

Castle Markets Project - Oral History

Transcription

Interviewee Details

Name: Ted Evans

ID Number: CM_020_ & _CM_021_Evans

Place of Birth: Tinsley, Sheffield.

Year / Date of Birth: 1943

Interview Details

Interviewer: Mark Sheridan

Date / Time: 21/02/2013

Place: Castle Market

Audio File Nos: CM_020_ & _CM021_Evans

Time	Description
0.26	No Castle Market
0.48	Footbridge
0.53	Cockles and muscles with Dad
1.10	Tram Service
1.43	Different eating habits
2.11	News Theatre in Fitzalan Square
2.32	Prawns on the tram
2.46	Animals on the stalls
3.24	Politically incorrect stuff
3.50	Young man
4.04	Old Norfolk Market
4.18	Pet Stall and exotic fish
5.15	Starting work
6.01	Going to the same stalls

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6.45	Supermarkets
7.02	Old people and transport
7.36	New market and transport
7.50	Working class end of town
8.21	People don't want to come in
8.30	Meat and plastic packing
9.00	Ducks and rabbits
9.17	Nicely presented
9.40	Rag 'n' Tag
9.48	Potty Edwards
10.15	Sheaf Market
10.37	Dennis' record stall
11.04	Flexible centres
11.17	Famous weight machine
12.44	Pre-supermarket
13.40	Public transport and the market
14.05	Manpower building
14.26	Trams down the middle of the Moor
14.40	Nowhere else like it
15.00	Butcher and steaks
16.16	Loyalty to the customer
16.46	Finny Haddock and eggs
16.56	Gammon steaks
17.17	New Market
17.46	Put out people
17.56	Powers that be

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18.16	Who's going to build?
18.36	Castle ruins and park
19.05	Buses and tram stop links to the market
20.05	Tea, sarnie and beer
20.46	Last thoughts
21.08	Best spot for market

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Mark: Right then Ted, if you tell us your full name.

Ted: Edward Evans.

Mark: When you was born.

Ted: 14th September, 1943.

Mark: And whereabouts in Sheffield you're from.

Ted: Tinsley... Through and through.

Mark: Right, now what can you tell us about your memories of the market?

Ted: Well, first memories were when there was no Castle Market. Only the fish and meat market. The 60s building wasn't there. It was a bomb site.

Mark: Right.

Ted: 'Cos it used to be the old co-op stores, I think it was a big department store, and it was bombed. So I remember it being just at cellar level with a footbridge being across to the market. And I use to come in with my Dad when I was pre-school age and we use to have cockles and muscles on little plates which you can still buy now. So that's when I first started coming in in the late 40s. And our tram service, the Sheffield to Rotherham tram service through to Tinsley used to come round Exchange Street so we could nip on the tram and get straight back home... So it was very hand transport wise as well.

Mark: What kind of things did you buy?

Ted: Well, I'm assuming, much less.... More or less what you can buy now but probably there were

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much more on the go then. People had different eating habits, you could buy brains and pigs chops and you know. You could look on a counter and see side of a pigs face with all teeth in. People'd buy that, they'd buy brain. All sorts of different things, you know, that we don't eat now.

Mark: What kind of treats did you have? When you came with your dad did you have a certain treat?

Ted: Well, the treat, the treat was actually was going to the news theatre in Fitzalan Square to see the cartoons and the short films like the three stooges and hopalong Cassidy. A treat might have been a few sweets but the real treat was after that was coming in the market and we'd have a plate of cockles. Me dad would have whelks, I'd have cockles and then we'd probably buy some prawns and sit upstairs in the front of the tram, I remember that, pullin' the heads and legs and tails off he prawns and eating them on the way home. There's lots of different things. You'd use to see the butchers used to have rails around the stores and there'd be pheasants and hares and rabbits and, y'know, game birds hung there. You don't see that now. In fact the butchers used to do that outside the shops in the suburbs as well. You'd see animals hanging about.

Mark: Would that not attract flies?

Ted: I don't know, I mean, whatever. It must have done at some time, yeah. Hardly be likely not to, you know? But yeah the, the stalls were, were filled with much more, politically incorrect stuff than we can't have now, you know? Common market won't let us have all these things. Got to be humanely killed and cleaned and served up properly.

Mark: What was - how was the new Castle Market anticipated then? Was it going to be this shiny wondrous building? What was people's attitudes towards it?

Ted: Well I don't know because when it was being built I wasn't a shopper, I was a young man, teenager, I imagine that sort of thing affected my parent's age group... More than it affected me, it just appeared, you know? I can't understand why they knocked the old Norfolk Market down. It was a strange thing.

Mark: Can you remember going in that?

Ted: Yes. I remember the Norfolk Market, yeah.

Mark: What kind of atmosphere was in there?

Ted: Oh, it was a great place. Stone flag floors an' I allus remember the pet store, they had big glass aquariums over the back with lights in and the (unrecognisable) and the bubbles and exotic little fish swimming about. But that was, ooh, like I say, when I was really small in the late forties. But that's why they pulled it down I don't know.

Mark: Did they have a drinking fountain?

Ted: I think they did, yeah. You know, I can't remember the exact details it's such a long time ago but yeah we used to go in there. Used to go in the Norfolk Market and the fish market but as regards this new part, like I say, didn't really affect me, directly, 'cos I never came shopping.

Mark: Did the press at the time make a big commotion about the opening? Do you remember?

Ted: No, I don't remember anything. It's just something, like I say, being of that age group at the time, sort of, at school, starting work and like all the shopping would be done by me Mum and me Dad, you know. I'd go me own life to lead, you know. Rock 'n' roll records and girls and eventually

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going to pubs and watching bands. It just sort of passed me by that era as regards progress. No, I can't remember much about the opening at all.

Mark: So since you have been shopping in here over the years, what kind of characters have you met? What characters can you remember?

Ted: Well I, I tended to go to the same stalls at one time and, then I didn't bother and I'd just come in now and again. But in recent years, more so especially since I've been retired I go to the same butcher, the same fishmonger, same bacon counter.

Mark: Why's that?

Ted: I don't know. You get used to the people and the banter and I prefer it. You get to know people so. They get to know you, you get to know them. It's a good market but it was a lot better.

Mark: In what sense?

Ted: Well. I think now there's a lot of tendency for people to use supermarkets. I know for a fact that people who would never come to this end of town. I don't know why but this is more, mainly for older people and mainly for people who use public transport. Now I don't know what percentage of population there are that do shopping, but I imagine a lot of them, drive and they don't want to come into Sheffield because of the parking, and the walking. They would rather drive to a supermarket where they can walk straight in, whereas most of the people who come in here, you'll find them out at the bus stop, the tram stop, and that's one of the things I'm wondering about the new market; it's not served by enough public transport because it's on a pedestrian precinct, and the only incoming traffic, the traffic going by the backside of it is incoming from the far end of town, not the working-class end of town if you want to put it like that, the east end.

Mark: So, would you class the market, the Castle market, as a working class market?

Ted: More yes, more or less yeah. I would.

Mark: Would you, would you say it has lost its character over the years?

Ted: A little bit yeah. It has, its gone down, it's a bit shabby now to be honest and people don't want to come into places, they don't like the smell of markets. They don't realise where the meat comes in, the meat comes out of a plastic package in the supermarket. They don't want to see somebody cutting it up or boning it, you know, carving it up and chopping it. They just want to walk past and pick it up off fridge shelf and put it in their trolley.

Mark: Are there various things that you've seen that have disappeared from the market?

Ted: Well, like I say, when I was a kid we used to see what animals hanging around, you know, rabbits and pheasants and ducks and geese and chickens and all sorts with their feathers and fur on. But that's one of the main things that's different from when I were a kid to now but you don't see that.

Mark: There's nothing on show?

Ted: No, no. It's all got to be nicely presented on a cool shelf, not the thing you know, hairy animals hanging about, chicken with fleas jumping out of them, whatever foreign bodies they might have with them with their feathers. But you know it's, I don't know.

Mark: Can you tell us anything about the Rag and Tag? Do you remember going in there?

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Ted: I used to go in with me Mum, when I was little, and me Dad. It just to look round. I remember Potty Edwards with his, selling at his pot stall and he use to amaze me as he used to bang things about and they used to throw them about to each other and they'd throw what looked like a complete dinner set, one to the other. They were so arranged that they were like one bloke to the other without dropping them, without cracking them, without anything. I do remember him and I remember when he moved into the Sheaf market, which is now gone, which was just across the way, and we've still got a tea set we bought from him. Yes, it used to come out for best parties and kids birthday parties bot now it's not.

Mark: Would you say it was good quality stuff that you'd buy from the market?

Ted: Oh yeah. There was also a record stall here. The Rag and Tag. Dennis. Dennis'. He used to sell ex-jukebox singles and second hand LPs. I've still got some stuff I bought off him. I got, I got one LP still. (Inaudible) in the loft. And they use to punch the centre out to put them on juke boxes. You used to have to buy flexible centres to fit back in them. Ah, still got some of those. Yeah Dennis, I think Dennis also had a shop at Grimesthorpe as well. They were serving in the Rag and Tag. And of course there was the famous weight machine, which was like a, oh, probably what jockeys get weighed on, something like that or use of them. It was like, sure it'd got brass poles, like twist poles and there used to be a Calor light, you know, Calor lamp, or gas, little gas light burning, you know dark winter nights in, on Saturday afternoons.

Mark: Where was that?

Ted: In the Rag and Tag. I'm sure they had a little, a little lamp, don't know what it were.

Mark: Was you ever weighed on the scales?

Ted: Oh aye. Think so, once or twice when I were little, yeah.

Mark: Was that just an appeal or was that, did people actually go 'cos they wanted to know their weights?

Ted: Oh it was a perfectly good weight system yeah. People didn't get, have weighing scales in those days. I do remember me Mum getting weighed every time we went to Bridlington on us holidays. Obviously here, she used to oh I didn't weigh that last year, put a pound on.

Mark: Would you say people went down as well just, not only for the banter but so there was more recognition between customer and supplier? You used to go to certain people?

Ted: Yeah, I mean we're talking pre-supermarket days now. I don't know when supermarkets really kicked off but I don't recall any in my younger years at all. P'raps, the first supermarket we ever went to was probably around 1970. So up to then we used local stores, we had a co-op, in Tinsley and we had a local, biggish corner shop. It wasn't until about, remember, 1970 that we had a supermarket come into Tinsley. It wasn't a very big one. But, er, a lot of stuff we bought from market. You'd get bread from cornershop, all the other stuff you'd go to the market.

Mark: What do you think about the market moving?

Ted: I'm not too keen on it being down that end, like I say. This area's served very well by public transport and the majority of people that come in here use public transport. And there's going to be no direct route to buses or the trams for people coming in from all this end of town. How they going to get round this, I don't know. Unless they knock the manpower services building down and run trams down, like they used to do. That used to be good route that. Get on the tram at Tinsley and

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get straight into Millhouses park when I were a kid.

Mark: I take it that'd be something you'd propose?

Ted: Oh I'd propose the demolition of that and I'd have trams running down the middle of the Moor, all the way to Millhouses.

Mark: Would you say the market still has an appeal?

Ted: Yes, it has for me. Yes. Yeah, definitely. There's nowhere else like it. Markets are much better than supermarkets for your fresh stuff. And the prices are okay and the quality's good. I would never think of going in a supermarket. The butcher I go to, he knows when I look on his stall he knows what I looking for. And it's usually a great big wedge of rump steak. I have a piece cut about an inch thick. In fact the other day I called in and I says, you know I think it was last Thursday, he had no rump steak on his stall. And he went down to his, their other shop n' says 'just wait a bit' and he ran down t'other shop where other down market as he's over there, an' he ran down he came back, he went back and fetched me a great big steak from his other stall.

Mark: So there was, would you say there was a sense of loyalty to the customer?

Ted: I think so, yeah. When you're paying 12 and 14 quid for a lump of steak, you know I'm talking enough that'll do two people for two meals, that's how I buy it, I don't buy little bits. When I go I buy a great big cut of it. I cut it meself when I get home. I have 2 pieces, I put 2 pieces in the freezer, and I do that everytime I go.

Mark: Would you say that that's one of the attractions of the market, is the relationship between the butcher and his customer?

Ted: Yeah. Cos if he hasn't got what you want, he'll get it you. Well I always know what I'm looking for anyway cos I'm buying (inaudible). He's very obliging guy and I keep going back to him. Same with the fish, the people in the fish market, fish stall, fish mongers. I go to Andrew's. Always get what I want there; fresh salmon, finny haddock, buy eggs from them, or chickens, bit of chicken. And then there's a guy, at Wateralls, go there and get some lovely big gammon steaks, you get two whacking gammon steaks for about a fiver and they'll do two people, two days. Some really quality stuff.

Mark: So you come down even though the market is going? Will you go to the new market?

Ted: Oh yeah definitely. I definitely will. There's nowhere else to go is there? (Inaudible). So yes, I'll use the new market, definitely will. I mean it's ok for me, I can walk down. But there's a lot of people here that'll be put out, hell of a lot. It's a brave idea having a new market but the powers that be have not thought it out. Not one bit.

Mark: What would you like to see done with this area once the market's vanished?

Ted: Well I'd like it to be an open public space really. Who's going to build anyway in this economic climate? I mean we've got all those shops down there, the Sevenstone project, well, closed down. I mean what will they do? Build offices again, another hotel? Nah. Might as well just flatten it. See what they can do with the castle ruins and make a park.

Mark: Would you say then that the market for the working class in Sheffield has vanished?

Ted: It will, yeah. The working class won't vanish. They'll just have awkward job getting down to the new market, that's all. You've only got to stand on the corner and see he busses go past here, and

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there's a tram stop 200 yards where people from Park Hill, Norfolk Park, Tinsley, Hillsborough, all along those lines that come into town and probably have a walk down here, in the market, and there are numerous bus stops out here with every route from nearly every part of the city went past, and what don't go past here pass within five minute walk, High Street. And all that's going to vanish. All that accessibility in the market, the new market, the public transport side of it will be the biggest bug bear.

Mark: Would you say that as people would come down on a Saturday it was more than just shopping, that it was a day out?

Ted: Oh aye! Yeah. Aye, it's not like nipping in a supermarket, nipping out again. Stroll round, I mean, have a cup of tea and a sarnie, call for a pint of beer if you want, you know, whatever. Sometimes, we'd come down here and have a few cockles, whelks, plate of tripe, go for a beer and, you know, just come in to town for a Saturday afternoon and then go home for tea, you know? Meet up, when we were younger and I really enjoyed it, you know?

Mark: Any last thoughts Ted? Any last thoughts on the market?

Ted: Last thoughts? Sighs. I think it ought. I think it ought to have been rebuilt here but I know that wouldn't have been feasible 'cos the stall holders would have nowhere to go, but I think this is the best spot, for the people who use the market, to come to. Unless they do something amazing about public transport down the Moor then they're going to be struggling. I don't know. Just don't know. It's one of those things in't it?

Mark: Well thanks very much Ted for coming down.

Ted: You're welcome.

Mark: Just adding to Ted's interview.

Ted: So I was. I was in here one Saturday, buying some meat. The butcher had his transistor radio on, and he said to me, he says 'there's been an incident at Hillsborough. There are nine people dead'. And that was the latest news he had. And then when I got home, saw the television and what had happened turned out to be the Hillsborough disaster. So I know where I was. I was in the market on the, when that was happening. So that's just a little footnote for you.

Mark: Thank you very much Ted.