

# Castle Markets Project - Oral History

## Interview Transcription

### Interviewee Details

Name: Michael Birks

ID Number: CM\_069\_Birks

Place of Birth

Year / Date of Birth

### Interview Details

Interviewer: John Buston

Date / Time:

Place: Castle Market

### Transcription

Time		
	John	So my name's John Buston. I'm conducting this interview on behalf of Castle Market's Project. Can I ask you your name please.
	Michael	Michael Birks.
	John	What is the name of this stall.
	Michael	Mixed Grade A meats.
00:17	John	And your primarily selling meat products of a raw nature. Can you give a general description of the products that you sell please?
	Michael	Generally fresh meat, everything, chicken, beef or lamb, meat products such as burgers, sausage, we do us own sausage, that sort of thing. Ribs beef, lamb ribs, pork ribs just about everything in fresh meats. We don't do cooked meats
00:47	John	Thank you. So how long has the stall been established in Castle Market?
	Michael	This business, not the stall, this business has been here for the last about twenty years.
	John	Its quite a long time?

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01:06	Michael	As Mixed Grade A Meats yes.
	John	As Mixed Grade A Meats. What's that term mean Grade A Meats?
	Michael	Well its a quality produce, quality meat.
	John	Right I thought that's what it implied. Thank you. So does the stall belong to yourself, your family or a company?
	Michael	Its a company. I'm the Managing Director.
01:26	John	Right, that's interesting. So whilst you've been running the stall what changes have you noticed in the market over the period you mentioned, over twenty years?
	Michael	The last twenty years. Oh, its vastly gone down, vastly gone down. Generally the footfall has gone down at least 60% maybe even more, since we first started
01:54	John	So that's because the market's generally in decline, is that what the cause would be?
	Michael	Yes, because its had, Its declined for quite a few reasons. It all really started when they took the buses off and they were building the supertram, I think a lot started then. It upset the roads and the routine of people and then of course supermarkets came on the scene quite heavily and then we had problems on the outside on the main entrance to the new market with lads, with drug dealing and such, just generally we've had it from all angles, problems.
02:33	John	So will you moving to the new market on the Moor?
	Michael	Hopefully yes.
	John	And you believe that will be a better environment for you and the business will pick up.
	Michael	Hopefully again, yes. The only problem with that is the expense of the new market. I think the tenants should all be looking forward to going into a new market but I think they're a little bit frightened because of the expenses. The rents are quite a lot different to what they are here.
02:58	John	I see, so will there be any assistance for those who are setting up stalls initially?
	Michael	They get, yes they'll get some cash for the, what's it called.
03:18	John	For just setting up the business initially? Some kind of subsidy or

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		something of that nature?
	Michael	No they'll get some...
	John	They'll get some concessions.
	Michael	Yes, they get paid for finishing the tenancy here and they're searching for work and they can't find it.
03:32	John	Relocating?
	Michael	Relocating expenses.
03:36	John	That's interesting to know. What do you like about your job whilst you're here what is it you've enjoyed doing?
	Michael	Lovely job, been here all my life since I were 16 year old. Been in this market now for fifty-two some years. Not as a trader, not as a tenant, I've worked in this market for fifty-two years.
03:57	John	So you must have seen a lot of changes?
	Michael	A lot of changes, that's right, a lot of changes yeh, and it used to be very very busy and hardworking, that didn't matter hard work didn't matter as long as everybody were happy. Everybody were happy with wages, the gaffers at that time were quite happy, everything was hunky-dory, but now obviously things are a lot different. The trade's just not there, there's a lot of businesses going by the way, they've gone. A lot of good established businesses have gone. Its really hard work making a living, keeping your lads, paying your wages, its really difficult now. We've hoping that the new place is going to be a lot different.
04:41	John	Good, so that may improve the atmosphere and there will be more of a rapport with the customers and other stall holders. Well thank you for your assistance.
	Michael	You're welcome.