVE COMPLETED TOPIC # 109 IN OUR SERIES...

IN TOPIC # 110, WE WILL BE LOOKING AT ACCESSORIES TO WEAR DURING THE VICTORIAN PERIOD.



AboutBritain.com

ORIGINAL SOURCE MATERIAL FOR THIS TOPIC:

- [HTTP://WWW.ABOUTBRITAIN.COM/ARTICLES/POVERTY-IN-VICTORIAN-TIMES.ASP](http://www.aboutbritain.com/articles/poverty-in-victorian-times.asp)



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"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

JOE FAY
LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE
RUSTY MASON
&
STEVE MASON

