

**Name:** Chris Ince (b.1948) and Jennifer Ince (b. 1948)

**Date of Birth:** 1948

**Place of Birth:** Manchester and Blackpool

**Date of Interview:** 15 July 2019

**Interviewed by:** NATHAN LINDSELL

**Duration:** 00:16:48

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00:00:00 *This is Nathan Lindsell to day's date is July 15 2019.*

*How did you first encounter skateboarding?*

We were living in Milton Keynes at the time in Springfield and we had a camper van which we took down on a holiday to Cornwall. We stopped at a camping site in Hollywell Bay, near Newquay, and they had skate ramps at this Hollywell Bay and this was the first time that our two sons got really interested in skateboarding. They hired boards there and when we got home we managed to buy them both some - so it's really happened ever since then. Following on from that, they obviously met friends who were also were skateboarders, as well. There certainly wasn't the scene like there is at the moment or the last ten years where everywhere you go you see skateboarders in the street. That was virtually unheard of then so it was quite a new phenomenon to both my wife and ourselves and we just progressed from there.

00:03:03 *What was your first reaction to your sons skateboarding? Was it a positive thing? Did you think it was anti- social?*

No, certainly not anti-social. We just regarded as something they liked to do. They also liked playing football and watching football so it was just an extra sport that they took part in really.

00:03:27 Jenny: A sport that they took part in or say hobby as well

The great thing about it, unlike most other sports where you have to take part as a team, you can go out on your own, skate wherever you want. Not always without hassle because if you skate in the wrong place you get hassled for it. The thing that appealed to us was the sort

of freedom of skate-boarding, and skateboarders do what they want to do and when they want to do it.

00:03:57

*What do you think was special about Milton Keynes at that time?*

That was the one thing actually that brought skateboarders from all over the country to skate. The 'spots' as they were called. With Milton Keynes being a new city there were a lot of new building blocks being built and a lot of the flower-beds were pure marble which were great for the kids grinding on and doing all sorts of things. A lot of the new buildings which were being constructed had a lot of steps to them or stairs which the skateboarders used to Ollie down or kick flip down or do whatever they wanted.

00:04:43

*Could you go into a bit about how you set up the shop at the Bus Station?*

Initially we were running a newsagents in Water Eaton Road in Bletchley and we realised that, although we were self-employed, we were still making a profit for a company and we wanted something to do for ourselves and with the family. We wanted to do something as a family and run it as a whole and be our own bosses completely. So we applied to Milton Keynes Development Corporation for, initially, we were thinking about a shop on a new estate because a lot of the new estates were being built and shops were being put in. But they offered us the opportunity to tender for the business running a newsagent and snack bar in Milton Keynes Bus Station waiting room. I sort of knew what they wanted to hear and Jenny had been a secretary in Manchester and London for Patent Agents, and what else?

*Jenny speaks - A long time ago*

Advertising Agent

*Chris continues speaking*

And the presentation of a personal secretary, we put together quite a good package and we managed to actually get it, which we considered ourselves very fortunate to do. We were told afterwards that some of the big companies had actually applied and we thought that as just a couple actually running a business at the time putting in for something like this and being granted it, without any bribes or anything to the Corporation - we were very fortunate. And basically just started out as, they called it, One Stop Snack Bar, and as I say, we saw so many skaters come, and our two boys were skating at the time as well, and obviously as there was so many buses and they didn't get in the way of the many buses or passengers. There was only one skate shop, or should I say, bike shop in Wolverton called Jamie's Cycles, I believe, and they were the only ones selling skateboards in the area at the time.

The bike shop closed down for whatever reason and we saw an opportunity to open another skate shop and provide the skaters who were coming to Milton Keynes the opportunity to buy their goods. So we did that and it grew from there.

00:07:29 *When did you open the shop and how long was it opened for?*

We were there about 8 years all together. From 1984. One thing we particularly remember was that Superman was being filmed over at the train station and a lot of the crew actually came over to us for their meals...which we found very exciting. Nothing to do with skateboarding, but just one of those things that happened in Milton Keynes at the time.

Jenny – it was good because we'd just opened as well so it was bit of a novelty.

*Do you think that if Bus Station had been in another part of town skateboarding would have been as popular in Milton Keynes?*

That's very hard to say, because I think once they took the busses out of the bus station...I think that coincided a lot when all the skaters congregated and when we were selling skate gear as well teas, coffees and sandwiches.

Yes, I think it would have happened whichever part of Milton Keynes it would have been in. I don't think the location made too much difference 'cos obviously, not only did they skate within the bus station they went out to other different areas of Milton Keynes, so this was just a focal point to meet at some stage before they went out skating to other spots.

*Could you go into a bit about how the shop promoted the scene and how it influenced the other skaters? Did you see a lot of the younger generation coming up?*

Yes, yes, definitely we did do, and just the fact that it was based in a bus station there would be young kids coming along with their parents, maybe travelling on the bus and stopping off here, and seeing the skaters here and the fact we were able to sell them stuff that definitely helped. There was one particular Sunday when we decided to hold a little competition here. And we just did it on the other side of the bus station waiting room, and there must have been about 200 kids turned up altogether from all different parts of the country, literally just by word of mouth which was absolutely phenomenal.

00.09.53

*Can you tell us a bit more about that competition?*

*General discussion about date of competition. Multiple voices*

I don't think any of the Flip team turned up for that one. But there were certainly others who became better known skateboarders then. It was a thing that we basically just decided to do. We got a couple of the companies who were supplying us with skateboards to give skateboards and equipment as prizes so that always helped obviously. But, yes it was very successful

Jenny – It was very low key, it wasn't advertised a lot, it was more word of mouth from the skaters and family and friends.

*And was that the only competition you did or did you do more?*

We did more when we went into our next venture.

Yes we, eventually from here we went on to own an actual skateboard park and we held many international competitions in that skate park but this was actually the only one we held in Milton Keynes.

*When people came to your competitions at Radlands do you think they also came to Milton Keynes? Was there a crossover?*

00.11.37

Yes. Yes, definitely. We did hear from a lot of them that they came on the way or on the way back home again especially with it being close distance to Northampton. There was quite a bit of that.

Milton Keynes was in a way the equivalent of Barcelona in Spain. That is the skate capital of Europe and at one time Milton Keynes was the skate capital of England just for general skaters coming to skate for free without having to pay anything. Yeah, definitely.

*Did you have big teams turning up in the café when you ran it?*

The main team was the Flip team which was run by a guy called Jeremy Fox, who was from Bedford. And he first bought his team here and he encouraged us to sell Flip equipment in the skate shop, which was one of the most popular brands in the country at the time. Obviously, the local kids were absolutely thrilled to see the Flip guys coming along and skating 'cos they were literally the best skaters in England at the time.

00.12.48

*And when was that?*

That would have been about 1990/91

*Do you have any particular memories about the Flip Team like Tom Penny and Alex Mole?*

Just how friendly they were. There were times when Jeremy actually had to go off and do other work and we put some of the skaters up at our own house and they were always very friendly and very polite weren't they. 'Cos Tom and Geoff were very good friends from Oxford and there's another one called Geoff Rowley who was from Liverpool, he was very friendly. There was Rune Glifberg who's from Sweden, and Andy Scott who was from up north, the Manchester area and Pete Dossett, yes they were all very friendly, very happy go lucky.

*General discussion about interview questions – multiple voices*

00.14.15

Basically, due to the success of the skate shop, which we called One Stop Skates because the rest of the shop was called One Stop Snack Bar. Again, we occasionally took our boys to other big skate parks which were all outdoors at the time. There were no official indoor skate parks in the country. There was just one at St Albans which was a youth club which had skateboarding on a Tuesday and Sunday. They just put the ramps out. When we took to the boys to the outdoor parks which were quite far away. There was one at Leigh on Sea and one at Portsmouth so we'd travel that far with the boys just to take them to a decent facility. And we realised that with the British weather it would be quite advantageous to a lot of people if we had an indoor skate park. So basically, because of the success that we had with the snack bar here, we managed to sell that for a reasonable profit and then plough that into our next venture which became Radlands Skate Park in Northampton.

End of Interview