

Baker Street Elementary

Presents
"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



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The Life and Times in Victorian London
036 - Foggy Smoggy Old London -- 04/08/2017



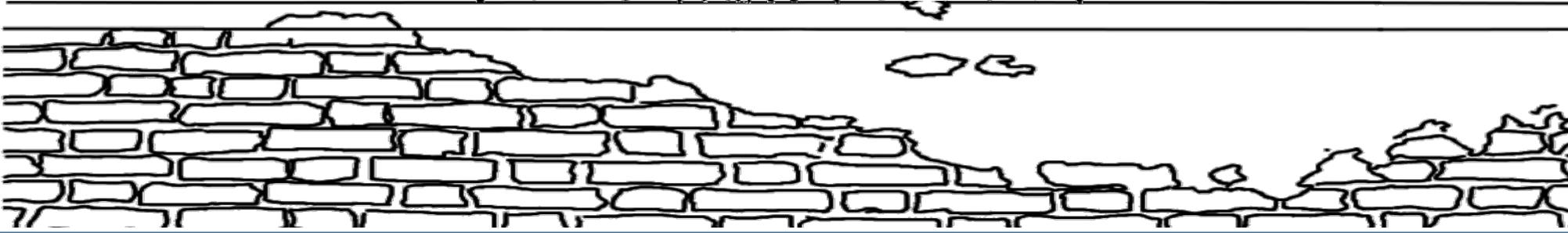


*Welcome to topic number 36... today
we will be looking at the pollution
issues in our dear ol' London...*

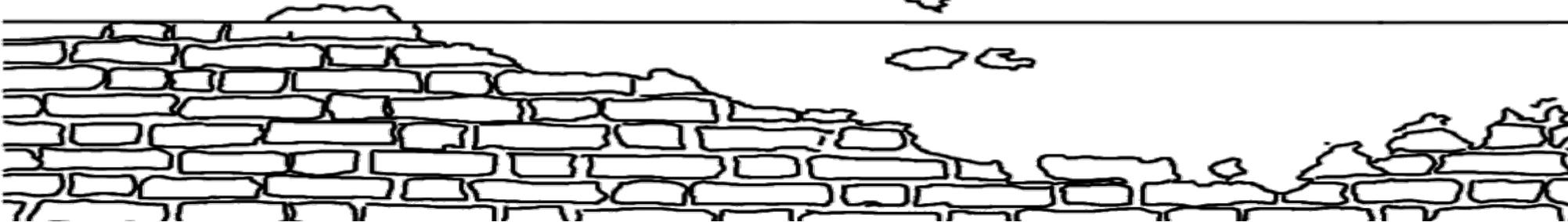
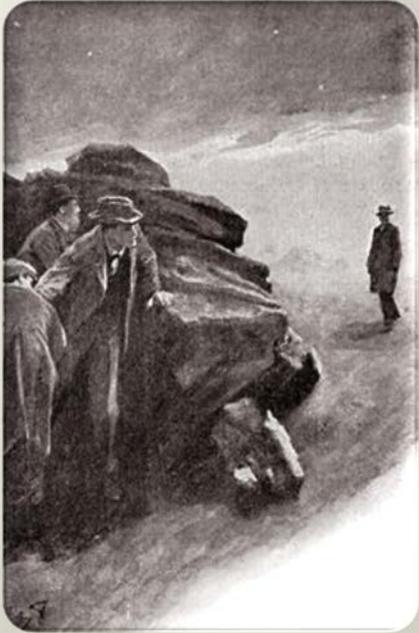


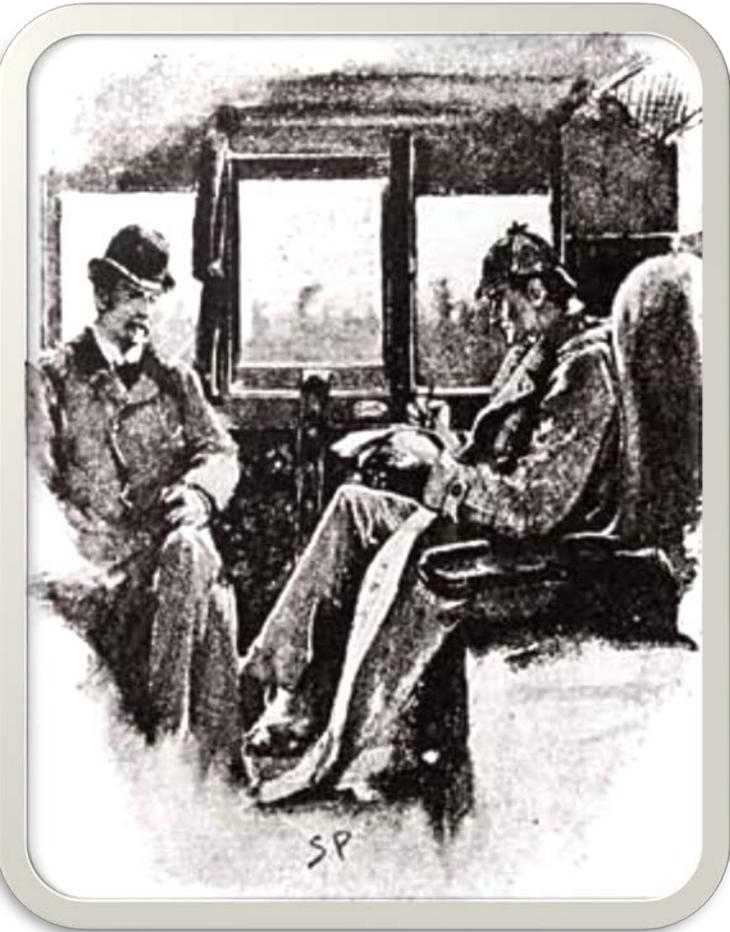


The Canon will contain 54 references to fog: a third of them in "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans"...



...and almost another third in a reference to the fog covering Grimpen Mire in The Hound of the Baskervilles.

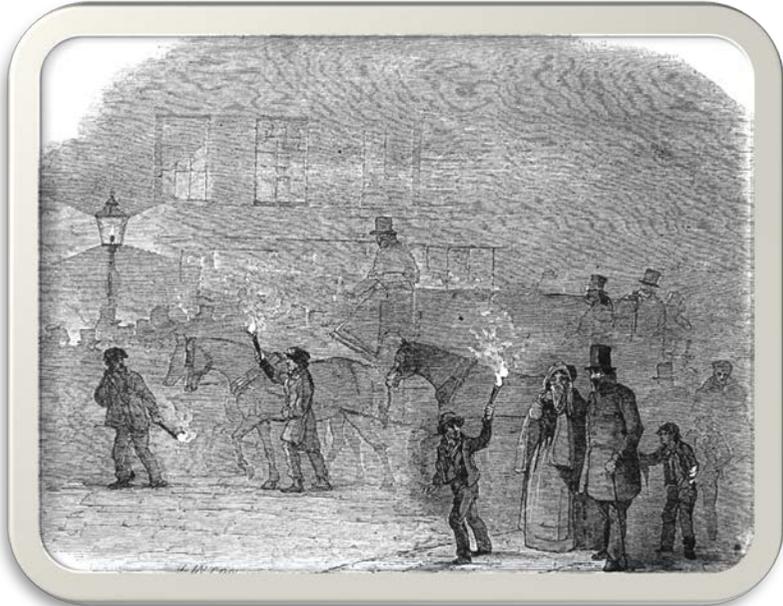




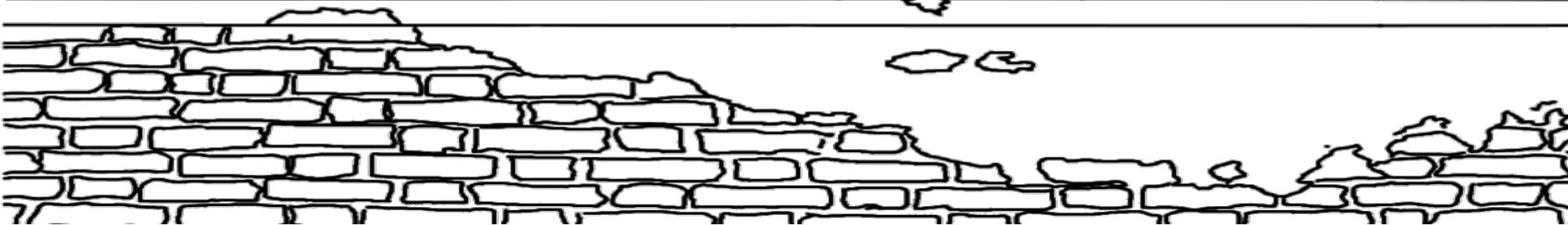
*The other references
are distributed among
ten stories.*



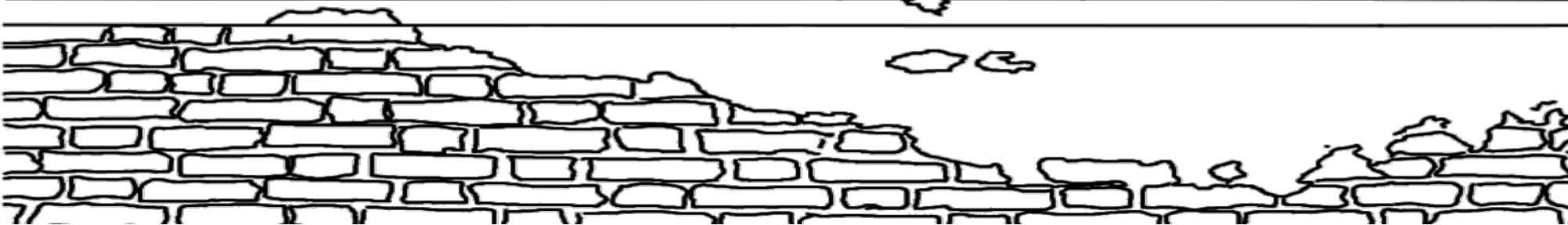
While Dickens romanticized it, and Doyle uses it to cloak the city in greater mystery, in reality, London's fog is a deadly brew of smoke and chemical pollution.



Smoke pollution began in medieval England when coal was burned for domestic use—primarily for cooking and heating.



*Beginning in the late 1700s when
England experienced its Industrial
Revolution, the rise of steam engines...*



...powered by burning coal multiplied the particulate matter in the air, and factories spewed other chemicals and pollutants into the mix.



The result is a thick smog (H. A. des Voeux will coin that phrase in 1905 to describe fusion of smoke and fog in London) that will kill 2400 alone during the winter of 1879-1880.



While the health effects of London's air pollution are well-known and recognized, both national and local governments struggle to control it.



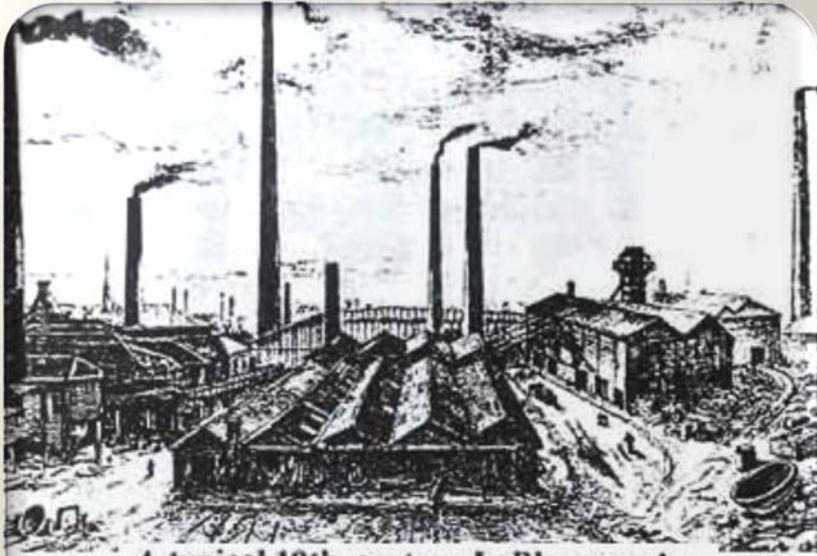
In the 1840s, some industrial cities passed legislation to limit smoke production, and London passed similar laws in 1853 and will again in 1891.



*These restrictions,
however, have little
effect on pollution.*



In 1906, Parliament will pass the Alkali, etc. Works Regulation Act to consolidate earlier efforts to reduce industrial pollution related to the production of soda ash.



A typical 19th. century LeBlanc works
(St. Bollen, Glasgow, ca. 1890)



Domestic smoke, responsible for about 95% of the fumes, will not be covered by the ordinances, as are other major industries.

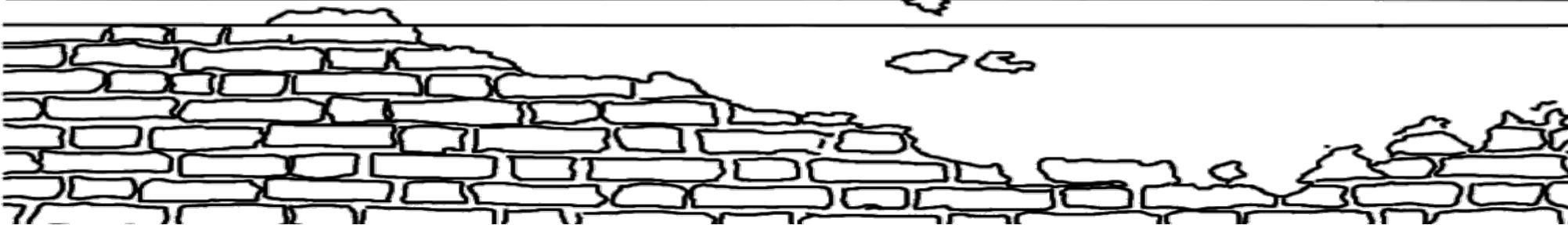
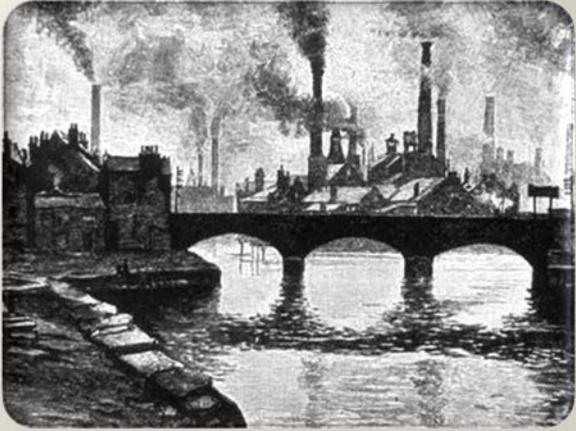




In addition, the definition of "smoke" is not clear, making prosecution difficult.



Despite such efforts, air pollution will continue unabated and in December, 1952...

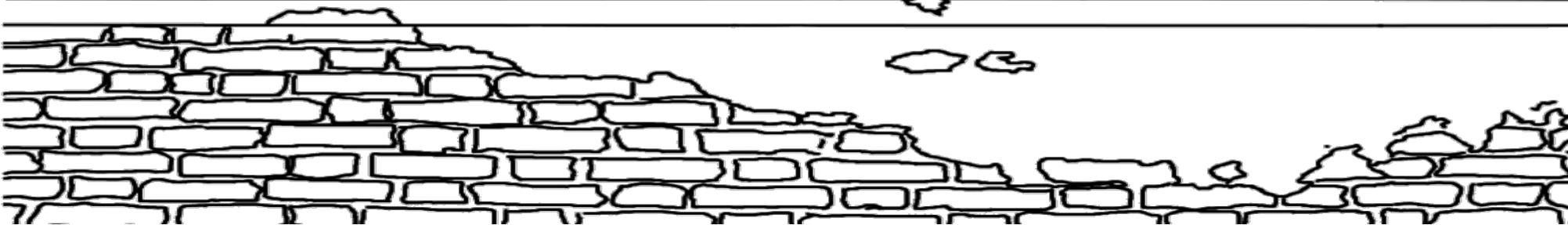


...a fog containing sulfuric acid (created from sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide, by-products of coal burning) will blanket the capital for several days...





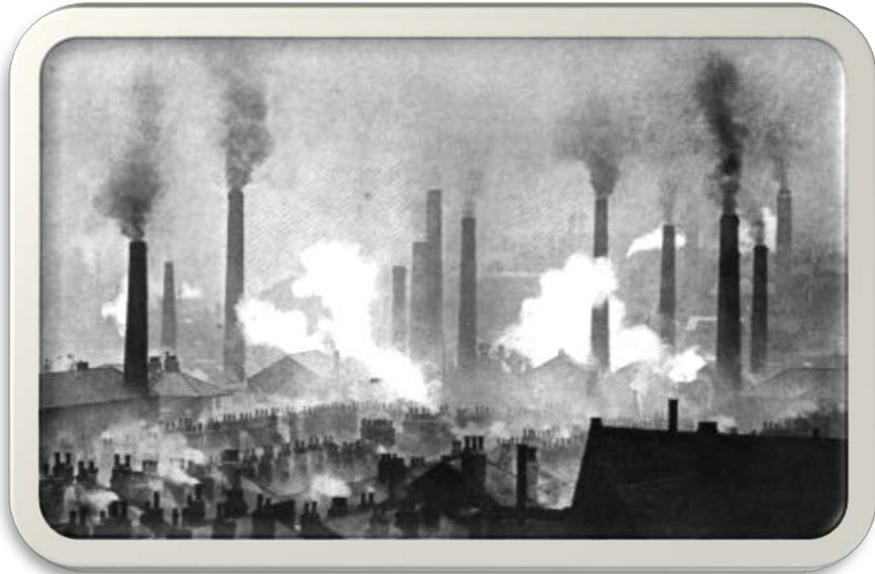
...darkening the sky, reducing visibility to only three feet, and killing 4,000 people and thousands of animals.



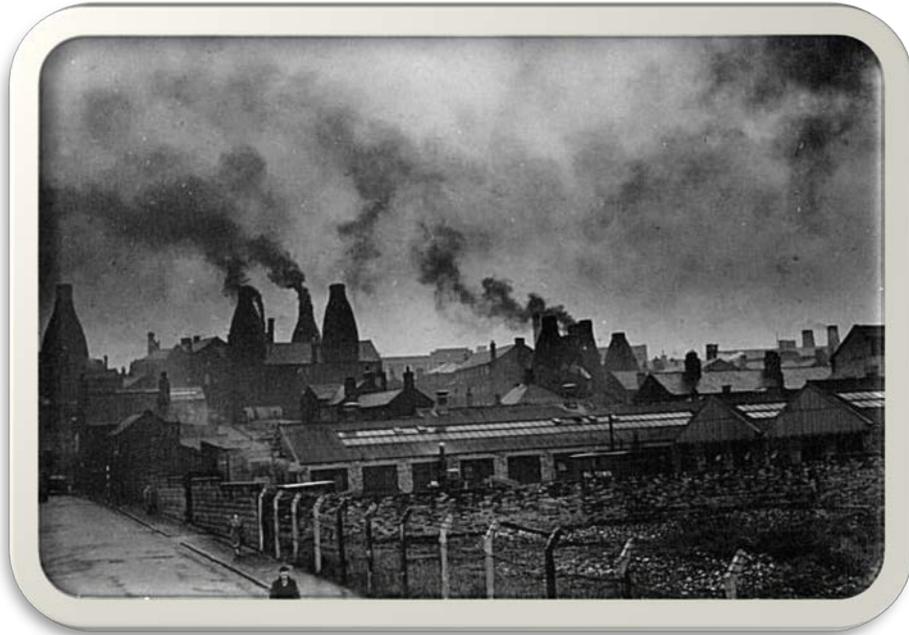
*In response, Parliament
will pass the Clean Air
Act in 1956.*



This legislation will create areas where only smokeless fuels are allowed and reduces permitted levels of sulfur dioxide and other pollutants.



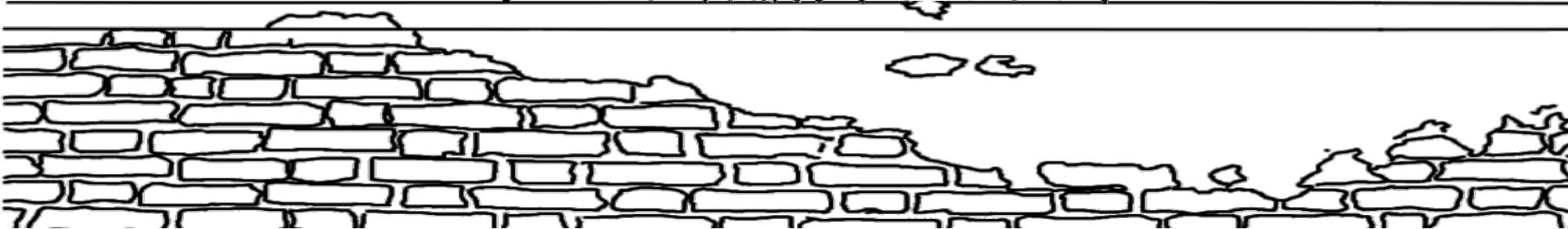
In 1968, the Clean Air Act, Tall Chimneys, will further reduce pollution by requiring smoke and other particulate matter be dispersed higher into the atmosphere through taller chimneys.



By 2013, more than 35% of the vehicles will be diesel, and in an unexpected twist, will be linked to about 9500 deaths each year in London.

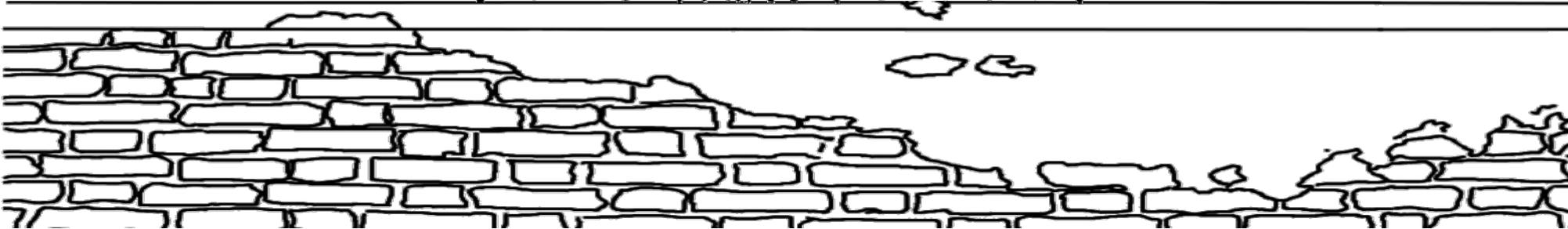


Diesel engines produce more nitrogen oxide than gasoline cars, creating high levels of nitrogen dioxide that contribute to respiratory problems and worsen asthma attacks.





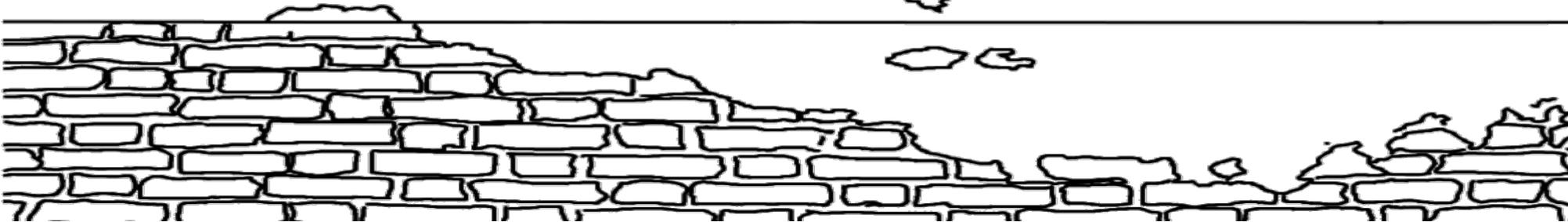
Britain's success story in fighting air pollution has come full circle.



The legendary fog from my time will once again rise to threaten its citizens.



Not only can it hide killers who use the mist to cloak themselves and their crimes, it makes its own contribution to the deaths of thousands each year.



*So we have completed
topic 36 in our series...*

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



References for this topic:

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"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

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