

Castle Markets Project - Oral History

Transcription

Interviewee Details

Name: Joan Hanley Read

ID Number: CM_015_Hanley Read

Place of Birth: Sheffield

Year / Date of Birth: 1952

Interview Details

Interviewer: Mark Sheridan

Date / Time: 15/12/2012 11.50

Place: Castle Market

Audio File Nos: CM_015_Hanley Read

Transcript

Mark: What's your name?

Joan: Joan Read.

Mark: Joan?

Joan: Hanley Read. Hanley.

Mark: What year were you born in Joan?

Joan: Ooh! Do I have to tell you a secret like that? [Laughs].

Mark: You can write it down if it bothers you.

Joan: Go on then, I'll tell you. It was a good year for Champagne. 1952.

Mark: What do you remember most about the markets?

Joan: How busy it was, the atmosphere. Lots of stall holders calling out. Being able to buy whatever you wanted.

Mark: Such as?

Joan: Anything ranging from anything. You could buy screws and nails that were loose. Hardware. Clothes. Fruit and veg - fantastic displays of fruit and veg. Pots - from Potty Edwards. Jewellery, jewellery as well. You know, as we grew older we used to be into jewellery and records and things like that, you know? It were trendy! A good meeting place.

Mark: Who'd you meet down here?

Joan: Oh your friends from school, or adults, you know you always knew somebody when you were in a queue, something like that, to talk to.

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Mark: What would you say your favourite memories were? What sticks out the most?

Joan: What? Do you mean as a child or an adult?

Mark: Both.

Joan: Used to like to go and look through pet market, you know? You weren't buying anything but you had the opportunity to look through and browse and things. You see all the pets, the big sweet stall, boiled sweets on the corner, that was another popular stall with people, and things you just used to go and look at for atmosphere like weighing scales. The lady that weighed adults on huge brass scales. And the herbalist that had a horrible skull staring at you, that used to make you run past. An old yellow skull stuck on top, urgh!

Mark: Was that next to the scales?

Joan: It was quite near as I remember, just before the pets, the pets market.

Mark: What can you tell us about the story about the meat, the petrified meat?

Joan: Oh, that meat, that hung up? Yeah it was just, I was just going to say where I am now, behind on the next floor up, wasn't it? In the fish market, that was it. If you went down the ramp I think it was on the left hand side? Someone might correct me on that, left hand side and it was hung up and the story was that it was a gentleman who'd left his meat behind and never came back for it after he paid for it, and they had this hung up and it were black and it was hung up above your head at the back. I mean, nowadays the health and safety, nobody would want it hung up there would they. Full of germs and maggots, but that were a feature, that were [laughing] one of the attractions.

Mark: So would people go and see this then?

Joan: Well they'd point it out if you were passing - 'Look at that!' and 'Oh my God!' - yeah.

Mark: What, what other memories can you bring back about the sights and smells, what kind of smells do you remember about the...?

Joan: [Laughing] Not very pleasant if you were crowded and you were a child in a big crowd sometimes, but, yeah. Well everything, you know, your fruit, your fish, it all gave a good really busy atmosphere, lively.

Mark: Did you have people, a lot of banter between the..

Joan: Oh yes! Definitely, definitely. Calling out, by here, by there, like 'over here this is the cheapest stall on the market' someone else would say 'Ours is better quality' or 'We give you your change', you can join in with fun, you know? It certainly weren't miserable. Good Yorkshire fun.

Mark: Yeah. So, it was friendly competition as well then?

Joan: Absolutely. Serious but friendly. Hard working people. Good atmosphere.

Mark: You say you came as a child? A lot of people say that when they came as children

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they came on a Saturday or certain day and had treats here. Were you, were you given any treats or?

Joan: I think the treats were the boiled sweets. You know, the very attractive colours on one stall, I mean honestly full of sugar and everything but there again that was the time that you were living in. Yeah, you know, just fantastic. Everything were put in brown paper bags, there was no plastic flying about causing problems, you know, landfill and such as that. Everything was in a brown plastic – in a brown paper bag - whatever you were buying as far as I remember. Oh and they'd got stalls, [laughing] if you weren't quick enough, and it were raining, you had to watch, cos they would fill up with water on top and as you were leaning forward to be served you'd get water down back of your neck. And they had these gas lights, they were fantastic, gas mantle lights hanging down as well. My God I sound old. [Laughs]. It's great, great atmosphere.

Mark: What do you think about the place now? As you come down today, what kind, do you get memories coming back about the place?

Joan: In the Castle market?

Mark: Yes.

Joan: It does bring back memories, yes of course, when it was busier and lots of people coming in but you can get busy days here now. Whatever you want. Household items, clothing or whatever. Yeah, good. Like the outdoor market as well, down the Moor. That, that's coming on lovely. The actual stalls, the outdoor stalls, you know, it's just – I prefer outdoor markets.

Mark: Why's that?

Joan: Don't know. It's just easy to browse as you're walking past int' it really? Atmosphere, again. Y'know. Done a bit of serving meself an' I use to enjoy calling out. What I remember from a being as a child. Someone once said 'you'd be better off down Dixon Lane'. I din't know whether to be pleased or offended, but I agreed with them I was getting a bit loud like that.

Mark: So what do you think about the market moving then to the Moor?

Joan: It's sad in a way, but I'm sentimentalist. I should learn to let go more I think, personally. I hope they can preserve the building in some way but then again there's so many empty buildings. The castle's obviously nearby and that'd be interesting if they could excavate that, open it up as a tourist feature. Something interesting, I don't know much about the castle really, the foundations and that. That could be an interesting feature for Sheffield.

Mark: Would you say that the market itself then is a big part of Sheffield people's lives?

Joan: I would think so. If you look round, say at Sally's, or at café's that've been there long time, people would say, 'I'll meet you in there' or by that place, y'know.

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Mark: You were telling me about Potty Edwards.

Joan: [Laughs] Great fun!

Mark: It wasn't just Potty Edwards. He had a brother and a father?

Joan: I believe, I believe that he had two brothers and that it was his father's stall. And again that was near the entrance so immediately you went in you could hear them calling out the pots, shouting for custom and the noise of the plates and everything. The fantastic thing about it is that they would have huge washing baskets full of services, tea services, and they'd be calling out like auction fashion, and then, they would toss them to each other. And I'm sure part of the attraction was watching these and I never saw one plate broke or dropped ever and they used to fling them and catch 'em. Just, just things like that. I mean in those days it was spectacular, you know?

Mark: A kind of a show just put on for people?

Joan: Absolutely, well that's it, you've got to draw your people in haven't you? And a bit of character.

Mark: Do you think there is still that kind of character in the market?

Joan: If you look for it. If you're – some people are - you can. Perhaps it was too much character in Rag 'n' Tag, I have to be honest, that's looking at it through memories int' it? I mean when it were pouring with rain! [Laughs]

Mark: I mean people used to come to shop but at the same time they did feel like they were having a day out?

Joan: Prices were cheaper as well. And you could see your produce what you were buying, you know? That's another good thing. Yeah. Like you can in here in Castle Market– I like this fish market with all veg in and everything. Lots of people do.

Mark: Thank you Joan. Thank you very much. That's great.

Joan: Are you sure? I'm embarrassed!

Mark: That's absolutely fantastic. Thank you very much.

Joan: I've never talked so much! Am I boring? I just brought up what you mentioned, was it alright me putting in the castle, your ideas?

Mark: That's absolutely fine that. Thank you very much.