

# Castle Markets Project - Oral History

## Transcription

### Interviewee Details

**Name:** George Newton Cutts

**ID Number:** CM\_011\_Cutts

**Place of Birth:**

**Year / Date of Birth:** 21/07/1943

### Interview Details

**Interviewer:** Anna Parkinson

**Date / Time:** 12/12/12 13:53

**Place:** Castle Market

**Audio File Nos:** CM\_011\_Cutts

### Summary

Time	Description
0.36	George been coming to the markets in the area for 60 years
1.09	Worked as a builder building the newest section of the Castle Market.
1.24	William Moss and Sons from Loughborough built the new section
1.50	Construction took about two years
2.00	Was a brilliant experience, felt he was a Jack the lad at age 17/18
2.29	Has shopped in the market ever since, just bought bread from baker's
2.40	Always uses the butchers and the bakers at the market
2.54	Used to buy a lot of clothes in the market
3.24	The market's changed because the council have neglected it. A part of Sheffield that has always been used by 'proper Sheffielders' and they have been ignored
4.23	Tried to get the Castle Market building listed in 2010 but English Heritage said it had no special features
4.40	George can see features that you wouldn't see elsewhere in Sheffield or even England.
5.16	Feels empathy for the market. This area of Sheffield was the trading area before the Castle was even built, but this has been ignored by historians and the council.

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5.58	Position of the new market is stupid in George's opinion Has talked to hundreds of people and they all think the move is a bad idea, although some of them are getting used to the idea
6.21	Moving is a bad idea, the name Exchange Street must mean something Used to get all their Christmas presents at the market
6.58	All his family and friends used to get their presents at the market
7.47	Remembers sweet shops and broken biscuit shop – lady used to break biscuits so he could have broken ones
8.05 8.27	Market has always been a marvellous place for children, George brings his grandchildren here now and they think it's like another world
8.50	The market has served a different purpose to shopping malls
9.28	Mick the butcher is still in the market, was here from the beginning, but most of the stall holders from year ago have gone now.
9.24	Mrs Jones ran the café that is now Sharon's café with her son, and wore a tea cosy on her head Out of work builders gathered at Shaw's café in the winter to see if there was any work available
10.17	
10.43	The market itself hasn't changed, what's changed is that it's been neglected by the council
11.40	
11.45	The roof has fallen into disrepair

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*Anna:* There we go I've switched it on now, so if I could just ask you to tell me your name and your date of birth then we can get started.

*George:* My name is George Newton Cutts. My date of birth is twenty one seven forty three.

*Anna:* Great, thank you. So, I'm just going to ask a few sort of general questions about the market and you can answer them however, however you like really.

*George:* Well I'll do my best.

*Anna:* So how long have you been coming to the market? And what's your first memory of it?

*George:* I've been coming to this market for 60 years at least. Well, not to this Castle Market, the -

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the markets that were built before the Castle Market, including the Rag and Tag. But I've been coming to this area of Sheffield where the markets have always been for 60 years. Yeah. Ok?

*Anna:* Yeah, yeah, great. And what's your first memory of the Castle Market?

*George:* I worked on it when it was built.

*Anna:* Oh really!

*George:* Yeah. Mmm-hmm. Yes.

*Anna:* Right, so you were involved in

*George:* From the very beginning – well, more or less from the very beginning I was an apprentice on here, yeah. Mmm, yeah so the company I worked for was William Moss and Sons from Loughborough, and they built this – this newest section to the Castle Market.

*Anna:* So was there an original - there was an original part of the market

*George:* Well the fish market was already there anyway, and a part of the Castle Market had already been more or less started before, you know, before I started on here.

*Anna:* How long did the construction take, how long did it take you to build it?

*George:* It was about two years in all, about two years. Yeah, mm. Yes.

*Anna:* Well that must have been an experience.

*George:* It was a brilliant experience because – being of a – I was perhaps 18 years old, 17, 18 years old, working on a market which – a traditional area of Sheffield where everybody came, you know it was a real good experience for someone of my age, you know, I – I thought – I suppose I thought I was Jack the lad at that time you know.

*Anna:* So have you been shopping in the market since you –

*George:* I've been shopping in the market ever since, and I've just been and bought my freshly baked bread today.

*Anna:* So do you often buy your bread here? What kind of things do you usually buy when you come here?

*George:* I – we use the butchers, we always use the butchers in the Castle Market 'cause the stuff's always fresh, and as I say, you know we use the bakery as well. And at one time we used to buy a lot of clothes in the market but not anymore because most of the old – the older clothes shops have now gone, you know the – such as Harrington's and places like that.

*Anna:* Yeah. Do you feel that the market's changed a lot since when you first came here, since when you built it?

*George:* Right then, now look, you're going to hit on a sore subject with me. The market's changed because the council have neglected it. It's – the market is a – it's a part of Sheffield that has always been used by the, what I call proper Sheffielders. I mean these are people that have probably not got a lot of cash to spend, they don't go online, you know, so they can't protest against anything, they don't use, er, they don't write to newspapers. They're the silent majority and as far as I'm concerned the reason the market has declined is because the people who actually use it, not been – listened to, or even bothered about. And I can go on and on and on.

*Anna:* Yes it's - it is isn't it? It's – I know with, um, quite a few people it's brought up strong feelings hasn't it?

*George:* Well, it certainly has with me, I mean I tried to get it listed in, er, 2010, and English Heritage

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in their wisdom said the work on the market – and there was no special features, I mean and I just sit here and look round me and I can see as I'm sat here now, on a nearly deserted lower ground floor, I can see features that there's nowhere else in Sheffield, or even, probably in England.

*Anna:* I imagine that you feel quite, um –

*George:* Annoyed [laughs]

*Anna:* [laughs] I was going to say

*George:* Annoyed

*Anna:* Annoyed, yes, but maybe because you spent time building the market, I imagine that you feel quite, um, protective of it

*George:* I've got an empathy with it yes, definitely. But it's not only that. This area of Sheffield – I mean this – there's some so called historians in Sheffield who are going on about the castle that is supposedly under it, but what these people do not – do not seem to want to understand is before any castle was built this was the trading area of Sheffield, and the confederation of the Sheaf and the Don. They seem to have completely ignored that. And now, due to – due to the historians and the Sheffield council they have decided they're going to move this area to a place that is absolutely stupid in my opinion on the edge of town, and whether they'll come to regret it, only time will tell.

*Anna:* This is something like I've said – it's - yeah, something that lots of people have strong feelings about one way or the other.

*George:* I've talked to hundreds of people in this market including stallholders, before I tried to get it listed, and they've all – up till recently when there's stall holders seem to be going – some of them seem to be going over to the idea of the new market. Hiya Mark.

[Mark: Don't listen to owt he tells you. It'll all be lies]

*George:* That's Mark from the bread shop. Anyway.

*Anna:* I imagine you know quite a few people in the market then.

*George:* That's right. As I was saying, I've spoken to hundreds of people and – including stallholders, and they all seem to have the same opinion that they didn't really want to move. And I know that the customers are – I should say ninety percent of the customers are still of the opinion that it's the most stupid thing that's ever happened in Sheffield. To move the trading area from the – from round Exchange Street. I mean the very – the very name Exchange Street should mean something to somebody. And, you know, it just seems crackers to me.

*Anna:* You obviously have lots of memories of the market having spent so much time here, and I just wondered whether you had any particular Christmas memories, given that it's coming up to Christmas time, if you have anything that you remember about Christmas, anything that you used to buy here for Christmas, or...?

*George:* Well we used to get all our Christmas presents here because this was the place to come you see. I mean you can all go and - to the fancy shopping malls or whatever they call them down Meadowhall, and spend your hard earned cash down there. But everybody I knew, you know in my family and my friends, everybody used to say we'll get down market like, it's Christmas we'll see what we can get in there. And it used to serve everybody's – everybody, you know.

*Anna:* Yes, yes. Were there any particular Christmas treats that you used to buy here?

*George:* Oh yeah well when you – when you were kids of course there was all the – there were all the different sweet shops and the broken biscuit shop, where you used to go in and say I want –

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used to say 'Mam, can I have some broken biscuits?' and you – you'd go to the counter and the lady would say 'Oh I haven't got any today' and then she'd just smash a few up and make sure that you got some. And you know I mean the markets have always been a marvellous place for kids to come. I bring my own grandkids here and I'm the only one that does bring them because their Mam and Dad takes them to Meadowhall. Now when I bring them here they have the time of their life they think – they think they've gone into some kind of different world and they absolutely love it. I think that's the problem – people like to park their car, get out of their car, walk ten or twenty yards into a door and that's the end of it, you know, the – the market has served a different purpose for well, not – I should say not thousands of Sheffielders over the years but millions, you know.

*Anna:* Do you feel that there are many people here, or do you recognise many people here, still from when you first started to come here, like stall holders, or people who come and shop here?

*George:* Oh yeah yeah yeah. Well there's Mick the butcher, who's the first butcher as you come in on the left down the slope into the market. Mick was here from the beginning, as far as I remember. But most of the stall holders I remember from when I first worked on here who had suddenly taken over the stall have now gone. Um, there was one particular stall holder called Mrs Jones, and she ran the café that is now Sharon's Café. And it's on the top corner. Mrs Jones ran it with her son, and I've forgot – I've forgot what his name was, but she always used to wear a tea cosy on her head, and – you know there were lots and lots of characters. Another tea stall where all the out of work builders used to meet was er, it was called Shaw's at one time. I mean I've forgot what the name before that was. But I mean when everybody was out of work in the winter which we always were, all the builders, that's where we used to meet to see if there were any jobs going and have a cheap cup of tea, you know. I remember lots and lots of stalls and stallholders that's now gone.

*Anna:* Yeah, it's changed hasn't it? I know lots of people who talk about how it's changed. Although funnily enough, I probably shouldn't chatter on myself, but that was my mum and dad just there, and my mum used to shop here at the market when she was younger and she's not been back for many years because they don't live in Sheffield now, and she said oh you know what in many ways it hasn't actually changed.

*George:* No, no, it hasn't, what's changed is the neglect. The council have neglected it, and that's the change. I mean I've been on the roofs in the last two years, I wangled my way up there, and it looks as though kids have been playing on the maintenance, you know you look across the roof and there's – bits that's been patched up, and - you know, it's summat you'd do on a garden hut, the way they've – the way it's been maintained up there, er, and it really makes me – when I were up there I could've cried, it made me sad to see how they could have done it, you know.

*Anna:* Well, I think, I think that will do. I don't want to keep you any longer 'cause I know you've got to get off.

*George:* Oh yes, yes.

*Anna:* So I'll switch the recording off.