

Castle Markets Project - Oral History

Interview Transcription

Interviewee Details

Name: Simon Stewart

ID Number: CM_029_Stewart

Place of Birth: Sheffield

Year / Date of Birth: 26/06/64

Interview Details

Interviewer: Helen

Date / Time: 23 March 2013

Place: Castle Market

Transcription

Time		
	Helen	So could you tell me your full name please?
	Simon	Simon Stewart
	Helen	And today's date is?
	Simon	23rd of the 3 rd 2013
	Helen	And are you from Sheffield?
	Simon	I am originally, yeh.
	Helen	Okay would you mind telling me your date of birth?
	Simon	26.6.64.
00:18	Helen	Okay thanks, so how long have you been working here at the market?
	Simon	In the markets, started, I used to help my dad when I was about 14 on the outside market. It was a Saturday like and I used to come down younger than that after school to help him pack up and see my dad [???] But, it was a fair while I used to work on the outside with him and work on the old umbrella market. Used to sell cards, always have done, used to set out and then we had another stall down in the meat and fish market started in the base by 186 [?other people talking so can't tell what he is saying?] and built it from there. And we used to

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		<p>have stalls in Rotherham Market, Grimsby. I've been to Grimsby for 24 years backwards and forwards and I've worked here in probably about 17 I worked down in meat market as butcher's apprentice for about 5 years, we started off down in the bottom and there used to be about, nearly 30 butchers in there. The butcher next to us Smith's, they used to do all offal and that, they were the first to do their own sausages, cow's heads all sorts anything like that which you can't do now. Then at the side there, there used to be Perkins Pie and Pea Shop and on Friday, Tuesday, Friday, Saturday market days Mr Perkins, he used to have a white overall, he used to stand outside and go in and out as soon as the stall was, he had an empty space, and there were Bells opposite, Smith's the butchers, then us. I've forgotten his name now, Grocotts, Butchers, there used to be a lad on there called Porky and he used to be pitching off on Saturdays with meat and that. You had Perret's after that, then Tony's after, then Jerry's and then I can't remember who used to have the other ones after that. Then it just all went round. You know the market was buzzing then, you couldn't walk down or all sorts, there were a good atmosphere. There was a big mix of different stalls then I moved over to the other side butchering, Graham Shaw's at the bottom, every Friday late on, the market used to open till 6 then on Fridays. Just after 3.00 pm when the pubs closed we used to get all the Irish Navvies from all the pubs and everything coming down and buying meat and if they bought something they were happy. Then Graham Shaw's used to be the actual, well the rogues or the, used to guarantee fighting down there every Saturday afternoon. They only did it amongst themselves and there were no then they went off, they were all drunk. And pubs were shut, and things like that and you know things were all different, more cafes, things were different.</p>
03:37	Helen	What have been the main changes you've seen since you've been working here?
	Simon	The main changes I suppose, the decline of the markets you know, the area due to Council, investment really, lack of interest I suppose even though it used to generate a lot of income. You know like Sheaf Market, I used to work at Sheaf Market and had a fruit market there, then one year we had a big promotion through all the markets and Sheffield in the Hay Market we had a big, they had a tug of war between Sheaf and Castle market even though Castle Market won the tug of war we still got the barrel of bin we should have won. [Helen laughs} There's various things really in, outside here there used to be Wigfalls, Army Stores, Davy's Bakeries. I always remember when I was working outside Wigfalls they had this glittery sign, like ahead of its time it was all sequins, it was really funny how they did it. It was the Army Stores where everyone used to get everything from. After that

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		then the Strand Libraries opened, that's gone now, card shop, there used to be a Police Box further up where Timpsons used to have a cobblers. If you look there, there's some steps you'll see a door and there used to be Police Box for the Market Policeman who used to be around here.
05:08	Helen	What was the role of the Market Policeman then?
	Simon	To keep everything in order I presume.
	Helen	Was he on his own? [laughing]
	Simon	Yeh, yeh, there were never, it was the whole time you know, nobody bothered, you know there was no real trouble I suppose, it governed? itself really down here. There were no drug problems or anything like that you know. You'd have your drunks and spivs and things like that but nothing like that, it was all quite well kept. As I say at the time this was the Meadowhall of its time. All independents, no chains you had Woolworths outside, that had three floors, British Home Stores so it was quite a big vibrant area around here and its just slowly declined and declined, you know we've been asking for a new market for years, now they're moving us. It will be a shame when this place goes.
06:05	Helen	How's business at the moment?
	Simon	Could be better, we're just all hanging on for the new market really but er. Yes, we're hoping to move yeh. But there's not actually many older traders in there to what they were. So yeh it should be interesting. You lose track of what there is actually
06.226	Helen	Did you have a favourite character, you mentioned quite a few, did you have a favourite one?
	Simon	No there are so many different ones, we used to have one guy come in he used to come in a string vest and no matter what the weather he used to wear a string vest, a deer stalker, big thick country thintg He used to come in with his wife on Saturday afternoon after he'd been to the pub and he were a character, he were a grave digger actually so, yeh then he died. They've all gone the old characters really that there used to be, you lose track of who they were. Yeh I can't think of anything else. There used to be downstairs that was full, I used to work on the outside, that all disappeared slowly and they used to call that the umbrella market. If the weather was bad we used to have sheets and we used to put em up, we used to bang bang bang, it was a customers' thing but nobody bothered you know, it was. There used to be a guy out there used to every Saturday sell big carpets he was selling. He'd be gone by one o'clock, a guy. Gary Green. Gary Green

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		<p>or his dad started on there, he had a licence to sell anything. He could sell anything he wanted, he used to go round the auctions. He used to have an old guy called Percy used to work for him and when he used to come in in the morning he used to walk under Sheaf and pick all the fruit and veg off the front, that was his fruit and veg for the week. There was nothing wrong with it, it justthere was quite a few like the old, there used to be a Market Tavern outside, it used to be a Berni in the old No 5. and all the market.... there isn't any of birthday party, they used to have their parties in there and when the butchers used to work late at Christmas all the bosses used to take the butchers in upstairs and hire the whole floor out Sunday afternoons and they used to have all their Christmas, Sunday Dinner and everything all the bosses used to pay for it cos they'd worked over the Sunday. And that's gone, and that declined when they changed it in the 80s, forgotten what they called it now, all the market lads used to go in every Friday night for a drink and cos one had got sawdust on his shoes, the bouncers said "you can't come in" they stopped and everyone walked out and never went back in since. Then they used to go round to the Alexander and that just declined as well. So yeh, quite a few places.</p>
09:23	Helen	<p>So you worked as a trader in the card shop business and as a butcher, so which do you prefer, what are the things you like or don't like about both of them?</p>
	Simon	<p>The butchering was okay, but we got out at the right time with the decline with the supermarkets and everything like this and there'd always been cards anyway so, I spent most of my life with cards so it looks like, I always enjoyed the butchering but that's changed as well so, and if I had to go in, I wouldn't go back into it, I'd probably end up having to go back to college or something to learn a bit more but you didn't go to college when you went down there you just learnt on the job all the time, there was, you just learnt, it was the best way of learning, I used to make sausages and everything else, if you cut yourself that was it, I've cut my finger with [?band?] saw three times and you just went up the hospital, had your stitches and then you came back to work. You didn't bother, it was just an accident you know. Cos now its all changed. You can't do this, they can't do that. Right, there was some good times down there. Yes. Characters.</p>
10:33	Helen	<p>Yes I bet. Yes, well that's absolutely fantastic. Thank you so much Simon.</p>
	Simon	<p>Okay, I'm sorry I can't think of anything else</p>
	Helen	<p>No that was wonderful, thanks for sharing your time with us as well.</p>

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	Simon	Okay, no problem.
	Helen	Thank you
	Simon	The best person would have been my dad, wouldn't it. My dad would have been the best person.
	Helen	Oh yeh, where is he?
	Simon	He's not here.
	Helen	No longer working?
	Simon	No he's here but he's not at work. He hasn't been at work all day or I would have sent him up to you. Cos,oh he's worked in here over 50 years, he's one of the oldest traders.
	Helen	Well maybe
	Simon	Just jot his name down so that we can give it ENDS