

Castle Markets Project - Oral History

Interview Transcript

Interviewee Details

Name: Elizabeth Aizelwood

ID Number: CM_063_Aizelwood

Place of Birth: Sheffield

Year / Date of Birth: 1942

Interview Details

Interviewer: Hannah Baxter

Date / Time: 13:33, 28/06/2013

Place: Castle Market

Summary

Time	Description
0:24	Rag and Tag – buying sweets, weighing scales and Potty Edwards
0:54	Memories of three Jewish fabric traders – Harry, Larry and Mo
1:50	Goldfish bowls at Woolworths and Algie the goldfish
2:36	Family connection with Harry, Larry and Mo
3:19	Visiting Castle Market today – getting keys cut and buying pork
4:26	Buying fabric and craft materials
5:31	Elizabeth’s children don’t shop at the Castle Market
6:13	Thoughts on the new market – will transport and cost put off shoppers and traders?

Transcript

Hannah: So first please could you tell me what your name is and...

Elizabeth: Elizabeth Aizelwood

Hannah: Elizabeth Hazelwood

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Elizabeth: Aizelwood with an 'A' not an 'H'

Hannah: Ahh really?

Elizabeth: Hmm

Hannah: It's unusual. And where you were born and when you were born?

Elizabeth: I was born in Minto Road, Number 8, on 17th December 1942.

Hannah: And please could you tell me what your earliest memories of this market are?

Elizabeth: Of this market? Coming into the fish market and the smell. But I remember more rightly the old Rag and Tag down at the bottom of Castle Street.

Hannah: What do you remember about the Rag and Tag?

Elizabeth: Oh, as I said, the old lady with the big weighing scales in the door way. Big brass they were with a red seat. And buying my fishes, large and small sweets and me marry-me-quick which you couldn't get anywhere else. And Potty Edwards selling his pots and Harry, Larry and Mo the three Jewish gentlemen who had a material stall. And there was an awful lot you could buy from them that you couldn't get anywhere else.

Hannah: So did you make your own clothes?

Elizabeth: Oh yes. My mother sewed for me from, well all my life, and by the time I got to the age of fourteen I was a dab hand with the sewing machine and then when my children came I sewed for them and went to Harry, Larry and Mo. I'm sorry I can't remember what their names were! But we always called them Harry, Larry and Mo and my grandma and my mum and I always bought our material from them and particularly at Whitsuntide when they bought their material and made their outfits for the Whitsuntide parade, on Whit Monday when they followed the Sunday School banner. And when we'd made the outfits then we went off and took them down when the kids were all dressed up to see Harry, Larry and Mo and even when they moved from the market down to the top of the Moor.

My mum, there was Norfolk Market Hall, and my mum worked at Woolworths and they had a delivery, a huge delivery of goldfish bowls because it was after the war obviously, late 1940s, and these sort of things came every so often and they couldn't sell them, they didn't know what to do, so my mum went into the market hall, into Norfolk Market Hall, and bought a fish called him Algie - he lived for 18 years incidentally - when they finished selling the fish bowls he came home and he lived for 18 years. He finished up in the dyke at Wadsley Bridge when he died [Laughs]

Hannah: An ancient goldfish!

Elizabeth: A very ancient goldfish, yes. We used to feed him ant eggs, he used to come up to the top and take them from my fingers.

Hannah: Did everyone call them Harry, Larry and Mo? Or was it just your family?

Elizabeth: As far as I know, I don't know whether it was just us or not, but it was my grandma knew the father. She had a bakehouse on Langsett Road and her bakehouse was one of the old ones where you lit the fire in the oven, swept it out and then baked, it was behind Lingard's opposite

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Blanchards, so she knew them from before the war and so she had an account with Nicholls on Infirmary Road area, you know West Bar, and so obviously they met through business, and you know, it was fun!

Hannah: So, now how often do you come into the Castle Market and what sort of thing do you buy?

Elizabeth: A couple of, ooh, at least twice a week, possibly three times. I come to have keys cut for church because that's the best place to have them done, round the corner. I come for my meat and for my vegetables because there's one of the stalls that sells pork and they dip it and I don't know if you've had pork that's been dipped but it turns to a beautiful pink colour when it's cooked and it makes a difference.

Hannah: Oh, which stall is that?

Elizabeth: Just as you go in and turn round it's down to your right, about the third stall down before the steps. I can't remember its name. I really can't, because I don't look at that I'm looking at the food more than anything else [Giggles]

Hannah: Do you go to the same stall every time?

Elizabeth: Yes, I go to the meat stall just on the left hand side as you're going in. Their meat doesn't look as if it's been out for weeks, one or two of the stalls down at the bottom have the cheaper cuts of meat which, you know, [Laughs] I don't wish to be a food snob!

Hannah: Do you still buy fabric?

Elizabeth: Yes, I do. There was a stall downstairs and Grace's Fashions. The last time I bought stuff from Grace's Fashions it was a tartan, a Blackwatch tartan cotton, which I made into a skirt. And I buy my cottons and things right downstairs on the bottom, there is a stall which sells cotton and buttons and her buttons are fantastic because I bought buttons for a cardigan, I needed 13, and to buy them in Cole Brothers would have cost me one pound ten pence each and I got them here at 49p, exactly the same button. Well I mean, what can you say?

Hannah: That's really good.

Elizabeth: It was very, very good and they're very accommodating there. They have all sorts of widths of ribbon which you use for crafts and for children when you're doing things and there's lots and lots of things if you look that you can use. I mean I've done Scouting for years and I used to come in and get, you know, various bits and pieces that the kids can use for Mother's Day and Christmas and things like that.

Hannah: So do you bring your children?

Elizabeth: Yes, when they were small but they objected to the smell of the fish market so I decided it was quicker to do it on your own, than with four small ones! [Laughs]

Hannah: So do they come here?

Elizabeth: No they don't now because they all live, well Amanda lives in Worksop - no she doesn't - Amanda lives at Mortley, Joanna lives at Worksop, my son of course is ill and Sarah, she never dreams of coming to the market. They do most of their shopping in Meadowhall or online [Giggles] I prefer to use my two feet and my eyes and my nose for sense of smell.

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Hannah: What do you think of the new market and will you be going there?

Elizabeth: I'll be going to have a look. I think it's at the wrong end of the city, I don't know how many of the people that come to this end, because they come from - I'm going to say it in inverted commas 'a poorer end of the city' - sort of like Page Hall, Firth Park and places like where there is distress in the community because I know that because of the churches and the foodbank we have to have, how are they going to get to that end of the city? The free bus now is very often full so how are people that are used to coming here going to be able to get down there and then get back home? It's a long walk down to the bus station, there are plenty of buses go round, but when you're waiting for buses down there it's a lottery. I don't know. I don't know how it's going to work. I don't think it will work very well. Plus the fact that they'll only be the market there because half the shops down there are empty and I don't think the big shops are going to come back if they've moved on. I mean, and what bothers me, is what they're going to do with this here when they move out? It's going to be like a wasteland. I don't think it's been terribly well planned. I really, really don't. I mean they have the whole of the co-operative building which is empty, a four storey building which they could have used for something. There's the B&M and all the upstairs there at that side. Not a lot of imagination has been used. Sorry! [Laughs] But that's how I feel about it.

Hannah: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Elizabeth: I just hope that we can, I understand from hearing some of the comments that the costs for the new market are going to be very, very high - will people be able to afford a. to move? and b. to have the prices that people can afford to buy at? Or will they opt to go elsewhere. I think it's a 50/50 situation for the new market, I think it might be very difficult to fill it.

Hannah: Okay.

Elizabeth: Alright?

Hannah: Thank you very much!

Elizabeth: That's alright.