

Transcription of an interview conducted 29 March 2018

Interviewee: BOBBY (B)

Interviewer: ALEX BEARD (AB)

Kingston, England

Transcription: JAREK ZABA

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[00:02] AB: Hello this is Alex Beard and today we are Kingston History Centre on the 29th of March 2018. And today I'm joined by -

B: [Lago ?st]. Or Bobby. I was born 18 of June 1998. And I am a BMXer, do it as a hobby.

[00:22] AB: That's great. Erm so first question, a very broad one. I wonder if you could tell us what is BMX?

B: BMX is kind of er - short for Bicycle Motor Cross. It came from BMX racing. And it kind of evolved into BMX freestyle. Back in the day people only used to race with BMX bikes and now in the Olympics recently BMX freestyle got introduced as a category. Before it only used to be BMX racing. Erm. I guess that's kind of what BMX is.

[00:56] AB: How did you get into it?

B: I remember about four years ago I used to do skateboarding before BMX. And er one of my friends at school was talking about these little kids bikes. And I-I got really curious about that, like what is this, like what is - what is he talking about? So I went over there and I asked them what is this? Like what are you talking about, why is it so cool that people are riding kids bikes and going high on quarters and like jumping gaps in the street. I didn't understand anything about it at the time. So he showed me this video of this BMXer going really really high in the air and I was like wow. That's actually really cool. Erm. Throughout that whole summer in school after school ended I watched a lot of BMX videos and decided to get a job so I could save up and buy a BMX bike.

[01:42] AB: That's cool. So er a BMX bike - expensive to afford?

B: Yes. I'd say so. They - my bike cost about 1.5k? I think so. Yeah that's how much it costs. That's a lot of money to spend on a BMX bike actually. I didn't think about it until now. I've actually spent so much money on it. That's how much everything costs on my bike but that's not including all the parts I've bought in the past so - wow. Maybe I should stop spending money on BMX, oh God.

[02:13] AB: So what kind of things do you do on your bike?

B: Usually we do tricks. There's also freestyle - n-nah, that's tricks. That's also fl-flatground, BMX. Which is you sit on your front wheel multiple times, you kind of jump around your frame and the whole aim of it so to not your fall off your bike while spinning around in a million degrees. Erm - I do the freestyle kind of BMX where we ride around the skate park trying to learn new tricks. Erm - this stuff called bar bend which you go up and jump up in the air, spin your bars, catch them and land before you die. Erm. There's

also rotations. There's lots of tricks to do with BMX. I do the tricks like BMX because I find they're the most fun.

[02:59] AB: Is there a trick that erm was particularly satisfying to master or took a while to master or?

B: Erm most likely bar spinning, the one I talked about where you jump in the air, you spin your bars in 360 degrees, you catch them before you land. That trick took me so long to master and it was one of the most annoying tricks to learn. Every other trick I've slowly learnt with time but this trick I learned over the course of two years. Er - it started off - so pretty much in BMX you have foot positioning. Your left foot forward and right foot forward. I did my bar spins wrong. You're supposed to throw them to your left with your left foot forward but I was left foot forward and I was throwing them to the right. So that was one of my biggest problems with learning barspins. I did learn the barspin to the right side, throwing it to the right but sadly but it was really inconsistent. I never enjoyed doing it because I'd fall off most of the time. And then one day me and my friends decided to go to Corby which is the biggest skatepark in Europe. And they were like Bobby why don't you try bar spins to the left? I said - that's-that's a good idea. So after about an hour of trying bar spins to the left, destroying my shins, the pedal. Usually what happens is you slip a pedal if you don't catch a barspin right, it goes through your shin. And if you're not wearing a shinpad you just - you fall on the ground and start crying most of the time because the pain is so excruciating. But after about an hour of just trying bar spins non stop, shinning myself, I finally caught a barspin to the left. I was like - that moment was one of the most exciting moments in my life, I was like oh my God, I have conquered this trick. And now I do it - it's been a year since I learnt it and I do it everywhere. People - people always told me like Barspin Bobby, why are you only doing barspins? And I just - I just say it's fun. It's really fun just going up in the air spinning your bars 360 degrees catching it and then continuing like nothing just happened.

[04:50] AB: That's cool. Erm. So you kind of mentioned shinpads there. I wonder what kind of stuff do you normally wear when you're doing it?

B: The only thing I - well, when I started BMX I didn't wear **[05:00]** anything. Not a helmet, shin pads, elbow pads, nothing. Now people do that as well - people don't wear any helmets, no protective gear. I think that's really stupid. Recently I started wearing a helmet. Actually not even recently, about a year ago I started wearing a helmet because I saw one of my friends jump over this fence and his back wheel caught and he got shocked to the ground. It was really terrifying, the ambulance had to get called. Erm he was bleeding out of his nose, he threw up a few times and - and after that I kind of stopped and thought maybe I should wear a helmet because my head is the most important thing on my body. I can live without fingers or an arm but if I feel break my head there's no way I can live. I can probably get paralysed. So I decided to start wearing a helmet. So now every time I go ride I wear a helmet. I've been considering wearing shin pads as well because shiners don't happen that often but when they do you sit there for 5 minutes just in pain trying to like rub your shin. And you're just thinking why-why do I not invest in shin pads. They cost 30 quid, why do I not just buy them and save myself the pain? But at the same time, it might sound a bit stupid but the pain is a part of BMX. And it's sometimes nice to be reminded that you're not invincible doing what you do, you can get hurt so you have to be careful. There's also elbow pads and knee pads erm. What are there - you can wear a full face helmet as well which protects not only the top part of your head but the whole face and everything. That's for people that go extreme and I don't so I just wear a normal helmet.

[06:34] AB: So that's really interesting. You mentioned the risk is kind of an integral part of BMX would you - would you say?

B: Yeah. Definitely. Every time I go right there's always a part in the back of my head thinking I could get seriously hurt and possibly not be able to walk or not be able to move my hand for a few days. And that's the kind of the risk that comes with BMX especially when you go out street riding because in a skate park, let's say Kingston Skatepark that I go to - I'm quite used to that skatepark now. I know every corner, I know how to air the corner, I know how to approach a gap in the way that I'm not gonna get hurt. But when you go out street riding you never know because you could go up to a spot you never been to and somebody calls you out to do something and you go fair enough, I'll try it and if it goes wrong it can go possibly very wrong. You can end up in hospital. I've seen my friends end up in hospital quite a few times. And er it is definitely a risk and that's why I try to be a bit more careful now when I ride. Before I use to just go out and ride and not really care but now since I have a job and I kind of wanna keep those two jobs that I have. Erm. It's er - it's definitely something to have in mind when you go out riding otherwise you could get possibly really hurt.

[07:50] AB: So is that something - is that how it kind of how it works people kind of like call you out why don't you do that and people do that or?

B: It depends. Usually when we ride street erm people do call you out. If you say something like mm, I wanna do that gap. But then you don't do it. People are gonna immediately call you out and go yeah you definitely need to do that gap, you only called yourself out on it. Er sometimes people go Bobby why don't you do this 360 over this gap or why don't you do this? I sometimes call my friends out why don't you - I have a friend that's not particularly good, I'm not gonna name him. But erm I sometimes call him out on purpose just so he can progress. And he never actually does what I call him so that's why he hasn't progressed yet. But. Yeah people - usually when we ride street people do call each other out. Sometimes we film lines as well - just for Instagram or - my friends wanted to work on a DVD but that never took off. Sadly.

[08:45] AB: Erm. So we kind of talked a bit about the risks and stuff but what's the kind of other side? What's the kind of feeling that it gives you?

B: The rewarding feeling of BMX is definitely why I'm still doing BMX. If I wasn't getting any reward out of it I wouldn't be doing it. Erm. I guess the reward itself is riding your bike every day. That's - that's one of the fun things about BMX. You can jump on your bike and kind of forget about all your problems. That's why I've had a lot of problems recently because I haven't been riding my bike. The weather's been awful. But definitely when you learn a new trick or do a new line or go up really high in the air or there's plenty of things that I could give - like an example of. To what give-gives me a rewarding feeling. For me when I air a quarter very high, that's what makes me feel like wow, I'm actually flying in the air with a bicycle, that's not meant to happen but it is happening. And that's what - the higher I go the more adrenaline I get. And adrenaline is a very nice feeling with - that comes with BMX. Sometimes it's very very scary but sometimes it's very nice to feel adrenaline.

[09:55] AB: Yeah definitely. So you kind of also mentioned that erm have you noticed [10:00] like with kind of the rise of everyone having camera phones and sort of Instagram things has sort of filming and taking videos become an increasing part of the sport?

B: Definitely. That is definitely a thing. Most of - most of the time when we go out riding everybody films at least once or takes a picture or something like that. And I'm glad that with the rise of technology and being able to capture something right now with my phone and then post it on Instagram a few minutes later. That makes the sport a bit more popular, makes it - makes other people see it and possibly react like I did when I saw it for the first time and go ohh, a-that's pretty cool. Why are people just jumping around on bicycles, maybe I should get into it. And that's why I'm glad Instagram is - is currently the thing. Erm - BMX is quite popular on Instagram. There's a lot of BMXers that are currently leading the [meta] of BMX. We've had quite a few waves of erm - how are they called it - quite a few waves of er [pause] mmm. I don't-I don't know what the word is. I forgot the word is.

[11:07] AB: Is it like different phases or?

B: Yeah we have kind of phases of styles that come round. Think that was another word but I couldn't remember it. There was - there's different phases of style that come round. Now it's really popular to learn a run for plastic pegs. Which is four tubes on the side of the bike. And a freecoaster which is a hub which doesn't pedal backwards when you go backwards. Usually every normal hub is called a cassette hub and when you go backwards, also known as a fakie, you'd pedal backwards as well with the hub. Because that's how the mechanism but this new freecoaster hub whenever you go backwards the hub doesn't engage. So you can pretty much keep your feet level - they won't move, nothing will happen. And that opens up a lot more possibilities of fakie tricks. But most of the time erm I like riding cassette more than freecoaster. I've been in coasters before but I just - I like the feeling of pedalling backwards I guess. That's kind of like the new meta, the new style that's come around. Erm - people are kind of starting to switch back to cassette. And mostly the style is dictated but wh-by what people see on Instagram or on YouTube or what the professionals do we kind of imitate.

[12:15] AB: That's cool. Erm yeah that kind of makes sense. I wonder if you can just kind of describe what a BMX is I mean erm how - how big or how small is it?

B: It is quite small. Compared to a normal bicycle like a mountain bike or a ride bike it is - I'd say half the size of it. It's 20 inch wheels. 21 inch frame which is quite small compared to mountain bikes. Erm. The bars are about 9 inch rise. It's just a small bicycle in general. Erm. People always looking to see and go why - why do you need a seat on a BMX, like you never - do you actually sit down on that? And I just go you don't ride a BMX sitting down, most of the time you're standing up while you're riding your bike so you can set up for tricks and similar things. And people go whaat, like - that-that's like a whole other world to them. That's what I've noticed along the past 3, 4 years of me riding BMX. Every time I speak to someone who isn't in this world of BMX they go what? They get so confused about everything to do with BMX. And I think kind of fascinating that there's a whole other world out there where people are just very ignorant or they don't know much about it so that's why they assume very silly things about it.

[13:33] AB: So erm a spot you've mentioned a couple of times is Kingston Skatepark. I wondered if you could just tell us about that.

B: Kingston Skatepark is quite an old skatepark actually. Erm. They rebuilt it recent-it's not recent, it's 6 years ago. I wasn't even in this country when they rebuilt it. Not-they rebuilt it and er I wasn't in the country. But erm. Before it just used to be a very simple skatepark. They completely redesigned the whole skatepark because of some accident there with the ramps. And erm. Now it's a lot more fun, there's a jump box, a spine, er a bowl. People are probably wondering - whoever's listening to this, ww-what is he talking about? A bowl at a skate-what are you gonna eat cereal at the skatepark? No. Erm. We have a bowl which is er just a few quarters curved around so that you could ride smoothly on them, there's a street section as well which means there's rails, ledges. Erm. Some more quarters, banks most of the time. And they redesigned that skatepark completely and I'd say that's my local even though around the area that I live in. I live in Chessington we have two skateparks closer to me than Kingston. Kingston is four miles away and I have two more skateparks that are one or two miles away from me. And that-they should be considered my local but I consider Kingston my local since all my friends go there. I pretty much know everyone there and I just get along with everyone there.

[14:57] AB: Does it erm - so does it get busy down there?

B: **[15:00]** Oh God yes. It does get busy. Erm. On weekends especially. It's - after 4 when the kids go from - go out from school it is hell to actually ride in there so that's why we usually go street riding or just go to another skatepark called Sunbury which is 15 minutes by train. But it's actually hell riding in Kingston when there's so many kids. Especially scooter riders. Erm. I'm not going to bash on them but they - they're very annoying because they're still kids, they have no idea what they're doing. They get in front of you and while you-especially while you're riding or if you're in the bowl going 7 feet high in the air and then you're landing and you're about to go to another ramp erm and the - on the other side of that ramp is a kid with a scooter and you're sitting there thinking, it's not gonna end well. I've had multiple collisions in Kingston just with scooter kids and most of the time it's not even my fault. Sometimes it's my fault because I wasn't looking, I wasn't paying attention but most of the time they're just very ignorant towards their surroundings and they just jump in front of you and you're sitting there thinking I'm going to die today. It's not fun.

[16:09] AB: So what about the relationship between BMXers and sort of skateboarders and - and inline skaters?

B: I'd say the relationship between skateboarders and BMXers is - is better than most skateparks I've been to. Especially South Bank. When we go to South Bank there's a lot of - we get a lot of dirty looks. We get people looking at us, looking at our bikes and going they shouldn't be here. Even though BMX is grown up with skateboarding at South Bank, it's also part of history but everybody just neglected BMX and looked at skateboarding as this amazing sport. This er very urban thing. Er-South Bank was founded by skateboarders. But BMX was there all along from the beginning y'know but they just cared to notice. I'd say the relationship between BMXers and inliner is erm - well inliners a kind of going extinct so I felt really - I don't know that many inliners. A few days ago there was this girl that came from Brighton and she's an inliner and she asked us do you guys know any inliners around here, and I - and we all just kind of giggled and went well, they come in the summer sometimes. Mostly extinct. And she was like oh really, and I was like yeah, sorry about that. But apparently in Brighton there's a lot of inliners so I guess - I guess it's just to do with the scene in the current town or place we go to. Erm. The relationship between BMXers, scooters and er - yeah BMXers and scooters don't get on. Skateboarders and scooters

don't get along. I think we all just kind of unite towards scooters. It's not a bad thing, there are some amazing scooter riders but not in Kingston. Not in Kingston.

[17:53] AB: So what are the erm other two skateparks which are a bit nearer to you?

B: There's one called Tolworth Bowl which is just a bowl and a ledge. Erm. I know a lot of people that love that skatepark. And I don't understand why, it's just this small bowl that you - it's very tight to get around, especially on a bike. I don't know how it is on a skateboard, never been there on a skateboard. Erm. It's very tight, the transitions are tight. Which means that - maybe I should explain what a tight transition means. There's mellow transitions which take longer for you to go up on and feels a lot smoother for you to air, so go up in the air on. And there's tight transitions which transition from mellow to I guess vertical very high and very fast. And it's a lot harder for you to get used to them. It's kind of hard for you to ride your bike on them. Er skatepark is very tight I'd say and it's - it's just excruciatingly scary to ride there because y-you don't know if you're gonna slip out. Or go too fast, go too slow. Erm my friend loved that skatepark I guess because it give them a thrill, I don't like it as much because I struggle to find lines to do there, I struggle to - to just have fun there. The other one is called Waters Edge or Cox Lane. Erm. I don't know if there's any other names for that skatepark, that's the two names I know. It's a bit bigger. Erm. There's a spine there, kind of a jump box, and a few quarter hips. And a rail. And that's about it. It's - I wouldn't say it's the funnest skatepark I've been to but sometimes when I wake up at 4 and the sun goes down at 6 and my friends are like begging me to ride I-I'd probably go to that skatepark as a last resort. I don't like going there because I broke my front teeth there. Both my front teeth so I had this thing where I had broken front teeth for two weeks because of that skatepark and I don't like going there as much as other skateparks. I guess that's why I like going in Kingston because I haven't been critically hurt yet. Touch wood. But yeah, haven't been hurt too bad at Kingston so that's **[20:00]** why I like going there.

[20:02] AB: I wonder if you wouldn't mind just revisiting that day. Wh-what happened?

B: Oh God. Erm. Well - that was - the day was going actually really well. Erm. Not really w-with my girlfriend but riding wise it was going very very well. We were - we went to Epsom Skatepark which is a bit - I think two miles away from the skatepark I broke my teeth in called Waters Edge. Epsom was fun. Hadn't ridden it much so I wasn't really familiar with the skatepark so my friends suggested let's just drive up to Waters Edge. And I went yeah, I like that skatepark, let's go there, what can go wrong? What I was thinking at the time. We went there and I was trying - since I was watching this very popular BMXer called Chase Hawk who does a lot of transition between corners and er a lot of [biggers] and I wanted to do something similar. So I worked from one side of the jumbox to the other side of the spine, kind of like sideways transitioning over it. And er - I guess I miscalculated something because my front wheel slipped. And er [laughs] I just got shocked to the ground. I was wearing a helmet thankfully. I don't know if it would have done much because I didn't really hit my helmet, I just hit the front of my face. My chin as well. My chin took almost all the impact but I guess it wasn't enough for my teeth to not get the strike. Erm. I just remember my front wheel slipping on the other side of the quarter, me getting shocked to the ground and then [pause] picking myself up and seeing that blood is falling out of my teeth. And then I touched my teeth and I felt two of them move and I thought oh God. And I was just noo, I wasn't feeling any pain, I wasn't - I wasn't actually feeling any pain with my teeth but I was feeling pain around my neck. Erm. Around erm my cheeks and the bottom of my chin. Erm. They were really

bloodied up. My teeth were actually fine. I felt no pain in them whatsoever. And my friends came rushing to me, they were like Bobby you OK, and I just looked at them and I was like I have to go to an emergency dentist. The worst thing was that it was a Sunday. So nothing was open. I had to stay like that for two weeks until I got to - th-there were no appointments available for two weeks, even emergency dentist. So I had to catch a plane to Bulgaria where I'm originally from and go to my personal dentist there. And she just fixed my teeth for free while I guess it's cheaper to go to another country to fix your teeth than it is in England unless you have insurance in England which not at all of the people do. I wanna know if teeth insurance exists. Does it?

[22:39] AB: I think it probably might do.

B: I have no idea. I've never looked into it. I probably should knowing that I BMX. I probably should insure my teeth ultimately.

[22:46] AB: Don't tell them that when you sign up to it.

B: Yeah definitely. I won't be able - yeah BMX. Yeah - I'm just to be sure about my teeth yeah.

[22:54] AB: Erm. I wonder if you can tell us about like the social side of it. So it sounds like you have quite a lot of friends that ride.

B: Erm before I came to this country I have- I had n-I had no friends in Bulgaria that rid BMX. The BMX community in Bulgaria, my hometown, just became extinct. Everybody started riding mountain bikes. So they'd be going to trails in the mountains. And I was the only BMXer at the time and I was just sitting there thinking why am I doing this like, I'm doing this by myself. There's no one to ride on my bike with. So I started skateboarding with my other friends. I came to this country, I brought my skateboard, left my bike in Bulgaria. And I came to this country and thinking the first skatepark I went to was er Leatherhead Skatepark. It's about I think 9, 10 miles away from Kingston. I-5 miles away from mine. So my dad drove me to Leatherhead Skatepark because my mum had work in the leisure centre next to the skatepark. I played around with my skateboard for about 2 hours and then finally some BMXers decided to come. And I was like oh wow. I forgot about BMX completely. I got on this bike. And his pegs were on the wrong side. I - I run my pegs on the left side, his were on the right side. So I did a double peg on his bike and I was like yeah, I definitely wanna continue BMXing. I don't wanna skateboard. I wanna do both because BMXing kind of gets boring sometimes. When it gets boring I decide to just skateboard and sometimes fun to do. But after I rode his BMX at Leatherhead Skatepark I decided yeah I wanna get a bike. Got a job here. Worked for my bike. Saved up enough money. Finally bought a bike after er-a month and a half of saving. I bought a complete bike worth er two hundred and something quid. Doesn't matter how much it was, it broke six months later. That's what happens with complete bikes though, you buy a bike for 250, 200 quid and before you know it the frames already snapped, the forks have been bent. And you're sitting there thinking it's really cheap. It's a really cheap bicycle, that's why. Maybe I should have invested in something more but for complete beginning bicycle it's OK I'd say. Until you start going into the intermediate **[25:00]** level of BMX then - then you kind of well slowly but surely break that bike. But the social side - I get - I get - I just go out of it completely. Erm - but yeah I guess that was my first BMX friend in the country. I haven't spoken to him ever since, that's the funniest thing. And then after I saved up money for my bike, that's where the bike saving up money part comes. I decided to go down to Kingston Skatepark. I don't know how I decided to go down to that skatepark, I think I just

Googled skateparks around the area. And er that's the first one that came up. It looked really nice. Looked big and spacious, so I was like mm, I don't like the bowl. Which was next to mine. I don't like Waters Edge which I ended up breaking my teeth. Erm so I was like maybe I should go to Kingston. Erm. That day - I think that is the first day I've cycled so long - it was 4 miles to cycle to Kingston but my hometown is 10 by 10 miles long. So cycling in my hometown usually takes 5 minutes to get to somewhere because you - you're not gonna cycle from one side of the hometown to the other one. So you're sitting there thinking, 4 miles, hmm I could do that. I cycled 4 miles to my - with my bike to Kingston Skatepark. I had no idea where I was going so I just used my phone to navigate me and I got lost during that. Er - instead of going to Surbiton I went to Hinchley Wood, I have no idea how I did that. But I managed to get on track, went to Kingston Skatepark. And I met - the first person I met is this called Josh Mould. Erm. He was - I remember the day very vividly. He was sitting on the chair outside of the skatepark with his glasses on, his cap on. Erm. And he was lounged about, smoking a cigarette. He goes you alright mate? To which I respond hey, I'm new here. My name's Bobby. He goes oh great. And you're a BMXer. And then after that I met Rocker, Stuart - Stuart was a skateboarder at the time, we managed to convert him to BMX. Erm. And then ever since new people have been coming into the scene. Now we have people like Luke, Jack, erm. Rockers, Stuart, Josh. We have Jack Farrow. Which doesn't ride as much so Jake if you're ever listening to this, people do ride. I miss riding with you. No. No homo. But erm. Yeah. I do have a lot of BMXer friends that enjoy doing the same thing I do but sometimes if you're not riding your bike that's where it kind of feels lonely. You're not - you just feel like you don't have friends. You have friends you ride BMX with. And if that's all you do that's fine but if you're kind of like me and want to just be normal sometimes and not just ride a bike erm they - they don't do that. As much. As normal people would. We don't go to cafes. We don't go to Starbucks as much. And er I don't go to Starbucks at all. I just like the h-the white hot chocolates - this isn't sponsored by Starbucks by the way, this is just completely me like liking white hot chocolate. But we don't do - I guess normal people things, that's why I'm using Starbucks as an example. Erm. When I used to go to college, I had normal friends. That sounds bad, normal friends. I had just boring old normal friends that erm - all we did was go to McDonalds in the Bantalls Centre on my college break and we sat down and ate McDonalds and that was kind of it. And erm. Ever since that happened I was thinking maybe I should just stick to BMX, this is quite boring. And I did.

[28:30] AB: So BMXers - they don't wanna go to Starbucks. All they wanna do is ride BMX.

B: That's kind of all we wanna do yeah. We just wanna ride BMX all the time. Erm. Sometimes though if you're like me you kind of wanna do something else apart from BMX because life isn't only BMX. There's more to life than BMX. So you're like mmmaybe we should like - I dunno hang out and watch a movie today? And they're like pfft, no. So I go OK maybe we should - I dunno erm hang out in the Bantalls Centre? And they're like pfft, no. I'm like OK maybe - I dunno, we go to a photography trip into London or something, one of my friends is like yeaah, and everyone is like pfft, no. So I go yeah, OK. But BMXers are - all they wanna do is ride. If the day is nice and sunny, like kind of today I guess. All they wanna do is ride. If the day is really bad, we still find a way to ride. Nothing stops us from riding. Recently I've kind of erm gotten into photography a lot and videography. That's what - kind of what I'm trying to make into my career. And I've put BMX aside. Plus the weathers quite bad. But I've put BMX aside, I've tried to focus on my career and erm - I got to ride my bike, I didn't ride for a week and when I got to ride my bike for the first time in a week it felt a lot more refreshed. It felt like wow, I'm riding again. This is fun. Last

time I rode I shinned myself, I cried, and I just threw my bike and was like no I'm not doing this. And now I'm not actually [30:00] getting hurt. I'm having fun and doing tricks feels a lot more fresher. That's the thing - if you ride for too long, if you ride for a month straight without stopping every single day you will feel awful. Your body will feel beat up. Doing tricks will feel like a chore more than fun. And then if you just leave it for a week, even 3 or 4 days and then come back to it your body feels a lot more refreshed. You feel like you're doing - things feel a lot more simpler I guess.

[30:31] AB: So - so do people like typically finish work and then jump straight on the bike?

B: Yep. That's what I do. I - I ride my bike to work. I leave it in the back. Erm. I finish work. And the first thing I do is grab my backpack, take my uniform off and just cycle to the skatepark as fast as I can. That's what I used to do. Erm. Since now it's kind of spring I guess, spring is coming. That's why I'm gonna start doing again. During winter it's quite different. The sun goes down at 4 and I finish at half 5. So you're sitting there thinking, what do I do? What do I do? Everything's wet outside, I can't ride my bike. So you just kind of go home, watch some BMX videos and wait for summer. Summer is the best time to ride a bike for sure. Since the sun goes down around 9. I finish work at around half 5 so I just cycle to the skatepark, meet all my friends there, we ride and that's kind of it.

[31:22] AB: Is there any erm particular standout kind of like street spots out and around Kingston that are?

B: Erm. There used to be this rail. Outside the job centre. Actually it was behind the job centre. Er - that got taken down. I've never done that rail. I've seen people do amazing tricks on that rail. I've heard people do amazing tricks on that rail. But I've never actually built up the courage since - it got taken down about two years ago. I was quite still a beginner at the time and I had no idea what I was doing. That's why I wouldn't attempt it because I knew I would get hurt. Erm there's other spots like this-there's erm - quarter pipe next to the library. Which is very steep. And very tight I'd say. Really fun to ride. Erm. What other spots do we usually ride? There's this spot called er circle which is a 3 - it's a 3 stair. But in a circular version so it's pretty much kind of like the circle with 3 steps leading up to the circle. And it's a good benchmark for tricks you can do. I've 360ed off it. I've bar spinned off it. I've done a [manny wall] which is riding only on your back wheel and keeping balanced on your back wheel to turn down which - if I had to explain a turn down to you you'd probably think I'm talking about wrapping yourself round the bike. So I'm not even gonna go into explaining a turn down. Erm. What other spots?

[32:46] AB: Whereabouts is that one?

B: The circle one? It's next to the bridge. Skatepark is actually past the bridge into - we call it Kingston Skatepark but it's actually really should be Richmond Skatepark or Hampton Wick Skatepark but I guess it's known as Kingsfield Skatepark on Google Maps but if you type in Kingston Skatepark it's still I-leads you to the same place. Erm.

[33:05] AB: That circle's by - is it by John Lewis? The sort of by the riverside.

B: Yeah. Yeah it should be by John Lewis.

[33:11] AB: One ques-do you have to - when you go into Kingston Skatepark, do you have to pay? Is it free or?

B: Erm. I'd say it's - I'd-it's free after you pay. If that makes any sense. You have to get a pass. Which costs five quid. You fill out a form, if you're under 18 you get your mum and dad to do that. And er pretty much - what this form is, they don't actually tell us but what this form is is a disclaimer that if you get hurt at the skatepark it's not the skatepark's fault. And I think it's called silly we just pay a fiver for that as well. But you sign a form. You get your kind of like pass printed out and it's pretty much a plastic card with your picture on it and your name and it says Kingston Skatepark. You can't use it as ID sadly. But you just pay five quid, get the pass printed and if the guy remembers you, since I'm a local the guy remembers me and I never have to use my pass there, but if it's someone new then usually they ask me for my pass to which I go but I come here every single day for the past four years. Like I should be entitled to come in here without having to show you my pass. Then he goes well it's the rules mate, so I - to which I go OK. So I get- I ride 4 miles to the skatepark to not know that there's gonna be somebody new who's gonna ask me for a pass. Yeah. You pay your 5 quid, you get your pass printed out, and that's it.

[34:30] AB: So does that mean it's only open certain times - you can't just go in.

B: Yeah. Sadly it's not open 24/7. Even at night you can - you can't go and there's a fence around the skatepark and there's a gate. And th-there's a gatekeeper called Micky. I guess he's park keeper not a gatekeeper. He - I've known Micky ever since I came to this country and I went to the skatepark for the first time. He - he does his job, that's one way to say. Hopefully he never listens to this. But he does his job. Sometimes when the skatepark **[35:00]** is wet he doesn't let us in. That's understandable. It's a council rules and council guidelines, whatever they decide to call it. But it's very annoying when there's one puddle in the skatepark. And he can dry it out. But he's not allowed. Air quotes. To dry it out. So he's like nope. You have to wait for it to dry out. And that takes about an hour to dry out. So it's a nice sunny day. It's not warm enough to where the puddle would dry out immediately. So you'd have to wait. And one puddle literally one puddle on the side of the skatepark and he won't let us in. And I think that's very annoying. And I think it's very lazy of him to do. But I guess he - it's his job, it's his decision. It's council rules. That's why I think skateparks shouldn't be run by councils. The skatepark usually closes in winter times around 4. Sometimes it closes around half 4 if we're lucky. Erm. Now it's starting to close at 7 because the sun is starting to set later. Usually in the summer when the sunset - sunsets around 10 it closes around half 9. Which is the best time to go there. It's nice and warm, you can wear a shirt. There's a lot of people. You can socialise with everyone. There's no girls, as always. There's only guys. That's one of the things about BMX and skateboarding. Erm you get more girls in - actually yeah in the past 4 years of me BMXing I've never seen a girl BMXer. I mean if anyone's listening to this that knows me that is a girl BMXer and I know them and I've got them into BMX, you know who I'm talking about. No you don't count, because I got you into BMX. We've never actually seen a girl on a BMX bike come to the skatepark and go hey, my name is insert name here. And they socialise with all of us and then ride with us, that's never happened. We've had girl skateboarders come in, like become friends with everyone and erm you kind of realise they're just doing it to look cool. They're just being posers. And that's - I guess that's good about BMX. Nobody's gonna do BMX just to be a poser because it's not a posing thing to do BMX. Erm. Skateboarding I'd say is more of a poser thing. I'm not saying all skateboarders are posers but you have those people that wear Trasher and have no idea about skateboarding. That just carry a skateboard around as an accessory, not actually do it. Which really annoys me and I'm glad BMX

doesn't have that. I'm glad no one wears BMX clothing and just carries their bike around and go look at me, I look really cool. People do BMX because they genuinely like it.

[37:33] AB: That's interesting. I wonder why there is no girl BMXers.

B: I don't know. I think it's because it seems like - I think BMXers have made it out to be such a manly sport and you don't really see that many girl BMXers in, on TV or on YouTube. We have been starting to get girl BMXers competing in - recent we have - we had the Vans Pro Cup in Chile. And there was - I think there was a section only for girls. Which was awesome I think. I think more girls should get into BMX. I think more - the more people that get into BMX the better. Doesn't matter if you're girl or boy. But I think skateboarding gets a lot more recognition because it's - first of all it's a lot more popular. And second of all there's a lot more professional er skate-skateboarding women. That are pushing girls to go maybe I should do this, maybe it's not only for guys to do this. Maybe girls can do this as well. And I think we need that in BMX. We need girls to go yeah, you girls can do it too. You can jump on a bike and do exactly what the guys are doing. You can do even better than the guys. One-I was watching the Vans Bro Cup - Bro Cup, Pro Cup yeah. The girls side of it. I was thinking wow, some of these girls are actually doing tricks that I can't do. Some of the girls are doing tricks better than me. And I was thinking that's awesome, that's amazing to see girls being better than guys in a sport that's considered a guys sport.

[39:04] AB: Wicked. I wonder if you could - kind of touched on it there, so is there a kind of BMX fashion? And what is it?

B: Yes there is actually. I've never thought about that to be honest. My - my clothing style is completely changed ever since I started riding my bike. Before I ride my bike I look absolutely disgusting. To do with clothing. I dressed a- no I don't wanna think about that actually. I just really bad - I didn't think about how I dressed. And I never wore Vans. I never wore skateboard clothing or BMX clothing. Erm. I just wore some random shirts without a brand. And ever since I started BMXing I kind of started buying a lot more - a lot more brands to do with BMX and skateboarding. Erm. I wear Vans all the time. The only shirt I wear is Vans or Nike. I wear like skinny jeans. I used to wear like very baggy blue jeans. **[40:00]** People were - started BMXing and while I was BMXing I still did it and then I saw every BMXer was just wearing black skinny jeans and I thought maybe I should get into that as well, otherwise I just look really silly. Erm. Plus black skinny jeans are very nice to ride in because they stick to your leg and you don't have y'know the baggy jeans flopping around when you're riding. You don't have them getting tangled up in your sprocket and you going face first onto the ground thinking what just happened? Then you go oh yeah, it's my jeans. Erm. Yeah black skinny jeans. Erm. I started wearing a lot of - more streetwear I guess because most - I have a friend that works in Natterjacks and he wears streetwear. And I do like the style of it. I like how people dress and er - if you look at me from afar you'd probably think I was a BMXer or a skateboarder. I have a lot of people that don't know me assume - like when I've met them they assume are you a BMXer? Or mostly they say are you a skateboarder? But I just go no I ride a bike. Sometimes I go at it, I go yeah man I'm a skateboarder yeah, I smoke weed all day. Not every skateboarder does but erm. Sometimes I do go yeah, I do BMX, I do this, I do that. They go oh wow, you do look like you dress like a BMXer or a skateboarder. So my clothing style has definitely changed ever since I started riding a bike. In BMX a lot of people do dress the sense or similar to each other. Erm. Most of my friends do dress kind of like what - what's popular in BMX right now. They say windproof or waterproof jackets, beanies. Hats like - brands like Carpark, Nike. Vans. We have a lot of BMX brands as

well. That decided to make clothing. Not only BMX parts. We have Animal. DSD. What other brands? My favourite brand is definitely - hmm, Odyssey. Or [pause] mm, what other brands do I like? Odyssey. I like - I think Odyssey is probably my favourite band to be honest, there's no other brands. Cult. And a lot of people do wear clothing like that. There comes from the brand.

[42:08] AB: Is there a particular spot to get this stuff in Kingston?

B: Not - not BMX brand clothing. As in the one I just said, Cult, Odyssey, Kink, BSD. You can-you can only get that online sadly. You can get Carpark, Nike, Vans at stores like Natterjacks, Two Seasons. Not sponsored. Natterjacks. Two Seasons. The Vans store in Kingston. I go to to the Vans store quite a lot in Kingston. I usually buy my shoes. I go through shoes - I go through one pair of shoes at least once every month. Or two. Depending on how well I take care of my shoes and erm how well I break. That's the thing as well - the reason I go through shoes is because I don't ride a brake on my bike. And that's kind of illegal. So nobody - so hopefully no police listens to this. Or if anyone listens to this and realises I'm riding a bike without a brake erm this has not happened. This interview has not happened, OK. But I ride a brake - I ride a brake without a bike yeah. I ride a bike without a brake. And erm - once actually I got pulled over by the police because I had a race on my bike and they saw me stopped on my foot and they just flashed a light and I was like ah that's not for me is it? And so I stopped my bike and they came up to me and were like excuse me you do know it's illegal for you to ride your bicycle on the road without two brakes. And I just sort of looked at the police officer and was like there's no way I'm putting a front brake on a BMX bike. I will put a back brake on but I'm not putting a front brake on. He was yeah but it's illegal for you to not ride brakes so I'll have to ask you to walk your bike to wherever you're going. So went OK. I'll walk my bike. I wait until the police turned the corner and I just jumped on the back of the bike. Went to the bike lane where it's not illegal for me to ride a bike without brakes. I don't know, is it? And er I just rode my bike all the way to the skatepark. But I - BMX is ridden without a brake most of the time because it feels a lot more free. It feels like - it feels like you're not restrained to use a brake and to brake all the time. You can just - you kind of feel like I guess free of everything. And that's why I like it. But at the same time it takes a toll on your shoes because you have to jam your back foot in between the back tyre and the seat. Which kind of ledges it - wedges it in there and you stop. So I guess you do have a brake. But it's not the most efficient brake. I-it destroys your shoes. And er it's illegal. So I guess it's not the best of brakes but I guess you sacrifice the brake to feel free. Which is kind of silly but that's what we do.

[44:48] AB: One thing I've kind of always wondered is erm when you're actually like - say when you're riding from your home to the skatepark I mean - I-is it not kind of very tiring an-and painful to ride it like a normal bike?

B: It [45:00] is, it is. I usually don't sit down when I ride back home or when I ride to the skate park. I'm always standing up. I'm always quite alert. Because if you're sitting down you don't have as much flexibility. And if anything happens, touch wood hopefully nothing happens, but if anything happens like a car just pulls out in front of you or anything, if you're sitting down you won't have enough time to react. Plus it's not - you can't pedal sitting down, unless you're seated quite high up so mine isn't so I can't usually pedal sitting down so I always have to stand up. It is very tiring, when I had small bars which are under 8 inches I always was hunched over my bike, my back - my back was killing me every single time and then I got higher bars. Nine - 9 inch rise and it's felt very nice ever since. My back is

straight every time I ride. And I've been riding to Kingston Skatepark and back which is 8 miles a day for the past four years so I have no idea how much that is. If I had to roughly calculate I'd say it's more than 2000 miles in the past 4 years but I have no idea. I've always wanted to put one of those things on my bike that tracks how much I've gone, how much I've climbed. The fastest I've gone. Slowest I've gone. But I never actually got round to it. So maybe I'm gonna do that next time I jump on my bike and see for the next 2 years how long - how much do I ride my bike. Erm. It is very tiring to ride my bike. But you gotta do it if you want to go for the skatepark you have to ride your bike. You can't take the bus with a BMX even though it's quite small. You can take the train and that's how we usually travel to other skateparks - a few days ago we went to Guildford and we took the train there. One of my trains drove there because he has a car and not all of us do. Like we [?] cars but we never actually get around to getting cars. Erm one of our friends drove there, we got the train there. We got the train back to London and then we cycled from Surbiton to where we live. But it is tiring. Not as tiring as skateboarding. Definitely not as tiring as skateboarding. I'm glad I have a BMX because I can get around town really fast. It's sort of small bike you can kind of cut through traffic without having a problem. Erm you can jump around as well. Er let's say there's the path is blocked or there's a hole there or [anything] similar you can jump over it. With a normal bike you can't do that. That's why I like BMX, it feels a lot more free I guess, yeah.

[47:25] AB: That's awesome. Yeah, that's great. We'll leave it there. Thank you very much.

B: No problem.