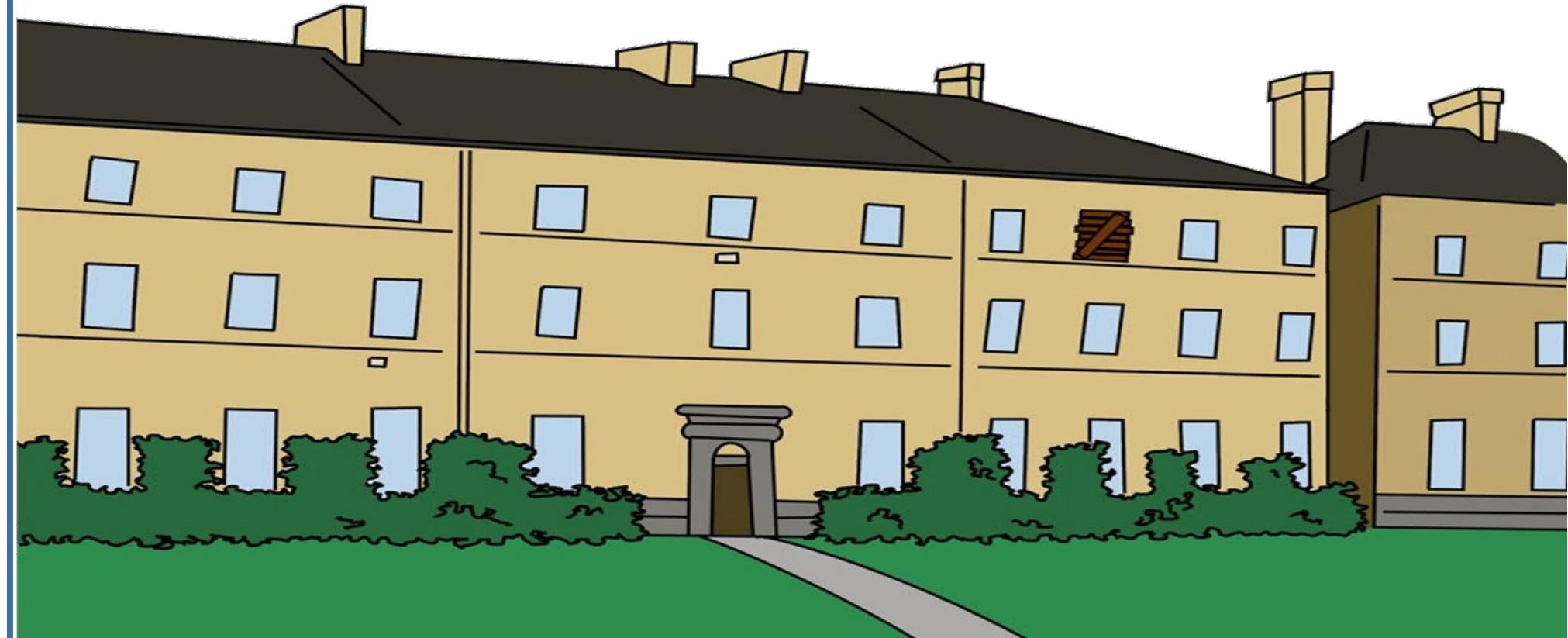


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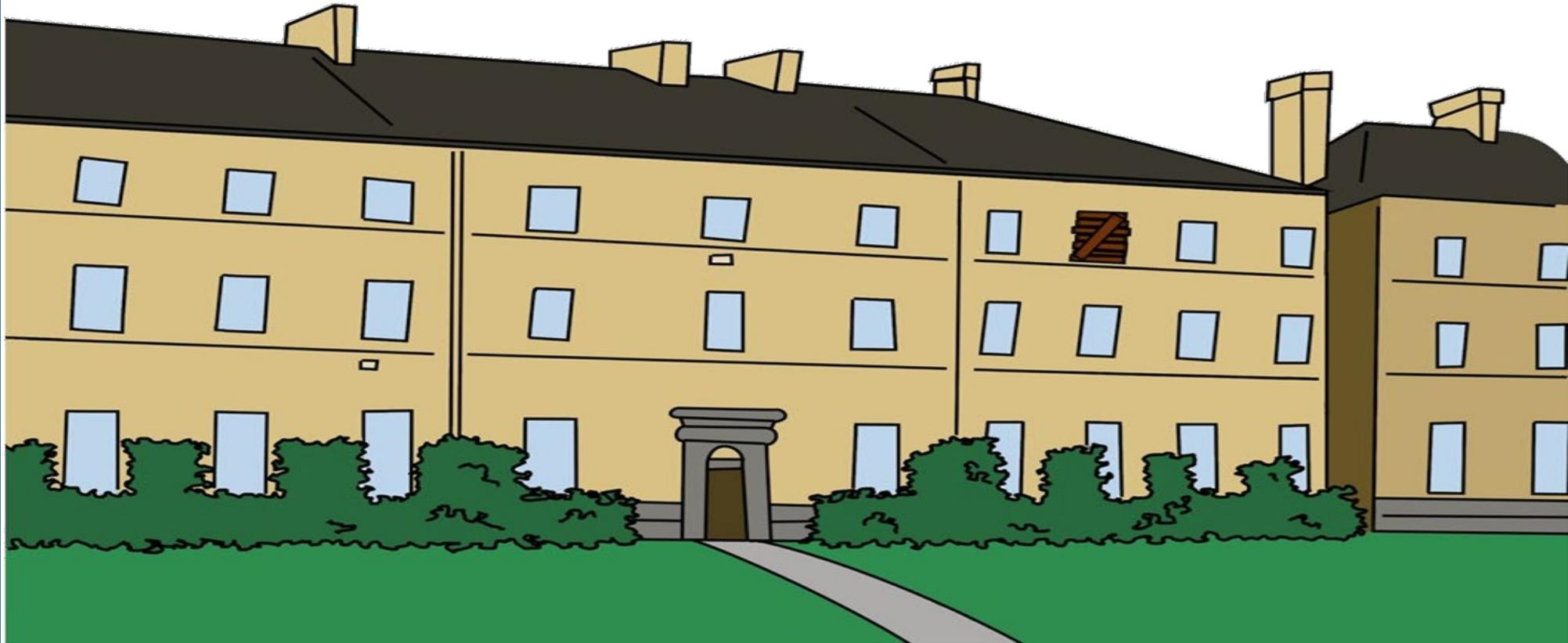
Presents

"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



Baker Street Elementary

*The Life and Times in Victorian London
024 -And They're Off! - January, 2022*

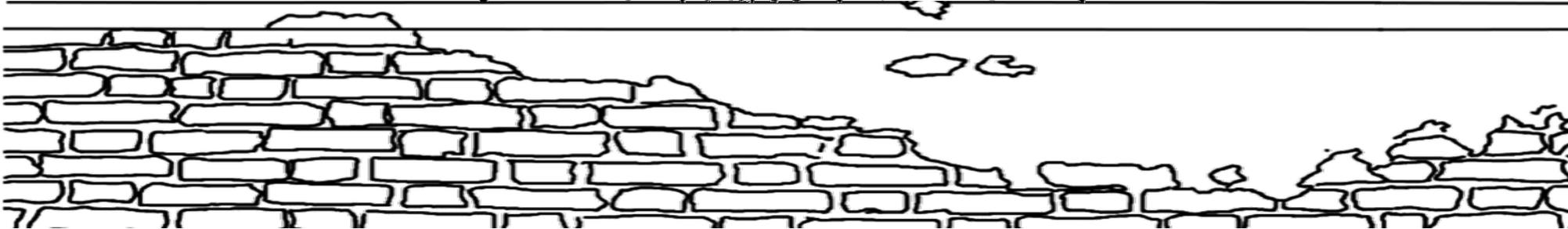




*Welcome to topic # 024... today
Holmes and me will be looking at
the sport of Kings, horse racing in
Great Britain.*



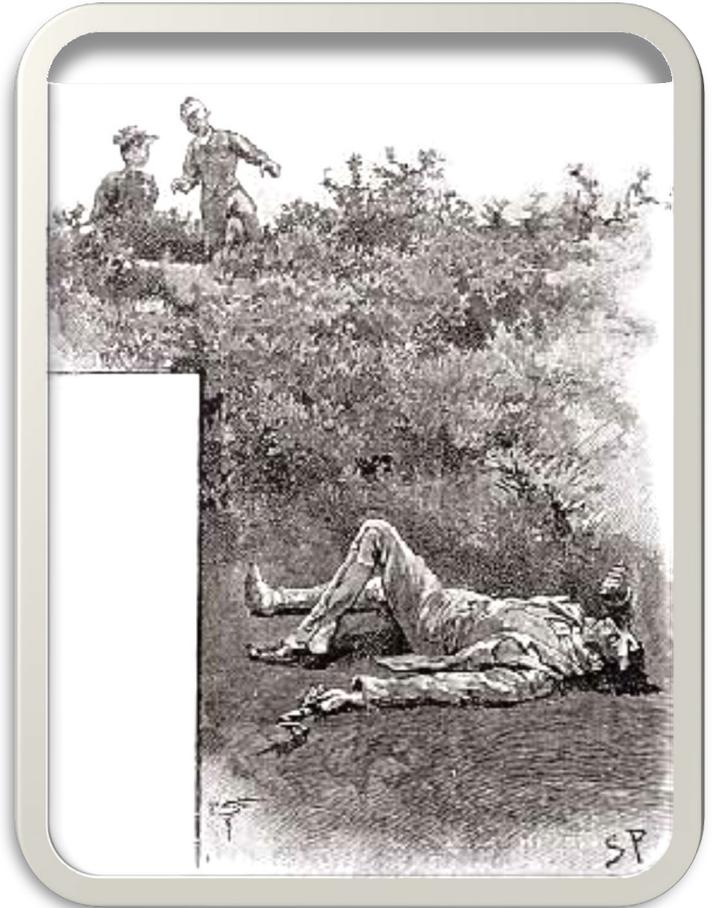
The Sherlockian stories includes two cases involving race horses.



You are called in to investigate the disappearance of Silver Blaze just before the Wessex Cup and Sir Robert Norberton's odd behavior prior to his horse Prince running in the Epsom Derby.



The popularity of the sport in Victorian England, in addition to the criminal element at that time, made it a perfect backdrop for these Sherlockian investigations.





The exact time of the horse's arrival in Britain is not known, but Caesar's first invasion of Britain in 55 BC was rebuffed by a cavalry.

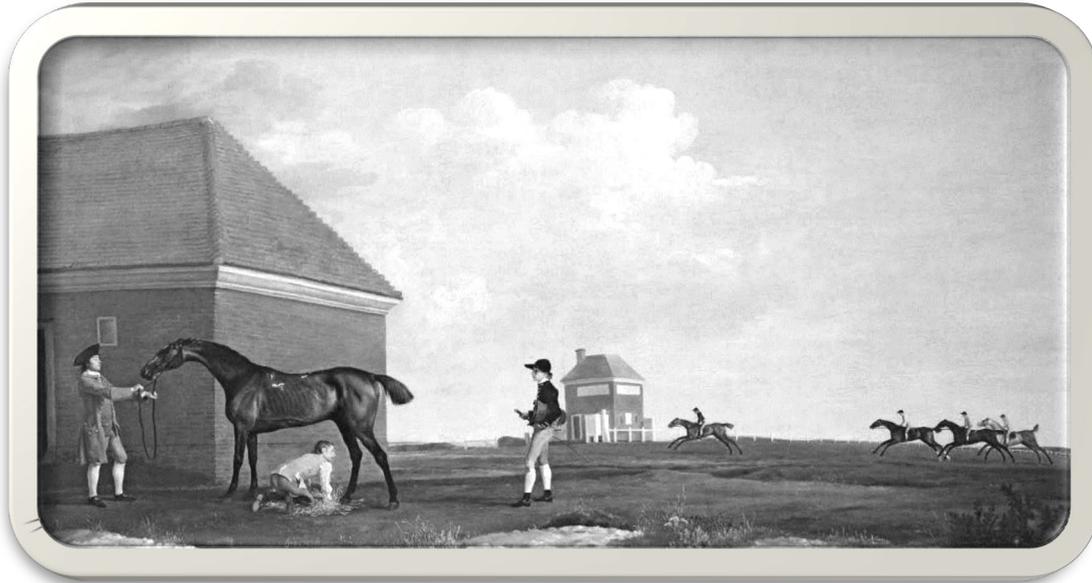




*The animals were smaller
than those today, but
quite numerous.*



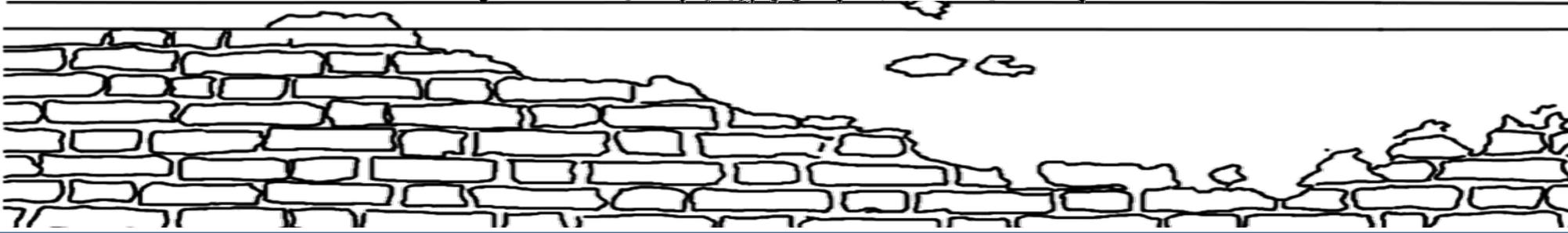
Following their use in warfare and other pursuits, racing the animals came into fashion in the early 1600s when King James 1 built the first grandstand on the Newmarket Heath.



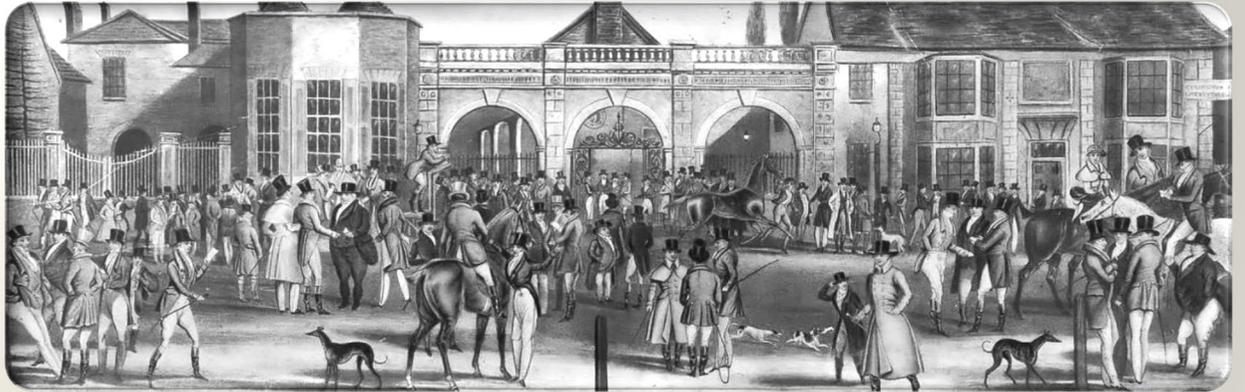
Charles II, however, brought horseracing into its own when he built a palace and moved his court there twice a year beginning in 1669.



Ever since, Newmarket has been considered the headquarters of British horseracing.



In addition to the racetracks at Newmarket, the Jockey Club built a coffee house at the site for member meetings in 1752.



This club, created by gentlemen passionate about horses and racing, became the official governing body for horseracing in 1860s in an effort to impose more control over betting and horse management.





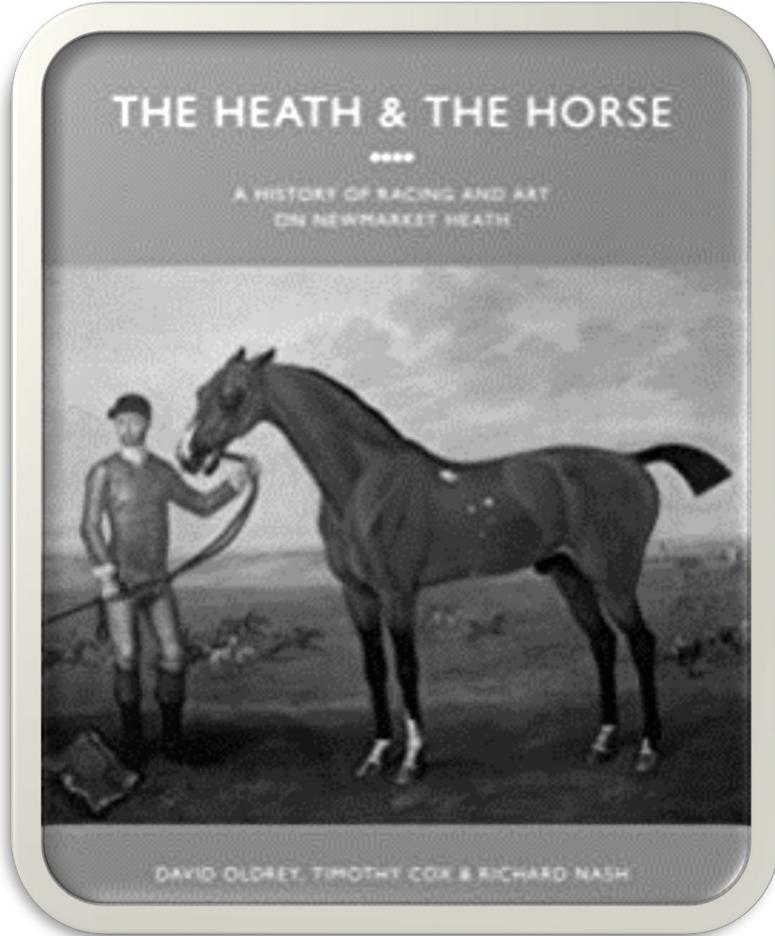
In the early 1800s, horse owners who were commoners were permitted to enter their animals in the races.



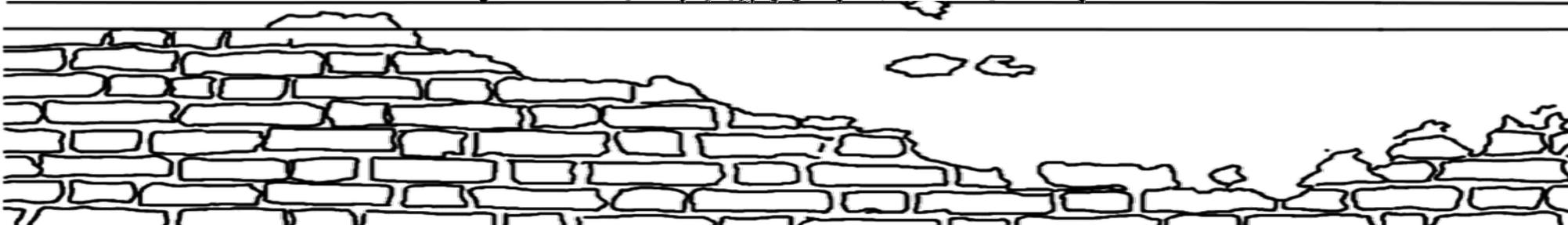
*As a result, the events
attracted larger crowds,
including the working class.*



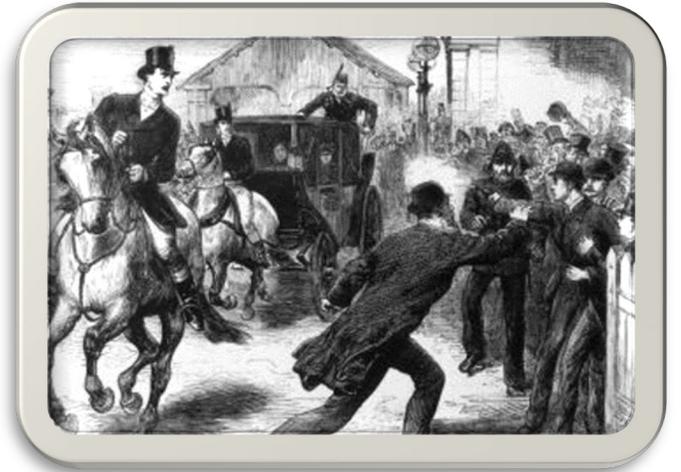
Betting had always been a part of the sport, but it grew more pronounced in the 1830s and 1840s with a number of scandals coming to light.



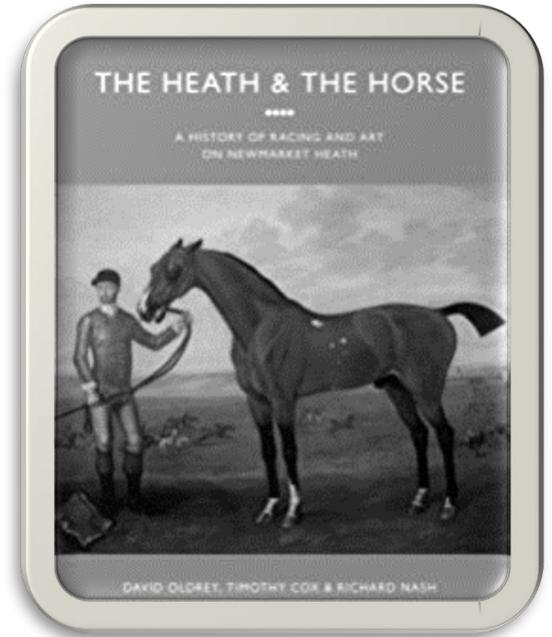
In addition to unscrupulous bookmakers, ineligible horses (above or below the age limit for the race) were discovered among the entrants.



While betting on horses had always been a part of the sport, off-course betting developed in response to the working class interest...



...and by the end of the 1840s, was an important feature of the activity.



For the most part, these sites evolved from tobacconist shops where men already congregated and placed friendly wagers through the proprietor.





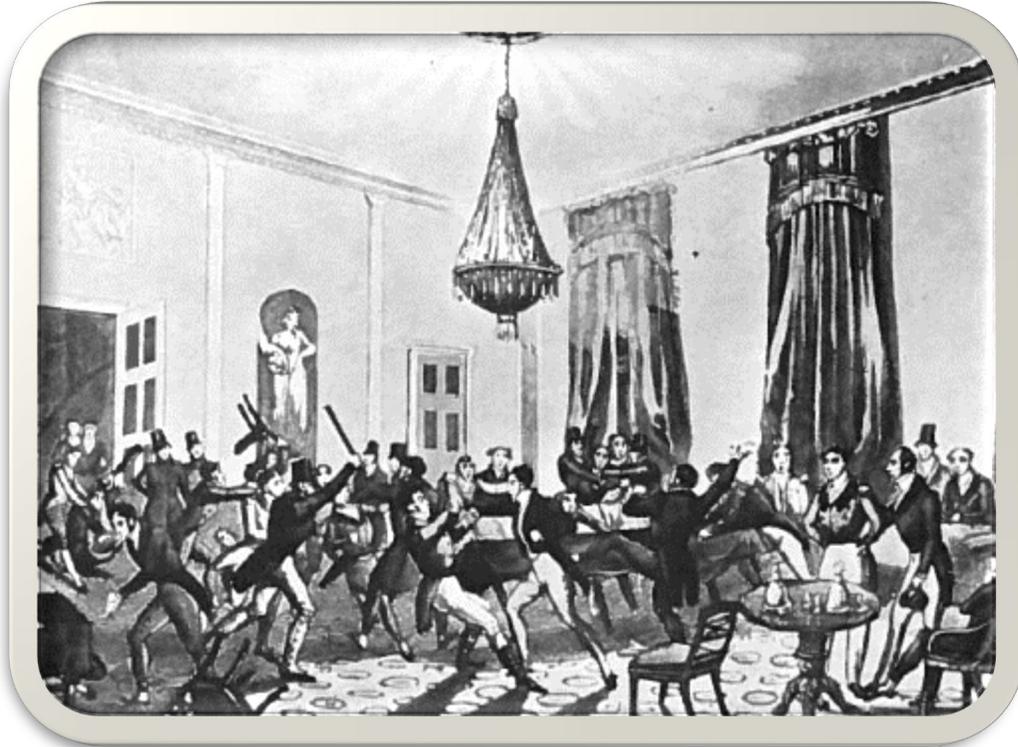
*Partitions with pigeon holes
for placing bets replaced
the counter.*



Lists of the various races and participants' odds were listed on the walls, and results were quickly reported as fast as runners could arrive from the telegraph office.



One of the most well-known and popular establishments was Dwyer's in St. Martin's Lane.



In 1851, following heavy betting on the favorite in the Chester Cup, those with winning tickets arrived...



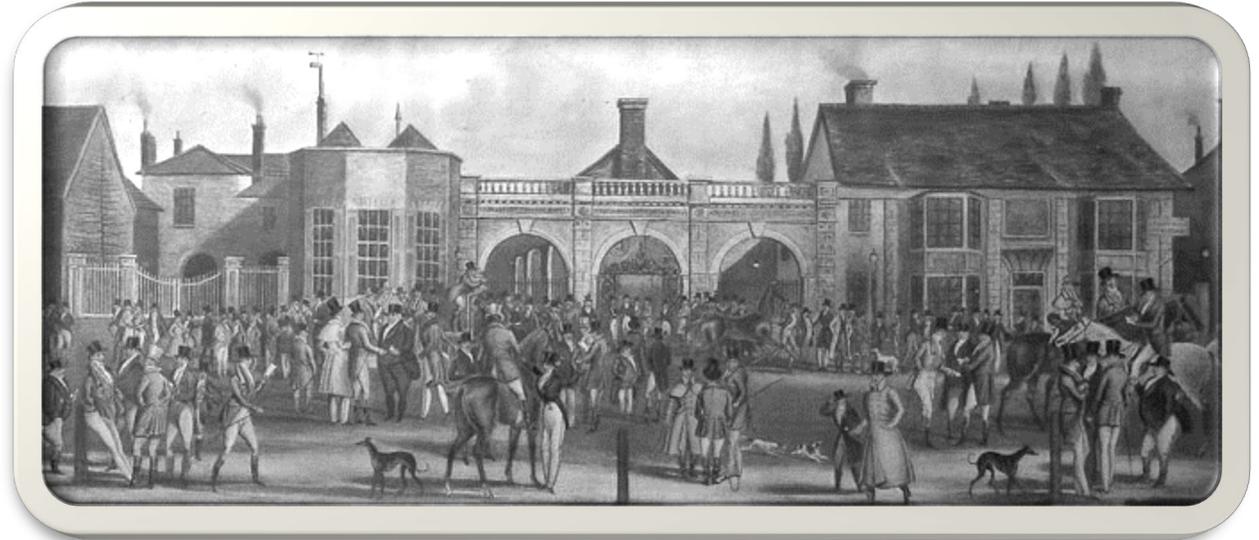
*...to find the place emptied and
the owner gone, leaving behind
a debt of twenty-five
thousand pounds.*



With The Jockey Club's management, the sport's respectability rose, and with additional security efforts, such as enclosing the tracks and providing stands, certain races gained popularity as social events.

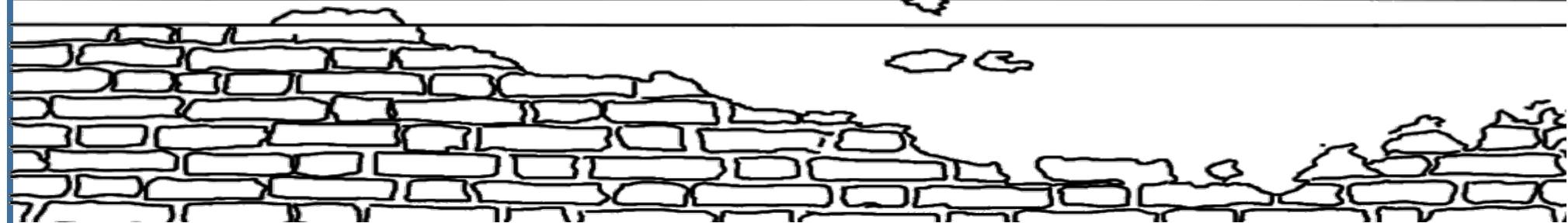


*In addition to the race course,
other amusements, from food
vendors to sideshow attractions,
were set up around the area.*

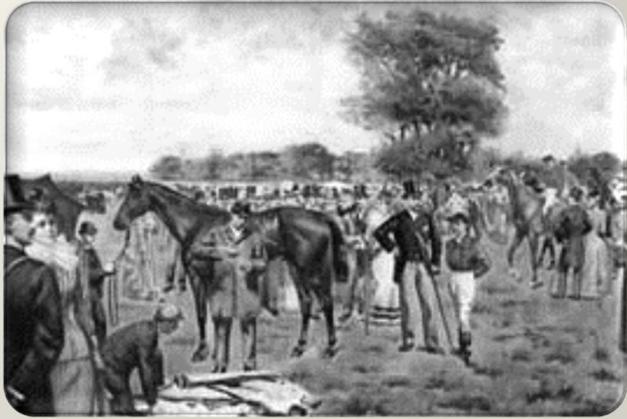




The Ascot, run in June, became part of the social season where women and men attended, and still do, in their most elegant clothes.



Derby Day, also occurring in May or June, became a national holiday.



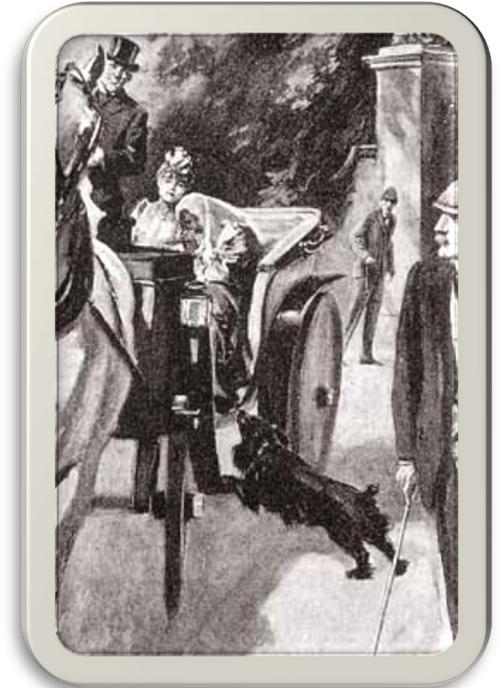
As these two Sherlockian cases show, however, despite the Jockey Club's efforts to maintain the respectability of horse racing...



...its continued popularity and history of betting on the outcome, fostered the persistence of a criminal element in the sport.



*Gratefully, you and I ferreted out
at least two of the most grievous
offenses.*



*So we have completed
topic 24 in our series...*

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



References for this topic:

- 1) Doyle, Arthur Conan. The Complete Sherlock Holmes: with an introduction from Robert Ryan (Kindle Location 15130). Simon & Schuster UK. Kindle Edition.
- 2) <http://chestofbooks.com/animals/horses/Health-Disease-Treatment-4/The-Horse-In-Britain.html>
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- 4) Chesney, Kellow. The Victorian Underworld (New York: Schocken Books, 1972) 282.
- 5) Hughes, Kristine. Everyday Life in Regency and Victorian England (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1998) 142.
- 6) Mitchell, Sally. Daily Life in Victorian England (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996) 221.



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JOE FAY

LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE

RUSTY MASON

&

STEVE MASON

