

Scottish Holiday Traffic took three hours to get through Town

Jim Noble was born in 1913 and interviewed In 1994

I was born in Park Street in Kendal and, apart from the war years I have spent all my time in Kendal. Looking back over the years Kendal has changed a great deal. It used to pride itself on being "The Old Grey Town" which of course was due to the limestone buildings from quarries round part of the town.

The first council houses to be built in Kendal were built in 1919 and now we call it Castle Grove and that is why it still has greater charm as a housing estate than, probably, any other in Kendal. The estate was built something on the design of Welwyn Garden City there are circles and rectangles but all the way round there are trees and open spaces and that has made that housing estate out of character with all the modern brick development which has overtaken the area.

Down the south end of town there were hardly any houses beyond Romney Bridge. There was a house at the corner there, and at the end of Natland Road there were five houses and then two others near what was then Low Mills. Out on Milnthorpe Road there was only Stonecross, which was then Howard Orphan Home; and the girls were dressed in blue and they used to be brought to the Parish Church every Sunday Morning with their clogs on. Apart from that, there was the big house at Hawesmead where the Clerk to the County Council lived. That house was pulled down and they built modern houses in that area.

That land, of course was church land and the two halls were built in 1858 by Archdeacon Cooper who was one of our rich vicars of Kendal who felt that it was necessary to do what he could for education and thus he opened the schools. There is still a little gate near Nether Bridge which leads down into the school which was where the headmistress went through to go into the school.

I am one who misses the rights of the markets to be very much in the streets of the town. If there was a cattle fair it was up on Beat Banks, hence its name, they used to tie the cattle up to rings in the walls down the side of the road. Then there was a market the full length of one side of Stramongate and they still preserve the right for market stalls to go there. Down near the Provincial on a Saturday morning there used to be a pig market in crates on. At one time there was a fish market in Highgate near where Woolworths used to be. Before that it was at the junction of Finkle Street

Perhaps the biggest development which I think changed the whole character of Kendal was the one-way system. The right of access to the centre of the town from the north side was almost denied because they sent you round all the highways and byways and the need for parking came. When all the Scottish traffic on their way to Blackpool for holidays you could have a queue ten miles north of Kendal. It often took three hours to pass through Kendal. The addition of course of the motorway one side and the by-pass on the other has shown there would have been no movement in the streets at all. You'd have been sat solid in Kendal.

Kendal as a whole, I think while it's lost some of its charm in the yards – I think too much was pulled down. A lot of that could have been saved – but I think the town, as a whole, expanded and its industries changed as necessary. Kendal has always prospered because at one time it had something like 46 different industries in its area. Some very small. Snuff and horn and shoes of course and the woollen mills. It had little firms like Baron and Hogarths making metal parts for the woollen industry, Gilkes with the water industry and then it had Kendal Mint Cake. That's an old industry and still going very strong all over the world,

I suppose, the general character of the town, where it is placed in the valley of the Kent and its river and everything else makes it a very charming and attractive place to live and work.

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