

Castle Markets Project - Oral History

Interview Transcription

Interviewee Details

Name: Paul Brown

ID Number: CM_062_Brown

Place of Birth: Kettering, Northamptonshire Year / Date of Birth: 07/02/1961

Interview Details

Interviewer: John Buston

Date / Time:

Place: Castle Market

Transcription

Time		
	John	My name's John Buston and I'm conducting this interview on behalf of trading histories which is a project regarding the history of Castle Market. I am speaking to a stallholder who has agreed to participate in this exercise. May I have your name please.
	Paul	My name's Paul Brown.
	John	Can I have your date of birth and where you were born as well?
	Paul	I was born on 7 th February, 1961 in Kettering, Northamptonshire.
00:27	John	Thank you. Generally would you please describe what your stall is and what do you sell.
	Paul	Today we sell a mixture of house wares, consumable house wares, cleaning materials, we also do a large section of carpets, rugs all sorts of floor coverings, a few novelty items but the bulk of the stock is house wares
00:54	John	So there's a broad selection here.
	Paul	There's quite a broad selection.
	John	How did you start working here, can you give a history of how you set up.

Castle Markets Project - Oral History

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	Paul	Yes we arrived in around 1991 November and we literally took the shop on for, on a temporary basis, for, on a three month let because at the time we were retailers of toys and we had to come out of a unit and we had quite a lot of toy stock to move before Christmas and we did very well that particular Christmas and we decided that we would stay after Christmas and just use it as a general retail stall. Over the years business has evolved into more household products and selling the rugs, carpets and things like that.
01:47	John	So you say it has evolved and so it is adapting to demand. Has demand remained consistent.
	Paul	The footfall of the market has dropped over the years because the environment round here hasn't been as good, it has had lack of investment so we've probably had to put more higher value items in the shop to keep it worth being here to be honest. So I mean, when we were here nearly twenty years ago we didn't sell carpets or rugs that were over £120 in value. Now we need items like that to keep it going really.
02:28	John	So you find that some people are prepared to spend that amount in here, in the market.
	Paul	Oh yeh, yeh, we get, we still get a good cross section of customers who are prepared you know probably got a little bit of a niche really with the rugs
	John	Yes, so they come here looking for something in particular.
	Paul	Yes we built up a reputation and oh yeh we're quite accessible here, All the buses, you know, although the footfall's dropped over the years there is you know virtually every bus that comes through Sheffield City Centre comes up Waingate so from that point we're quite lucky really.
03:02	John	So are you suggesting you get people from various social economic backgrounds calling in here, and various aspects of the city?
	Paul	Yes, definitely, yes we do and over the last few years obviously there's been an influx of immigrants who are starting off afresh, whether they be Eastern European or from the Far East who arrive in Sheffield and probably starting in a flat or whatever and they need everything, they want carpets and they want all the households, basic, washing up bowls
	John	Something to set them up?
	Paul	Yes, and that in the last few years has kept the market going to be

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		honest, that changing...
	John	In the custom, their various strengths.
	Paul	Yeh, that has added to what was a falling footfall. I don't think there's any more customers but they have taken some of the slack up from the more traditional market customers that we had over the years.
04:00	John	Right, so they are more affluent in the sense that they have a disposable income for the specific goods that they require, is that it?
	Paul	I don't know about affluent no they are just essentials that they basically need to have, yeh.
04:15	John	That they need. Well that's interesting, its interesting that you described that. So would you say generally what aspect you like about working in the market please?
	Paul	No two days are the same, we get some interesting characters in here to say the least.
	John	Can you give an example.
	Paul	About five minutes ago, well half an hour ago I was just loading the van and my assistant here, the glamorous Sue, said could I come and give her a hand and we had three lady travellers who were determined to get some rugs at a certain price and half an hour later we're still negotiating.
	John	At a certain price, were they haggling, a bit of haggling in the market, that's interesting.
	Paul	Proper haggling, we finally came to a deal in the end
	John	That's good, its interesting isn't it.
	Paul	So I guess a lot of shops wouldn't have that.
	John	They don't have the flexibility.
	Paul	Not got that flexibility.
05:15	John	Is there anything you may not like about the present circumstances in the market?
	Paul	Obviously its sad to see it, you know, the building neglected, lack of investment. I think personally that perhaps they should have just refurbished this site because I think this site works quite well as a market. It'd be nice to move to the new market, a new environment but

Castle Markets Project - Oral History

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		I'm not 100% sure its still in the right place really
05:47	John	Yes, I've heard that expressed before. Though they are meant to appeal to a broader socio economic group and appeal to a broader custom. However, you believe that generally speaking its not necessarily in the right position. Its too far away from your present customer base, is that it?
	Paul	That is one of the issues with it I think.
06:11	John	And people would be more dependent on cars, its not so accessible in relation to public transport.
	Paul	No that's not true to be fair, well if statistics that we've been given apparently there's about 90% of the buses that run up Waingate will go passed the new market.
	John	They will.
	Paul	And there are services that service the bottom end of the Moor which don't service this area so in theory there could actually be more buses but its just educating people, there always used to the markets here. They've been here for hundreds of years and ...
06:38	John	So over time they might actually adapt to the new market if there's adequate public transport
	Paul	They will, I'm sure they will.
06:44	John	Well, I was going to ask you about the new market, you are potentially going to move there are you?
	Paul	Yes, we've been allocated two stalls in the new market. Because of the size of them and the cost of them we will only get literally, we wont be doing the household, we'll literally be just doing the rugs and carpets from there. We already have a shop opposite where the new market's located, literally opposite so we will sell everything else in that shop and do the rugs and the floor coverings in the market
	John	Right, so that's interesting. Well thank you for your