

Transcription of an interview conducted 23 March 2018

Interviewee: SIAN HAYWOOD (SH)

Interviewer: GEORGIA NEWSHAM (GN)

Transcription: JAREK ZABA

[00:03] GN: Erm. OK. So what- what were your earliest memories of cycling? Because you grew up in the borough didn't you.

SH: I did grow up in the borough. I've always cycled. Erm. My mum used to live in Kingston and my mum and my two sisters and the dog used to cycle erm to St Andr-St Mark's so. I would sit on the main seat, my two sisters sat on the back seat and the dog would sit in the bicycle while my mum's cycling. So we had a long history of cycling. Every school that I've gone to since I've cycled. Erm. And yeah mostly along the river. And through Bushy Park. Erm. And generally - I've never had any accidents. Erm. And felt quite safe around here cycling. Mainly I think because other people don't - there's not many other cyclists. Erm. So everyone gives me such a wide berth. Erm sometimes they cycle on completely the other side of the road and I think well, you don't need to go so far away. But yeah we - I've cycled where- and now I cycle to work. Erm. I cycle to Sunbury. Which is seven miles there and - well seven and a half miles there. Seven and a half miles back. Erm. Love cycling.

[01:35] GN: And can you rem-remember your first memories of being on a bike back in the borough. With your - you said there was 3, there was you, your sister and also a dog on the - on the bike.

SH: Yeah. Well. I mean that's my - I don't remember my first erm memory of cycling but I - they are my first memories of the f-family on the bike and we must have looked quite a picture. And people know us as the tricycle cycling family. But erm - my sisters never cycled after that, they've never taken up cycling but erm I cycle everywhere. I mean we - me and my partner had a car but we never used it so it - it died. Erm. And we just find that cycling in this area you don't need a car. We just - we just cycle wherever we can get - sometimes we catch the train with our - with our bikes on the train and then we cycle back at the weekend. Erm. And now I have a child that I - as soon as I possibly could I erm - stuck him on the back of the bike. My husband was er very worried about this. But erm actually [laughs] he-he loves it. And he'll - because I cycled so much when I was pregnant I was cycling right up to when I gave birth. Erm. We found that he hated going in a car. Erm. But erm er on the back of the bike he fell asleep and this was the main problem because he would fall asleep and his poor little head would lol about so I would have to find myself sometimes strapping his head to the back of the seat with [laughs] with a erm with erm some sort of cardigan or something. So that his head doesn't lol around too much because the main problem is that he falls asleep so easily on the back of the bicycle.

[03:27] GN: And do you think he actually finds that calming?

SH: I think he loves it.

[03:32] GN: Does he actually miss being in the - not having that sort of motion being on the back.

SH: No he loves it on the back of the bicycle. He erm - ever since he was tiny he calms straight down if erm went on the back of the bicycle. We cycle everywhere. With - yeah felt such free-because of course when he was very tiny I couldn't-I didn't-I couldn't cycle on the back of the bike - couldn't put him on the back of the bike so. When he got to about I can't remember how old he was but as soon as we put him on the bi-I felt such freedom cos I can go - they can go all over the borough on my bicycle. [Laughs] And now with the new erm cycle path that runs outside my house erm that is - that is it's very nice. Cos I get to cycle along there. Erm. I did have erm - yeah I dunno, there is some er - I-I think this is everywhere though in this country that people feel for some reason they hate cyclists. And erm - because now I'm erm a pram pusher which people hate pram pushers and also cyclists. I feel that whenever I'm not walking people feel an annoyance towards me. Erm. And I know this new cycle path definitely angers people because it has taken up quite a lot of the road. Erm. And I can see why they're annoyed by it but rather than going to the council about it they erm **[05:00]** do want to take their anger out on myself. And I did have - when I was heavily pregnant a lady stopped me erm to shout at me. Because I wa-it was my- it was vaguely my fault but they hadn't finished the cycle path, it stopped and started. And I was heavily pregnant which meant I had to go onto the road and go off it and it-so I was cycling on the road and oh, she shouted at me so much and told me she hoped I died and I just left it because erm it was too ups-too annoying. But erm yeah I hope that people will gradually learn to love that cycle path rather than feel such anger towards it. [Pause] Yeah.

[05:51] GN: Erm. Do you remember your first bike?

SH: [Pause] No. I don't remember my first bike. Which I've lived in this area for a long long time but I don't think I remember - I remember chaining my-losing my bike. Someone stole it. However I don't think they actually stole it because a couple of months later I saw it in Kingston chained up with my padlock. [Laughs] So I think that actually - it wasn't stolen, I just locked it up and forgot about it. [Laughs] So my dad and me went down and erm cut- cut it off with a hacksaw. No one stopped us. [Laughs] But erm - yeah I got my bike back. [Laughs]

[06:40] GN: And erm obviously you have like really fond memories of cycling. It's like a big family pursuit by the sounds of it with you. Y'know you y'know you literally young age being on the back of the bike like seeing your mother like in the front seat. Y'know literally feeling like moving around like family unit like on the bike. And obviously you - you want that for Tal or have that sense now of Tal being on the back of your bike and even before you even had him he was like being around [] 8 months pregnant like. When is he old enough to start cycling and like when -

SH: Oh it'll be - oh I don't feel any fear, my mother in law holds a lot of fear for me cycling. But erm I don't feel fear. So - he'll be his - he'll be very - I guess yeah a very young cyclist. And I look forward to erm teaching him to cycle a bicycle. We learnt to cycle on the blue bridge. So erm - blue bridge is the bridge that runs over the Hogsmill. Kingston. So that's a good place to learn to cycle. I imagine Bushy Park they've got a really nice - I think there'll be a nice place to teach him to cycle. Erm. But lots of places to do cycling around here. Erm. Yeah. I love cycling, I think it's erm a way to keep fit. It's not running. Running's painful, I don't mind running but yeah love cycling. The kids are school really can't understand why I cycle. They erm - I know I remember when I first started at the school that I'm at at the moment because I'm a teacher erm and they would stop me and say miss, why don't you get your boyfriend to

buy you a car? They just really really did not understand why somebody would want to cycle but erm - and teachers at school as well, the other- my colleagues they really don't understand why I cycle. I cycle in the snow. Cos I don't have the car so I have to. Erm. I don't want to cycle in the snow, it's a bit dangerous cycling in the snow but I don't have many snow days so. And everyone's asked I can't believe that I should cycle. Love cycling. Because it's along the river, there's no turning left so I feel it's very safe.

[09:01] GN: 100%, I was going to - so I learnt to cycle in [Marble Hill] Park, Richmond. And again there's always been that connection of cycling like on the towpath or near the river and I think that's it as well. And even like - so my mum wasn't a big cyclist so it wasn't here that was cycling around, it was actually my friend's mum would do what you talked about. So two of us on the back so like so she'd be cycling off the seat obviously and then like me and my mate would both be like sat on the seat, with her on my lap. But again it would always be along the river or it would always be yeah on the towpath. And there's definitely like warm memories for me as well like that connection. Like it like family and what like friends and that bond there but it's also the relationship with the river I think. The towpath but yeah.

SH: It's faster [out here] . Go faster. So often I [10:00] go faster than the cars. I guess again along the river it's not about that. But. Yeah. Love cycling. [Long pause]

[10:18] GN: Obviously you're also continuing to cycle now. How - so you said you cycle to work.

SH: Yeah.

[10:25] GN: How much cycling do you do now? Do you cycles on the weekends or-

SH: Yeah. I cycle all the time, my bike is a complete mess. And I do go to these bike shops twice a year to get a full rehaul. And he's quite impressed at how erm messed up my bike is. [Laughs] Everything needs changing and cleaning. [Laughs] We-yeah. Went on a - we went up the erm Hogsmill up to er Ewell. On the bikes just a couple of weeks ago and it was so muddy. And erm. Yeah. Just completely ruined our bicycles. Yes uh so muddy. But yeah I do - I cycle 14 miles a day. And then at the weekends. Everywhere. So a lot of cycling.

[11:20] GN: Erm. Obviously you - I can imagine you cycling into [laughs] old age. Er. Like erm yeah. Do you see yourself like being like a 75, 80 year old lady on the bike?

SH: Let's hope so. I do hope so. And I haven't got all the gear I might add. I cycle in normal shoes. Haven't got clips or anything. And normal clothes. And my bike's not particul- it's a reasonable bike but it's nothing special. Erm. I dunno why I haven't got all the gear. Maybe I've got [laughs] dunno what do they say? All the gear and no idea. [Laughs] I've got a bit more of an idea and not so much of the gear. [Laughs] I do wear a helmet. Funny I wear a helmet more - I always wear a helmet in the weekdays but in the weekends sometimes I don't. Erm. But I know should always wear a helmet. Yeah.

[12:22] GN: [?] it sounds like there's a bit of a promotional bond with you cycling. That you feel like quite comfortable and that you are safe and not and obviously that's - y'know if you've been on the back of a bike from a young age.

SH: I don't go through lights. I try and be a -one of those good cyclists. Try and make a - I know people again hate cyclists but I don't want them to hate cyclists anymore. Guess if no one's come out - slow

down at lights and I always look and if there's really no one sometimes I do go through them. But I shouldn't really say that. I'm a teacher so I don't know what to do naughty things. [Laughs] I don't want to upset people.

[13:06] GN: But you've never - you've never had like an accident.

SH: No I've never had an accident. Erm. [Pause] No. Never had an accident at all. I [laughs]

[13:23] GN: How do you feel like you were saying about cycling on Portsmouth Road. I know there are - earlier these groups that like - like mini amateur what are they called like pentalons or whatever. Like have you ever had - you've never had issue with them. It's always like-

SH: No. I don't mind those guys. I mean they only cycle at the weekends. And they leave at 5 o'clock in the morning. So I've got a young child we dofn't start til later on in the day so they don't actually upset me at all. Erm. No I'm not intimidated by them. I prob-I know that I cycle than them. [Laughs] They're probably much faster than me, I don't cycle particularly fast. I cycle as fast as I can. But erm whenever I cycled my husband he must makes me realise how s-how uh slowly I do actually cycle. [Laughs] But leisurely. And er yeah. Don't cycle fast.

[14:23] GN: And erm - you were obviously very good on the penny farthing the other day. How erm - how do you feel about like Kingston's connection with history - does like - sorry I mean Kingston's connection with cycling history. The fact that the designer of the penny farthing er was from Surbiton, did that make you have even more of a fondness for-

SH: Yeah I was really really impressed to hear that the penny farthings erm founder was in Surbiton. I think they should get a blue plaque put on his door, I don't if they have already done that but I think that's very very exciting. Erm. **[15:00]** And yeah I think it's great that we're getting all these new cycle paths around Kingston. And erm I hope it continues. There is er - pe-yeah I don't want it is. People feel scared of cycling. Driving, but we need to try and push it, try and get more people cycling cos it is such a lovely way of keeping fit. I mean that's why I think I - erm I don't ever diet or anything and it's because I cycle. And erm. And I go to the gym. Just a great way of keeping fit. Getting where you wanna get. Being energy efficient. Well yeah. Keeping your carbon footprint down. [Long pause] [Laughs] Do not video any of it.

[16:07] GN: Yeah. So I think the - Boris Johnson when he was mayor gave, I think it was 30 million pounds to the borough and they've called it like a Dutch mini Holland and a Dutch style cycling route and they're planning to bring-

SH: Is it only here they're doing it or is it lots of different place?

[16:23] GN: Er I think they were giving funding out to borough-yeah like boroughs across the country to try and to have this push to - is it a cultural thing isn't it? I mean exactly you look at Holland where you do again - and it's like fa-it's like your - your childhood you see like families on bikes and it's very much like getting taught from a young age that it's like completely normal thing to do erm. And as you say like I think people can be a bit sh-yeah sheepish about getting on the bike or erm - but if it's like a lifestyle thing just. Erm. So I think they're trying to push that element of it. Which is good. But I agree with you on the Portsmouth Road, y'know. You still get a lot of sort of harassment. More people [?]

cyclists and it has taken up a lo-a large portion of the road as well. I think yeah come summer it's great I just- cos I obviously live on the Portsmouth Road as well and I - you don't see that many people using it considering -

SH: It's difficult to get onto it. Y'know I like - I would've - I liked the way that it - there was far be- but it was - you had a cycle path on either side going up and down whereas you have to now cross the road get onto it. And then for me being on the other side of the road. Now it's hard for me to get - well I can go down the Mall and then have to go on the side pavement a bit. People hated when I go on the pavement. Erm. And I've been - I've been hooted off the road by some cars which they say y'know, get this bit is only big enough to get onto the pavement so we can get past you. And if I go on the pavement people shout out at me when I'm on the pavement so. Is that - I don't know. Yeah. That's not pleasant. Erm. But I also then when we come out of our house we have to go on the pavement or we go onto the - you can't - because the curve is big there. You have to go onto the road, cycle along the road from there and you can go in onto the pave-onto the cycle path. Which is enough time for people to be hooted at. Which I hate being hooted at. [Pause] So I have to get - pump my arm out permanently to say I'm going, I'm going, as soon as I can! [Laughs]

[18:49] GN: Yeah it's true. Fight your corner.

SH: I don't - I've been told off [ever]. Not nice to be told off.

[18:59] GN: Coming from a teacher. [Laughs]

SH: Yeah. I don't think I'll be the last.

[19:04] GN: Yes. It's [?].