# The Museum of Ewetopia



The Secret History
of the Caledonian Sheep Riots
of 1919



Map of the Metropolitan Cattle Market, Later known as the Caledonian Cattle Market, 1862-1871

### In the Beginning...

The Metropolitan Cattle Market, or Caledonian Cattle Market, was built by the City of London Corporation and was opened in June 1855 by Prince Albert.

Designed by James Bunning, the City of London's architect, The Caledonian Cattle Market had a tavern on each corner and a clock tower at its centre, which you can still see today.





The clock tower, c.1896

Present day clock tower, 2010

The market could accommodate 7,000 cattle and 42,000 sheep at any one time. Market days for cattle, sheep and pigs were Mondays and Thursdays, with horses and goats on Fridays.

Contemporary commentators described the market as

...an immense emporium for the sale of sheep, cows, pigs, and calves, ...great numbers of animals are exhibited for sale, especially on Mondays, when they sometimes number over 15,700

George Birch, The Descriptive Album of London, c.1896

On market days...it presents a very animated scene, it being estimated that upwards of four millions of animals are sold here annually.

Reynolds' Shilling Coloured Map of London, 1895

All appeared to be quite ordinary on the surface of things. However under the cosy facade of a hustling and bustling cattle market, lurked a more sinister reality...

#### Trouble A-hoof

By the turn of the twentieth century the fortunes of the cattle market began to turn. Overcrowding had always been a problem. Charles Dickens's son even made reference to it in his *Dictionary of London* in 1879:

The market is of immense size, but large as it is, it is insufficient to contain the animals sent up for the Christmas markets

Charles Dickens (Jr.), Dickens's Dictionary of London, 1879



By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it was not uncommon to see large families of sheep crammed into tiny pens. This led to unrest, which in turn led to the beginning of a movement: in 1913 the radical **Sheep Ewenite** collective was formed. This underground movement distributed rudimentary propaganda and held weekly secret meetings in the shade of the clock tower.

"Ramrades, when I left the open fields of Wales for the bright lights of Islington I did not foresee these trying times. If my old Ram had described to me then the scene that meets my eyes today I would have shaken my woolly head in disbelief. But this is a daily reality for each and every one of us - do we want this to be the future of our lambs? Or our lambs' lambs? We must ewenite...Sheep Ewenite!"

Rameses Sheepman, Inaugural speech at a **Sheep Ewenite** gathering, April 1913



Sheep Ewenite had a charismatic leader in Rameses Sheepman, who came from a hardy lineage of South-West Welsh Sheep, in Glamorgan.

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With the arrival of the First World War in 1914 however, the sheep were called upon to rally together for the good of the nation, and their rebellion was temporarily put to one side.



Recruitment poster, starring Caledonian sheep community it-girl Ewenice Shepherd, 1914

#### The War Years

During the First World War a large proportion of the City of London Corporation's staff was called up for national service, leaving the market hugely understaffed. Reacting to concerns about allowing hysterical women to work, the chairman of the City of London Corporation, I. M. Fictitious, instead opted to enlist the help of the market's own livestock. Goats were thought to be too undisciplined and concerns were raised about cows' udders getting in the way. I. M. Fictitious settled on the sheep and began a campaign to recruit them as Caledonian Cattle Market staff, using Ewenice Shepherd - the poster-girl of the Caledonian sheep community - as part of his campaign.

Sheep were largely employed in the mucking out of enclosures, and distribution of food among the livestock. Though they were only paid in trinkets and cigarettes they rather enjoyed their new found responsibilities and relished the space that came with their enhanced position at the Market. Serenity descended on the sheep enclosures...

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#### Penned In

In late 1918, the boys from the front started returning. The sheep were laid off in one fell swoop and forced to return to their closed quarters. After the freedom of the War this was a bitter pill for Rameses and his motley flock to swallow.

Sheep Ewenite resumed their rebellious activities with added enthewesiasm;

they began to recruit lambs in droves and the Ewenite Youth Movement was born. Rameses Sheepman began holding regular moonlight meetings, where he rallied the sheep community of Caledonian Cattle Market behind him to form a ewenited front.

I. M. Fictitious did not know what had hit him. Diary excerpts reveal how he awoke one night to find a candlelight protest outside his bedroom window. Determined to assert his authority, he increased security around the sheep pen, taking draconian measures to ensure that he could "...keep the blighters where I can see them." This infuriated Sheep Ewenite and also won them the support of itgirl Ewenice Shepherd, who had previously remained neutral in the rising political storm.



Sheep Ewenite protest march, winter 1918

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I.M. Fictitious, *Diaries 1913-24*, pp. 269, Allen & Unwin Press, London 1936

The final straw for Rameses came with the introduction of a pack of sheepdogs to the Caledonian Cattle Market. Tragically, on 31 December 1918 his youngest sister Ramona was killed like a lamb to the slaughter when she was playing dangerously close to the savage pack. They ripped her lamb from lamb, leaving only a tuft of white wool which froze on the snow-covered ground.

Rameses was inconsolable. He mobilised his troops and through sheer force of numbers overcame the sheepdogs, the market's high fences and finally I. M. Fictitious himself. Legend tells that he was trampled to death in the clock tower.

And so it was that New Year's Day of 1919 came to be known amongst sheep nation-wide as the day of Rameses Revenge.

### Ewetopia

For 3 months Sheep Ewenite ran the Caledonian Cattle Market as a ewetopian commune, with cows, horses, goats and sheep living together in harmony. Trade in livestock was outlawed and a bric-a-brac market grew up in its place.

During this time art in the Caledonian Market flourished. Out of the rebellion came an avant-garde and radical farmyard art movement which saw the birth of Picassewe, Maaaaa-tisse, Moonet and Goatguin.

Eugene Shepherd, the sheep world's darling, became Ewenice Sheepman...she married Rameses in a civil ceremony held at the clock-tower.



Ewenice Sheepman Neé. Shepherd on her wedding day, 14 February 1919

However this happy time in the Caledonian Cattle Market's history was short-lived. Lloyd George, the prime minister at the time, could not tolerate a ewetopian farmyard state within the city of London and called Rameses to parliament for secret talks. Rameses proved to be as stubborn as a mule and flatly refused to disband the farmyard community in Islington.



Lloyd George meets Rameses Sheepman, London, 31 March 1919

In retaliation, on 3 April 1919, MI5 sent wolves in sheep's clothing to infiltrate the Caledonian Market Ewetopia.



Image from MI5 training ground, Wolves in Sheeps' Clothing, April 1920

...A monumental bloodbath ensued, followed by a colossal barbeque. Ewenice Sheepman perished along with thousands of others. However Rameses did manage to escape and was last seen in 1921 heading towards Cuba.



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The Caledonian Market experiment was the only farmyard ewetopia of its kind, and yet the history books sheepishly neglect this phase in London's history. For years the animal community have campaigned for recognition of this vital period in their past. We hope that the **Museum of Ewetopia** goes someway towards rewriting this fictitious event into our Nation's consciousness.

## Caledonian Market Ewetopia | Timeline of Events

13 June 1855	Caledonian Cattle Market is opened by Prince Albert
Dec 1879	Severe overcrowding at the Caledonian Cattle Market is documented
1905-1913	Growing dissent amongst farmyard animals at Caledonian Cattle Market
Jan 1913	Foundation of Sheep Ewenite, a radical separatist movement of sheep at the Market
April 1913	Inaugural meeting of Sheep Ewenite at the Market Clocktower, lead by Rameses Sheepman
1914	World War One breaks out. Recruitment of Sheep to the management of Caledonian Cattle Market begins
Winter 1918	World War One ends. Sheep are immediately laid off
Dec 1918	Living conditions for sheep worsen. The Ewenite Youth Movement is founded. Regular protests, sit-ins and peaceful demonstrations are held at Caledonian Cattle Market
31 Dec 1918	Ramona Sheepman, sister of Rameses Sheepman, is killed by sheepdog guards
1 Jan 1919	Rameses Revenge
	Sheep gain autonomy at Caledonian Cattle Market and a Ewetopia is founded on the site.
31 March 1919	Prime Minister Lloyd George and Rameses Sheepman meet for secret talks in Parliament.
3 April 1919	MI5 send wolves in Sheep's clothing to infiltrate the Caledonian Market, marking the end of a Ewetopian dream.

## The Mueseum of Ewetopia

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