

Transcription of an interview conducted 15 March 2018

Interviewees: IAN LINDSEY (IL) AND PETER LINDSEY (PL)

Interviewer: JAREK ZABA (JZ)

Kingston-upon-Thames, England

Transcription: JAREK ZABA

[00:20] JZ: So this is Jarek Zaba with the Wheels of Time project. I'm here - erm - at - erm - uh a home in Kingston. With -

IL: Ian Lindsey.

PL: And Peter.

[00:32] JZ: Peter Lindsey, yep.

PL: Yeah.

[00:33] JZ: And if you could confirm your place and date of birth if that's OK.

IL: Kingston. 30th of the 11th 1955.

[00:44] JZ: And are you able to do the same?

IL: [Laughter]

PL: 22nd September 1927.

IL: There you go. New Malden.

PL: New Malden.

[00:58] JZ: New Malden. Right, OK, great. Erm - OK. So first of all - erm I think I'd like - I'll start with you Ian if that's alright. If you could just tell me about your sort of first memories of cycling and first experiences of it.

IL: Well my first memories of cycling were on a tricycle outside here [laughs] going up and down Richmond Park Road. But uh - most of my cycling I probably did - well I used to cycle over to Hampton Court when I worked over there. Erm - up Hampton Court way. And err - I moved over to Surbiton and then I used to cycle to Weybridge. Er - every day. Six days a week. Which was eleven mile each way. And er - yeah. I had a - err - er FW Evans hand built bike built in the 70s.

PL: Oo yeah.

IL: Which was a pretty expensive little beast back in the day. And that used to get me rattling back and forwards over there. Used to take me just over half an hour. And I was knackered when I got there.

[Laughs] Cos when I got back.

[02:07] JZ: That very first tricycle. What do you remember about your very first memories of cycling?

IL: There's a picture of me somewhere with erm [pause] cycling outside, here you go - you could see up the road you could see the power station up there so I mean that must have been in the early 60s. And

erm - and I think I've rode on the pavement outside here on my first bike. Er. With either me mum or dad or me brother hanging on behind to make sure I didn't fall off. [Laughs]

[02:41] JZ: Did you enjoy it - did you take to it as a kid?

IL: I - I liked - I like cycling. Yeah it's always really nice. Good exercise. And er - a great way of getting round when you're little.

[02:54] JZ: And - so er - did you cycle consistently through your life or were there - were there points when you didn't or -

IL: Well I don't cycle so much these days. I've got my bike out there but - m-teaching people to drive stops me from doing the - a lot of cycling. But er - cos I got nowhere to go to work, I just walk out the door and get in the car.

JZ: Right of course, yeah.

IL: But both my kids. Er - cycled. And erm - they - they erm - took up speed skating and course they use the same muscle groups. For speed skating as you do for cycling. So both of them became pretty good cyclists. And er - yeah. They're both in the fitness industry now so I suppose it must do something towards it.

[03:46] JZ: I mean what kind of feelings do you associate with being on the bike?

IL: Happy days. Get out, wind in the hair. Yeah it's nice.

[03:56] JZ: So tell me about some of these cycles to - so what was the first one you said that you started cycling to? Workwise.

IL: Hampton Court. Go over the bridge.

JZ: What was your job there?

IL: I did an apprenticeship in horticulture. And er - so I used to cycle up - it's funny cos when I did these jobs it was always cycle straight to work, straight up to the clock in. Ding. [Laughs] Boompf. And then go and park the bike. [Laughs] It's kind of the way it works.

[04:28] JZ: You clock in first because that was measuring how long you were there was it?

IL: Yeah, yeah. Because that was it and no one trusted you that you'd arrive at the right time, had to clock in. I mean you did too didn't you dad when all the time you worked?

PL: No, I -

IL: Didn't you clock in?

PL: No no, I never ever ever had to clock in all the time I was working. No. Just put it on a sheet and that was it.

IL: Trust.

[04:56] JZ: Yeah. Apparently so, yeah. And what was that cycle [05:00] to Hampton Court like, was that from this home here?

IL: Yeah. It's very straightforward - I mean the traffic was lighter then, that was probably in the 70s. So you probably went straight down Kings Road, round over the bridge. And straight up the Hampton Court Way and I was there, just a couple of minutes. I say a couple of minutes. [Laughs] Yeah. It was a little

while. But there was no - it - it did seem higher risk. If I go out on my bike and try to do that ride I find that quite risky.

[05:36] JZ: Really? Because what time period are you talking originally with Hampton Court?

IL: Hampton Court I'd have been about 17, 18. So - I mean I'm 62 now so - so fair old time back.

[05:52] JZ: Yeah. Around 50 years back or something.

IL: Yeah so I suppose it would be - I don't know, 1972, 73. Round then.

[06:01] JZ: So you think it was safer to cycle back then around here then it is -

IL: Oh yeah. Oh well maybe - maybe it's a bit different now they've got some of the cycle lanes through which is probably y'know nice. But er - not - not that a lot of people enjoy going down the Portsmouth Road with it being so narrow now.

[06:18] JZ: Yes indeed. Caused a bit of controversy didn't it, yeah?

IL: I know, I know it did. But I was one of the ones who very much enjoyed going down and cheering on Bradley Wiggins when he came down during the Olympics. Me and my friends went up and watched the women's race come through past the roundabout at the bottom of Kingston Hill. And - and then coming in and out of the park the - er - the men's race. And it's nice to see - well - say it's nice. It's pretty cool when they close all the roads and make Kingston mega-cycle town. But the - at first it was a little inconvenient to say the least but it's erm - now they've got it running pretty organised it's not too bad. We get used to it and er - I quite enjoy it.

[07:08] JZ: Do you sort of enjoying watching cycling recreationally as well?

IL: Yeah. Yeah it's good fun.

[07:17] JZ: So how did you enjoy the Olympics did when they were coming through?

IL: Oh tremendous. Tremendous. I've got a little video somewhere of - I was down by the Rose Theatre. Erm - just opposite the Rose, stood on a little wall by the police station. And you could hear this build up of sound into a crescendo as - and you could hear Wi-ggo, Wi-ggo, Wi-ggo, and it got tremendous roar as - as Bradley come through. And - it was tremendous. N-unforgettable. And I think he said himself when he was over at Hampton Court at the end - he never heard anything like it. As to when he came through Kingston, he just said woah. [Laughs]

[08:03] JZ: So yeah. It's quite a - it's quite an exciting thing. Sort of the global event happening in your home town.

IL: Yeah. I know. It's unreal. Who'd have thought. Y'know. There you go. That's Kingston now. It - I mean when I used to cycle when I [inaudible] you see a few people cycling up and down but not the numbers that's now. That come up and go through the park and stuff. It's er - much more er - heavily er - cycled now. Kingston really is cyclopolis if there is such a word. It's really become the cycle town of all towns.

[08:48] JZ: Yeah. It's great. And - you said you think it was more dangerous - or it is more dangerous now. Is that just down to -

IL: Maybe that's cos I'm getting old. That - that could very much be to do with it. Me turning myself round and looking over shoulder when I'm cycling is m-much easier back then. Had to say. I dunno. It could've been y'know.

[09:15] JZ: Do you think there's more traffic around in general?

IL: Yeah I think so. There's - I mean we never used to have crash helmets on. Er when we cycled. No one needed them. It was just not done. But I mean now - they've all got the lycra and the er - hard hats and the y'know. Which is fair enough I suppose it moves with the times and that. I used to run a motorbike with no helmet on either so it's [Laughs] Back in the day. And I guess we used to drive cars round with no seatbelts on didn't we?

PL: It was always the way, weren't it? Seatbelts? Sod the seatbelts. [Laughs] Think I [inaudible]

[10:00] JZ: And you yourself do you cycle? Or did you cycle?

PL: Oh yeah. I went biking up to Balham. I was working up there like y'know.

[10:12] JZ: How long does that take to cycle to Balham?

PL: I don't know, I used to just do it. I used to - I'd go from California Road up to Queens Road, pick me mate up there and we just - just bike up there. Cos that's - we were working for a bloke in Malden so we used to just have to go there and that was it.

[10:36] JZ: What time period roughly is this?

PL: Oh I can't tell you now. It's a long time ago. [Laughs]

IL: It would have been after the war, wouldn't it?

PL: Oh blimey yeah.

[10:49] JZ: Yeah the sort of 50s. Erm. And was it safe? Do you remember?

PL: Well you don't - the old tram tracks were about then and that was - y'know the trams were about. Up there on that route. I remember going up to Shannon Corner and over the level crossing and [pause] - I can always remember going over the level crossing like y'know to Balham. I don't know why that was but it was just the route it was I suppose wasn't it? I'm right about that aren't I?

[11:28] JZ: You may well be I think so. I believe there is a level crossing in that area so that would make sense.

PL: Yeah. Cos if you -

IL: Well there's several isn't there? You're probably talking about West Barnes Lane ain't ya?

PL: No no no. I don't think so - oh I don't know. It's all - it's all a long time ago.

[11:50] JZ: Of course. Do you remember your son cycling for the first time or -

PL: No. They just had their own way and that was it.

[11:57] JZ: Did you buy Ian his first bike? Did that tricycle that you were talking about do you know?

IL: Well I suppose so. Someone must have paid for it. [Laughs] It just - Father Christmas.

PL: Oh Father Christmas.

IL: Who we still believe in here.

[Laughter]

IL: Yeah. One Christmas suddenly - bike there. Yeah no one bought it. Just dropped off the back of a sleigh.

PL: Well it was - after Phillip used it, you had it didn't you?

IL: Oh yeah. Hand me downs. You got a younger brother?

[12:33] JZ: I don't actually I'm the youngest in my family.

IL: So you got the hand me downs.

[12:37] JZ: I got the hand me downs absolutely. Was Phillip an older brother of yours?

IL: Yeah.

JZ: Did he cycle around as well and-

IL: Yeah. I mean he's 4 years older so he would have been - he would have pedalled on them and I'd have got them after he'd broken them. After he used them, y'know.

PL: Actually we had a tandem for quite a while.

[12:58] JZ: Yeah tell me about the tandem. Did you enjoy riding around on that?

PL: Oh yeah, that was - that was good fun that was. I can't remember the first I went on it. I know it was quite a way.

IL: Going down to Brighton didn't ya?

PL: Oh. Brighton was - just a Brighton trip like, y'know on the old tandem. That was - but it was good like.

[13:20] JZ: You didn't cycle all the way to Brighton from here did you?

PL: Oh yeah. Well that was only on a - it's on a tandem.

[13:28] JZ: Oh yeah. I suppose it's much quicker yeah.

PL: And they used to go boop boop. And she'd be sitting with her feet up. Sssss.

IL: [Laughs]

[13:37] JZ: You'd have to do all the hard pedalling yourself?

PL: Yeah. And she'd be sitting with her f- and course blokes would come.

IL: [Laughs]

PL: Still that's the way life was and you just accepted it all and-

[13:55] JZ: Did a lot more people ride tandems then? Because you don't see them very much these days.

PL: No. Cost a few bob these days tandem I bet. Wouldn't it?

[14:06] JZ: Yeah you don't really see them - see them around. But erm - yeah.

IL: Well that picture I showed you of that tandem I don't know much that would cost now. If you - if you tried to buy that now it would be in the thousands. I mean I know my bike that I used to go down to Weybridge on was hand built. FW Evans. And it cost me - just over 200 quid. In the 70s. So I don't know that would be now, that would be in the probably 2000, two and half thousand now.

PL: Still that's just what a normal bike costs nowadays wouldn't it?

IL: Well they got all the names. Who's been riding that one then.

[14:55] JZ: So the - the - going back to when you were cycling to Hampton Court. What bike would you have been riding then?

IL: [15:00] I pr-I probably had the Evans tourer then. I actually remember cycling back from Southwark where - I think that was Evans's big shop. That was the one that they had - n-and I went to college up there. But I used to go up on the train. Cycling up there every day, that was too chaotic. But I bought my bike up there and cycled back. And er - yeah that was nice.

[15:29] JZ: Good to ride on?

IL: Oh yeah. It was a nice bike. It's - it y'know as I got a bit older it got a bit cronky and er - ended up getting rid of it. I've got er - erm - a hybrid now. So it's not off road, it's not - it's a fairly quick on road bike. But it's erm - you can also go off. Off road. And y-like - if I go and ride round the park I like riding on the - I don't like being near cars, I suppose it's because of what I do. [Laughs] So I ride on the cycle track and it always - I find it annoying when you drive round there. Erm - if I'm taking me old mum and dad up - up the park - it's the number of bikes with-with who are - erm. Mountain bikes on the road there. Wh-I just sit there and think why do you want to drive near cars? I mean there's a perfectly good cycle track down there and - I don't know. A lot of them don't seem to use it that much. But I mean I understand if you're on ribbons and you're on a tight little proper racing back then there's no way you wanna be on the cycle track but erm - the rest of them. Keep away from cars. [Laughs]

[16:44] JZ: That's an interesting point actually. Because you're a driving instructor is that right?

IL: Yeah.

JZ: So you must see cyclists from the other point of view? The motorist's point of view.

IL: Yeah from both points of view. I mean I try - I mean I also see equestrians round here. Round coming out of Ham and up Kingston Hill. And y-you just teach people to give them a really wide berth. I mean I always used to descr-but it doesn't work so much these days. Look when you see a cyclist, think of a milk float. That's - cos no one sees - kids now, what? What's that?

[17:19] JZ: Ha ha. What is a milk float?

IL: Cos you don't - everyone goes - oh I go off to Sainsburys and buy me milk or Tescos and buy me milk. In plastic bottles. But erm.

[17:29] JZ: So the milk float is your way of saying treat it like it's really wide?

IL: Yeah. Six foot clearance. And if you can't give that - don't go past them. Y'know. But erm. Yeah I see it from both points of view and it's - I think generally it's a bit of give and take y'know. Everyone's wrong and everyone's right.

[17:51] JZ: Have you ever had any accidents on your bike?

IL: No. But I suppose I'm kind of quite road aware. [Laughs] As part of my - erm. Y'know my make up. I've sort of got 360 degree vision. I know what's coming, I hear.

[18:12] JZ: Absolutely. You can hear a learner driver coming.

IL: Boop boop. Yeah. Or I can hear when - erm - Toad of Toad Hall's coming down. [Laughs] Giving it the old toot toot. Yeah. But er -

[18:27] JZ: So er you mentioned this hand bike that you acquired later on.

IL: No - that was - I've chose the parts. And they put it together for me. So it's hand built and erm - it. Reynolds F31 double butted. I mean it was hi-tech at the time. Now it would be - y-garbage.

[18:52] JZ: So this was 70s, 80s?

IL: Yeah in the 70s. But back then it was top of the range. But now it would be - wouldn't even be bottom of the range. I-y'know. I suppose the frame would still be good but y'know. But er - I don't know what happened to it. I think I turfed it out. It was - y'know.

[19:13] JZ: What was it like to ride on? What sort of things do you associate with riding on it?

IL: Well it was quickish. Y'know it was a tourer, it wasn't a racing bike. Y'know but it was erm - it was good. Good smooth fast. Ish. I mean it must have been because if I was doing Surbiton, Maple Road Surbiton by the Grove there. Erm. To err - British Aerospace in Weybridge, it's about 11 mile. And I used to do that in about half an hour. So I was clocking up 20 mile an hour on the bike. Mind you some of that was downhill where I probably be doing considerably faster but the bits uphill were a bit slower but y'know I was 25, 26 at the time so I was er - fit. [20:00] Then. Do that now. [Laughs]

[20:04] JZ: Did you drive a car at the time as well?

IL: Yeah I drove a car and a motorbike.

[20:10] JZ: What reason did you cycle to Weybridge instead of using the car or the motorbike?

IL: Well because me wife had the car and the kids. So it would seem a bit harsh for me to take the car and left here with two kids. And no wheels. But er - no, no it was the way it was. And in - in the end I got a motorbike because we all know it's not safe cycling over there, get a motorbike. Oh OK. [Laughs] And I did come off the motorbike funnily enough.

[20:43] JZ: Yeah that's the irony in there.

IL: Yeah no it's but - there you go.

[20:45] JZ: I mean did you feel it was safer on the motorbike in any way?

IL: It's all - it's all the same. I mean it was only cos I came up a road and it was really icy. And on - on the motorbike, I was coming along - I was perfectly OK. But someone dropped a - a - a motorbike in front of me. And the only way I could stop was by dropping the bike and sliding. [Laughs] There's no way it would stop any other way. Y'know. [inaudible] all over the place. But I never had that problem on a bike.

Because you'd be going slower I suppose. And I didn't tend to ride too much when it was really icy on the push bike. Cos you couldn't get as much clothing on.

[21:28] JZ: And erm - what do you sort of associate with that regular cycle to Weybridge? Was it something you enjoyed?

IL: Yeah - I enjoyed a level of fitness I probably never had since. Never - never been as fit as that. And y'know. Err - and that's cool. Y'know I could go out running and goofing about. Looking out the window, there is a - a cycling proficiency team just gone past. [Laughs] It's - there's a certain amount of irony. Here we are, talking about cycling in Kingston. And [Laughs] And there's about 10 kids on bikes with a couple of - all in high vis jackets just gone past. Yeah. Sweet. [Laughs] And that's something I never did. Never did a cycling proficiency. Maybe I should go back and do it.

[22:22] JZ: I think you're probably proficient now.

IL: Yeah I think I might have got enough of behind me. A bit of experience behind me.

[22:31] JZ: So how many did you have this Weybridge job or do this Weybridge commute on the bike?

IL: About 7 years. 6, 7 years.

[22:36] JZ: Have you ever tried calculating how many miles you must have clocked up in that time?

IL: Well I was doing around - over 100 miles a week. Regularly - at high tempo as well. Erm. I dunno. I'd have to get a calculator out. But it would be a few thousand. I mean if I'm doing 100 miles a week, 10 weeks is a thousand miles. So - I dunno. 10, 20,000. I dunno. Maybe more. Which was quite a lot of - quite a lot of bicycling.

[23:20] JZ: And err - I think you - I think you said you don't get a chance to cycle as much these days. I mean do you cycle at all, do you ever get to just go out on a ride, do you still have a bike?

IL: Yeah I've still got a bike. I've got my hybrid. I got it over at Halfords, it's not a great bike but it's erm. Y'know it's nice. It's a bit of fun. Get out on. And er. Yeah. Got it parked down the side there and I go out sometimes just down the river or don't get very far now. But erm. Two lardies sitting in the car all day.

[23:56] JZ: And erm - you mentioned about the cycle lanes. Do you think Kingston's getting a little more cycle friendly?

IL: Yeah. And I think that's a good thing. I mean even from my point of view on the motoring side, I think it's important to try and separate bikes from cars and - because. Cars tend to - tend to just point out bad cyclists who jump la-jump lights and stuff. And erm. Cyclists just y'know bang on the roof of cars that just don't check and cars cross in front of them, they're all as bad as one another.

[Interruption]

[24:58] JZ: Well I was - I was just about ready [25:00] to wrap up. Unless you had anything else you particularly thought was -

IL: No I've got to get off. I've got to do a bit of er work.

JZ: Right lovely stuff, lovely stuff. Thank you lan.

IL: It's been a pleasure.