

Castle Markets Project - Oral History

Interview Transcript

Interviewee Details

Name: Gordon Wildgoose (and John Burkhill)

ID Number: CM_030_Wildgoose

Place of Birth: Sheffield

Year / Date of Birth: Unknown

Interview Details

Interviewer: Helen Finnerty

Date / Time: 23/03/2013 10:54

Place: Sharon's Café, Castle Market

Audio Files: CM_030_Wildgoose

Transcript

Helen: So can you tell me your full name please?

Gordon: Gordon Wildgoose

Helen: Okay Gordon and how long have you been coming to Castle Market?

Gordon: 55 years

Helen: Wow

Gordon: No 55, 60 years

Helen: Right, are you from Sheffield?

Gordon: Yes

Helen: Right and can you tell me your earliest memories of the market?

Gordon: When I were 6

Helen: Right and what do you remember?

Gordon: Well this used to be Brightside and Carbrook cooperative, it got bombed during t'war and you used to have to walk across a wooden bridge to this little bit on this side, it used to just be t'fish market all these other stalls weren't in, this were like a, it were like a big trench, weren't it John?

John: Yep, yep.

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Gordon: It were like a castle on its own and you had a big wooden bridge you used to walk across to get into that 'cos all this side here it were all Brightside and Carbrook and they never rebuilt it 'til late 50, '58 '59, when they rebuilt all this, up till then it were all just bomb damage and it was just fish market. The trams used to run in front of it on Exchange Street, it weren't blocked off like they are now, there were no one way systems, all the traffic used to run down there. There used to be trams running this way and that way down t'bottom and everybody used to, everybody used to shop here because most of town was flattened, there weren't many shops left. Where Fitzalan Square which is now Primark, that used to be a Burton's building didn't it? That used to be C&A - coerts and 'ats - as they called it, that's what it stands for in it? Coerts and 'ats! They moved out and Primark's been in but for years it were just a bombed building, it were just an empty building, a shell of a building with C&A and Burtons.

2.00 *Helen:* So how often did you used to come to the market then at that time?

Gordon: Every week

Helen: Right and what days would you come?

Gordon: Saturdays, Fridays and Saturdays

Helen: And what kind of things did you used to buy?

Gordon: Well fish, fish out of this one and Rag and Tag market down the back here, which is where that big roundabout is, that were a big market down there and that's where you brought all your other stuff, mainly you used to shop in your own estate because there were no supermarkets, you just used all your local shops, so estates used to have a big shopping centre, when they built all the estates each one had its own shopping centre, so for most of your stuff you didn't come to town anyway, you'd come to town for fresh fish and things like that, as I say there were nothing in town, it were all blitzed. It weren't until the 60s when they built it all back up again and you could come down and buy clothes and food. Other than that you used to shop local. As in 60s when people, when I were a teenager, they started buying clothes, din't ya, which they'd never done before. You could buy anywhere in town then. I'd have a suit made in Barney Goodman, ay John?

Helen: Did you ever buy clothes from here, inside the market?

Gordon: No there were no clothes in here

Helen: Right

Gordon: There were only fish 'til they built this

Helen: Yes

Gordon: Only fish down the side here, all this is new, all this was built in t'60s.

Helen: So after that did you come back to the market to buy clothes?

Gordon: Oh yes, no because there weren't very many clothes in here

Helen: Right

Gordon: It were like it is now but there weren't no clothes. You might get a shirt and a pair o' jeans. But you couldn't buy suits, you went to C&A. Coerts and 'ats. Or Barney Goodman.

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3.44 Helen: Can you remember any characters from that time in the market? Castle Market?

Gordon: What did they use to call her? Big Ada?

Lady (possibly Gordon's wife): Big Ada, weren't there?

John: Ah Big Ada, I remember Big Ada

Helen: Who was she?

John: She was a right character

[Inaudible]

Helen: And what did she do, was she a trader?

Gordon: No, no she just used to walk, was she Russian or summat?

John: No it weren't Russian Edna, no.

Gordon: She were like a female tramp

John: She were a right character, she looked like [Inaudible]

Gordon: Oh she must have been 6 foot an, she used to wear a bloody old mac, that old mac she used to wear

John: She would have made a good wrestler, put it that way, wouldn't she?

Gordon: For years you just saw her round town, or in Pond Street bus station, she was always walking about, all the time

Helen: Was she on her own all the time?

Gordon: Yeah, allus on her own, never saw anybody with her, always on 'er own.

Helen: And what happened to her? Do you know?

John: I don't know

Lady: I think she just died of old age

John: You're talking back to, oh old Tony I mean, he used to throw stuff outside t'market, he were a right character, I once said to him, as said Tony, as says coppers round t'corner, ah said he'll have yeh, ah don't worry John he said I'll be all right. Anyway when I saw him again, I said did he get yeah, aye he said he's done me, he said I've got to go to court but I sold him a dozen He were a right character weren't he.

Gordon: You see what happened were there used to be a lot of seat savers. As I said the market itself, the rag and tag were down the bottom here where them two hotels that've been built and that were, you could buy a dog, a dog to anything, you name it they selt it, and that's where everybody used to go on a Saturday. Well Fridays and Saturdays which were market day, Tuesday I think were, Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Everybody used to come to rag n tag. It all got pulled

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down and built on, there's very few places you can see it, well you can't see it at all anymore, it's all been built on. The only bits that's left, original bit is this bit 'ere, but all this is coming down soon

6.12 Helen: So how often do you come to the market now?

Gordon: About once or twice a week that's all.

Helen: Do you buy anything in particular or?

Gordon: Vegetables, they're cheaper here than supermarkets and they're not as good anyway so it's better here

John: old rag n tag were summat else weren't it? and old Potty Edwards?

Helen: Ah Potty Edwards, what do you remember about him?

John: He were brilliant, he used to throw teasetts up in the air!

Gordon: He used to stack em somehow

John: He were brilliant weren't he?

Gordon: he used to have them up his arm like that!

John: Up his arm like that!

Gordon: Throw them all, and all plates would stop together, and catch them back.

John: Potty Edwards

John: And weight scales, guess your weight, rationing and if she were right she used to give you a free thing din't she. No problem at all. She were never wrong

Gordon: there used to be a seat, you used to sit in a bit seat din't you,

John: I don't know how she did it but she were never wrong. All she used to do was this, din't she? And that's all she used to do. And she were never wrong, never ever wrong was she?.

Gordon: that's when they had stones, don't have kilos

Helen: Yes the old measurements, I remember stones

Gordon: Pounds, shillings and pence and pounds and ounces

John: [Inaudible]

Gordon: It were ha'penny and then it went to penny, din't it? Used to be ha'penny and then went to a penny yeah.

John: Yeah that's it. Ha'penny and then went to a penny, aye. What a charatcer

Helen: So when did that go then? When did the weighing chair go?

Gordon: When they pulled t'old market down.

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John: They pulled whole lot down you see and it'll be a damn shame when they pull this down [Inaudible] I think people get off that bus there, any bus, older people, they come straight in the market, they get what they want and back on bus and back home again. Problem when they get down t'Moor. Terrible, terrible time.

Gordon: Plus trams here, tram doesn't go to bottom of Moor you've only got so many buses, here you've got 'em all here, come from East, North, South and West to here. The bus stops are all outside here, like John says, you get off the bus, nip in here and get back on it 'cos it stops on t'other side of the road.

John: It'll be heart breaking and these people don't want it to go, Sheffield people don't want it to go, they don't want it to go but, and these people don't want to be down Moor. Clegg and his cronies, you know what I mean?

Gordon: You've got these that want to look at Sheffield castle, there's nowt left of Sheffield castle. There's a few bricks down in t'corner there, who wants to look at them?

8.53 *John:* They're driving everyone down to Meadowhall, that's what they're trying to do, they're trying to drive everyone down to Meadowhall, don't care what he says, that's what they're trying to do.

Gordon: And if you park a car down at bottom of Moor it's £2 for t'first hour and it's £1.40 on a parking meter for first hour.

Lady: We always used to come t'town in the car.

Gordon: We used to come in't car but we don't bring it anymore.

John: Well you can't can you.

Gordon: I mean this car park here, 3 hours is nearly 6 quid, car park on the back of 'ere, what's the point of coming down here to save money to pay 6 pound to park your car? [Inaudible] Never liked motorcars, it's unbelievable, they don't want cars in town but today's situation, everybody's got a car and everyone wants to park a car near a shop, you can't 'ere

John: That's the big advantage down at Meadowhall, it's free car parks

Gordon: They've got a whacking great car park. Crystal Peaks has got a big car park.

John: [Inaudible]

10.04 *Helen:* Do you travel far? Do you live a long way from the centre?

Gordon: No I live at Norfolk Park

Lady: It's not far we walk a lot when it's nice

Gordon: We can walk to town in good weather

Lady: Not when it's like this.

Helen: How did you get in today with the snow?

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Gordon: Tram, come on tram

Lady: Come on tram todsay

Helen: The trams are still running OK today?

Gordon: Oh yeah, oh the buses are, the buses are running and the trams are running, that makes a change for the buses to be running

John: I live on Richmond. I've had to walk down today.

Helen: You walked in your shorts? In this weather?

Lady: He walks everywhere

Gordon: He walks all over. He's got beyond feeling cold in his knees

John: Put it this way what I do, cancer doesn't stop because it's got bad weather, it's snow and it won't stop because of that, that's what I do and I look at it like that. [See interview CM_031_Burkhill for explanation of why John is wearing shorts] and if somebody puts 10 pence in my bucket it's 10 pence more than MacMillan had the day before and if you look at it like that then I can raise this quarter of a million pounds. Look at it any other way and it don't work, that's the only way to look at it

11.03 *Gordon:* They had him on Calendar, Calendar were it John?

John: Yeah, these people in Sheffield have voted me so many things, I mean television people they come out and see me, Sheffield Star, they think I'm round the bend, in the nicest possible way, I think I'm round the bend.

Helen: I think you sound like a celebrity.

Gordon: He is.

Lady: He is a celebrity now. Everybody knows him.

Gordon: He's on television, Calendar news had him on.

Lady: Yeah he's doing some good things.

John: These people have done that, not me.

Lady: Well he's helped our daughter, because my daughter's had breast cancer as well so

John: Every one of them, you know what I mean? No matter where I go, no matter where in Sheffield, I'm looked after. Everybody looks after me no matter what. It's fantastic really. In fact I might sell me flat and not have to pay for nowt. Wonderful, wonderful people!

Helen: Okay thank you so much, that was absolutely fantastic, thank you for your time and for sharing all of that with me.

John: You're very welcome.