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PANTS BUTTON: BLACKET * NEW CATTLE MARKET*: FALLING DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE AFTER A PANTS BUTTON

by Joy Journey

One of the most rewarding aspects of button collecting (for me) is picking up a random button and following where it leads. A quick jaunt down the rabbit hole can turn into hours in another universe.

Recently a friend gave me her grandmother's four little button boxes. Lots of simple, non-descriptive, unexciting buttons.... But each one had a story and I was determined to track them down! One little four-hole sew through pants button displayed the name

"BLACKET * NEW CATTLE MARKET *

The New Cattle Market was built in central London and is referenced in an 1851 City of London Central Association document. The Market is praised for its cleanliness and use of the latest sanitary practices.

A document a few years later offers disapproval of its being built right next to a large infirmary (hospital) where patients need fresh air, peace and quiet, noting that a cattle market involves none of these desirable qualities for patient health. An interesting notation states the "thoroughfare" between the two structures is six feet wide and 30,000 people pass along it each day. Ouch! That's a lot of traffic on a thoroughfare even ten times that wide.

The January 16, 1857 Solicitors Journal records that the debt of the New Cattle Market was satisfied and paid by James Blacket. One wonders how long the market operated there in the midst of bustling London, before it was booted to the outskirts where it was no longer seen, heard or smelled. One could hope that the practice of killing cattle could just go away completely once and for all!

