

Castle Markets Project - Oral History Transcription

Interviewee Details

Name: Janet Barber

ID Number: CM_028_Barber

Place of Birth: Sheffield.

Year / Date of Birth: 7/1/45

Interview Details

Interviewer: Helen Finnerty

Date / Time: 23/3/13

Place: Castle Market

Audio File Nos: CM__Barker

Summary

Time	Description
00.30	How long she's been working in the market
00.47	Earliest memories of the market
01.00	Potty Edwards
01.05	Lady with the weighing scales
01.20	How the market has changed
01.41	Market banter
02.24	Business at the moment
02.48	Lack of investment
03.46	Lack of parking facilities
04.33	Travel/public transport to the market
05.32	Her own shopping at the market
07.40	Physical description of Potty Edwards
08.30	

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09.57	Previous customers
11.00	Previous trade/how she became involved in the pet shop trade
	Most popular items/Business as it used to be before
	End of Interview

Transcript

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

Janet: Janet Barber

Helen: And are you from Sheffield?

Janet: Yes

Helen: And would you mind telling me your date of birth?

Janet: 7/1/45

Helen: Ok, so we're in the market today ... so are you working here? Or?

Janet: ...working here for a friend who is on holiday

Helen: Ok, and which stall are you working?

Janet: On the Green Pets Store

Helen: OK, so how long have you been coming to the market?

Janet: Well, I started when I was a child with my father coming to the old Rag and Tag Market so my earliest memories are about 5 year old, coming down to the market but actually physically working on the market, about 27 years.

Helen: What are your earliest memories of this market?

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Janet: Of this market? Mainly coming in for whelks and cockles and tripe and going round. My earliest ones are when it was the Rag and Tag, when the pot seller used to shout off and the pets were all there where all the children used to go and the lady with the weighing scales, she used to guess your weight before she sat you on them, I think that were a penny then yeah so lots of things, lots of things but it's changed drastically I don't think it's as ... friendly as it used to be I don't think the council care as much as they used to care ... You know, but overall they are a very good crowd, they are a good crowd but there's not enough banter, there used to be when they were shouting things off and doing ... you miss a lot of that ...

Helen: Do you remember any little things they used to shout out?

Janet: Yes, there was Mr Edwards, the pot seller, who used to shout his dinner services off, his pots and pans, and then the fruit man used to shout off at the end of the day if they'd got lots of bananas left he'd reduce them down and shout them off or strawberries, cherries ... everything that was soft and going off. And then when it came to this market you weren't allowed to do the shouting

Helen: Oh really...

Janet: No, they said it was more up class and you weren't allowed to shout and do ... which took a lot, a lot of the market edge off, I think, but no it were great, lovely

Helen: How's business now then?

Janet: Rubbish! Not just cos of the weather. Umm, the footfall is not like ... I mean ... when we first came here we had crowds doubled, doubled round the stalls from 8 o'clock onwards and as you can see, I know the weather doesn't help today, but the footfall is not the same .and I think that's because they haven't ploughed the money back in to upgrade the market when they were taking good rents and what have you. We always used to say they'd plough it back in but they didn't and now it's got to the point where they say it's unrepairable and that's why they are building a new one but the new one was supposed to be ready for 2000, for the Millennium so they're 13 years behind on that! So I'll leave you to [Laughter] you know, cos we were hoping to go to the new market in the millennium but, of course, we've been retired 5 years now and still not got into the new market yet, so whether they get in this year as they're predicting... you know... and I do hope it works for 'em, I do hope it works for because they've let this market go that much that people don't want to come in, it's not a pleasant atmosphere. Plus the parking situation doesn't cater ... and we all said ... all the market stall holders said, make a car park... Most people now drive, don't want to carry shopping, want to go in, pick it up ... and there's no car parking facilities. Now what there'll be down The Moor, I don't know cos I haven't got involved with not having a stall anymore, so I don't know but I hope there's more parking facilities for people down there cos I do think nowadays most people do drive everywhere you know they go to a supermarket, pick everything up ... in the car... away. If they only do a 2 hour short stay, people can get round in 2 hours, and I think it would make a difference.

Helen: When you worked here did you travel far?

Janet: We'd come from Chapelton, it's about 8 mile away. Yes, yes... and our buses aren't like in town where you get one every 10 minutes, our buses are 45 minutes apart, you know, so if

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you miss one in Chapeltown, you've got three quarters of an hour wait to get, to get back. So it would have been nice to have had a car parking facility

Helen: [hmm, hmm, hmm, yes]

Janet: Because most folk are moving out, aren't they, they're living on the outskirts rather than being in the middle ... I mean, bus services from a lot of places, a lot of estates ... because it's bang outside their door. Now, whether it will be the same when they get down there, I don't know cos it's good that you can come out of the market and get on a bus. Here you couldn't but shoppers can, so we'll just have to wait and see but er....

Helen: Do you do your shopping here now ... still ... or....?

Janet: No, because I shop at home where I can park! [Laughter] But I mean, when we're working in here, yes I do, yeah and the customers came in here for nuts and pork pies, cos you can't beat the pork pie man in here, you just cannot beat it and yes, I do come out at Christmas but normal shopping, I shop at home cos its 8 miles to come and as I say every 45 minutes we only get a bus so....

Helen: And umm you've mentioned quite a few of the changes you've seen er since you've been working here and coming here. Can you think of any other characters, you mentioned Potty Edwards?

Janet: Well, they've all gone, I mean there're all passed on, you know what I mean. They were all 30 odd when I were 5, some of them you know, Well it were just Mr Edwards, he were a character all on his own

Helen: What did he look like?

Janet: He was fattish man, fattish man, not right tall, but a big loud voice and he used to juggle the pots in the air. He were absolutely ... he could roll a dozen plates from one end to the other... he were fantastic and even if you weren't buying any pots, you'd end up buying some because of his banter, you know, it were good, it were good ... yeah, yeah, and he's the one that stands out the most ... but the lady with the weighing scales, she was enormous. She was a big lady and she would sit there... and it was a big red velvet chair and brass, it was beautiful and she'd say "I'll guess your weight" and then you'd get weighed to see if you could prove her wrong. I never caught her out, ever. No, she was spot on. They're the two that stick in my mind the most probably because they were the loudest, I don't know [Laughter] But they're the two that stick in my mind the most as a child and then coming in to have tripe on a plate with salt 'n' vinegar, you know..

Helen: So when you were working here did you have any favourite customers?

Janet: Oh yes, some lovely ones yes, and even now they come into this one. Our old customers, so yeah, we have some lovely ones who will chat about their dogs and their cats and you've seen their children, you know, grow up and yeah, there are some lovely ones, some horrible ones, but there are some lovely ones as well. You get 'em with a chip on their shoulder and they think you're trying to pass things off, and you're not, you're not. I mean, you've got to make a

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living you don't want to give rubbish stuff to anybody. And then you get some really nice ones that make you think ... yeah that's made your day, that's given you a good feeling about your day, yeah

Helen: So what made you decide to specialise in pets, is it a family trade?

Janet: No, no, my husband is a frustrated small holder really! No, we used to fruit and veg and that was dying off, cos people were doing it all in one at the supermarket and the pet shop came up for sale and Trevor brought it, didn't tell me, just phoned me up and said I've bought another stall... and I can't tell you what I said to him! [laughter] but it was very successful, very successful. I mean, we had one, two, three, five stalls downstairs for pets.... and he did very well at it and then we retired and the girl who worked for us took the small one on and, touch wood, she's doing alright and if she goes away, we come out of retirement and do it for her so she can get a holiday, cos she were very good when she worked for us, so it's swings and roundabouts in't it? But, yeah, it just came up for sale and Trevor always wanted to get something to do with animals and he likes the banter with the people about the cats and the dogs and he's very good, cos he loves animals and he's, you know, an animal freak really, frustrated small holder [laughter]

Helen: So what was the most popular thing people came to buy from your stall?

Janet: Can't say really cos we sold so much of everything, I mean, the children used to come for the hamster cages but a lot of the stuff we sell is for wild birds you know the food and fat balls and the peanuts, we did a big turnover in that and then the beds, you know, especially at Christmas when people were renewing dog beds, treating it for Christmas, he could have a new bed and what have you ... Yeah, a big turnover on everything really, you know, it was quite successful, quite successful, yeah

Helen: Do you have any pets at all?

Janet: Not now, our dog's died and I said we're getting older and I don't want the hassle anymore, plus we're upset [Laughter] For 30 odd years we've had dogs, always but not now ... [Laughter]

Helen: Ok Janet, that's fantastic. Thank you for sharing your experiences and memories with me

Janet: No that's fine, that's fine. I hope it's been some use to you

Helen: Thank you very much

Janet: You're welcome