

**Name:** Josh Lock  
**Date of Birth:** 1987  
**Date of Interview:** 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019  
**Interviewed by:** Lindsay Knight  
**Duration:** 00:46:37

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*Okay, so I'm Lindsay Knight, it is the 29<sup>th</sup> July, I'm interviewing...what's your name and when were you born?*

My name is Josh Lock; I was born in 1987.

*Okay, great stuff. All right, let's start at the beginning then. Yeah, so how long have you lived in Milton Keynes and when did you start skateboarding?*

I've lived in Milton Keynes since I was four years old – so, about 1991, I think, we moved here from Luton. And, skateboarding, I think I've always had a skateboard. I always remember having one. I had like one of the little plastic skinny ones; my brother had the Big Fish board with the plastic trucks. So I always remember having one and I remember like going down scaffolding planks in my parents' garden on it. But I think it started to become a actual thing when I was about eleven years old. A friend at school, his brother was a big mountain biker and we used to steal his magazines if it had...like it had...I can't remember who the advert was for but it had someone skating in it and it was a kind of like a 'look-at-each-other' moment and we were like, that's a bit cooler than mountain biking, isn't it? And then it sort of went from there: we got skateboards and the rest is sort of what went on for my whole life. *[Laughs]*

*Do you remember the first time you saw anybody skateboarding in Milton Keynes?*

Yeah, I remember going to some, it was like a weird concert, festival thing, at Planet Ice, of all things, and I went...I walked from Planet Ice over to McDonalds and I walked through the train station. So I was already aware of skateboarding, I had already seen like a few people skating, I think, but never to what I actually came across that day. Like, I just got there and I was, like, this is

where all of the people that I'd want to know are and it was like...it was from then, it was like, well....

*Do you remember anything you saw, anybody that you saw on that day that really stood out, like, really caught your eye?*

I don't really remember much about that particular day, like, it was literally like a walk through and I had seen it going on. It was more later when the people that I sort of were in school with, that were interested in skating as well, and we managed to, as a group, be allowed to go out on our own. So, we got sort of dropped at the train station and I think the thing that sticks in my head – and it probably does for, like, so many people – is Darren [*unclear*], just hacking from one end to the other, heel flip over the rumble strips in the middle, keep pushing, pushing, pushing and then do a manual on the whole ledge of the train station. I think that was the first thing I was like: "Wow, this is like...people are...people like they are in magazines here, you know, like, they're seriously good people," so...

*Do you remember that first time you got dropped off, you said, at the train station? That's kind of like a deep dive straight into the centre of... unclear].*

Yeah, yeah, there was no, like...we'd skated together, like, where we lived and stuff and, like, we managed to get hold of magazines and stuff like that, so we kind of knew like, a few things but it's not until you get dropped in that situation, like, that it was...I guess...I don't know if we felt daunted, I can't really remember feelings like that as a kid, you know, like, it was probably more of an excitement than it was, like, any sort of fear or apprehension about it. It was just, like: "Let's just get on it then." Like, you're never going to get like that if you just sit and stand by and watch, you know what I mean, like? And 'cause there's a way the train station was, you had, like, the blocks started so low that it didn't matter: as long as you had a fair grasp on how to ollie, you could kind of learn quite a lot very quickly because of the different heights and different things there was going on there. Even just the fact that you can roll down from, like, either row, you could go down the bank and then down and up from the underpasses, like, you learnt how to pump and get speed out of things like that, so...

*So it was like an entry point?*

Yeah.

*At that point the bus station didn't have a centrepiece block and even the Buszy didn't exist, so, the action seemed to have switched to the train station between sort of mid-nineties and then. So was the train station the centre where most of the skating was going on when you started or was the Buszy still part of it?*

When I started it was like at the train station I used to see it. I didn't...I think, for a good maybe six months, a year, of going there I didn't really know the bus station was a thing. We ventured out to, like, explore the city more but never really had gone over there. I don't have any sort of recollections why, or anything; they just didn't... I guess maybe it didn't cross our minds, maybe we knew about it and we didn't think it was that great. Also, we were young and small and the block there was big and had a lot of, you know, older guys there, you know what I mean? Maybe it was a bit of intimidation or something there. But, yeah, I think it was more when I was maybe fourteen, fifteen, I think, the Buszy started to become an actual thing, especially spending more time there in all weathers. Like I think, when I was younger, I probably didn't go out if it was raining. Whereas, it became such a necessity that, rain or shine, I'm going out; I don't care, you know.

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*That makes a lot of sense to me actually. I think I had the same experience. Do you remember a moment in skateboarding, for you, when it stopped being something that you did every so often and became the thing that you almost like a...you'd got on the bandwagon, you know, that point that...where it became a necessity: you had to go out at the weekends [unclear] and you were looking for a place to skate, rain or shine? Do you remember what that point was and why it was?*

As far as I can remember there was no actual, like, switch in my head where it was like: 'I have to do this'. It went from: 'This is what skateboarding is,' to: 'This is now what I do.' I didn't do anything else. It's what made it such a harder transition when I got older, when skateboarding had slowed down. It was lot of, like: 'What do I do now?' you know? Like, there was no...yeah, there wasn't really a point in which I knew this was it. I was already in it before that realisation ever came about, you know.

*Okay. So who were the people that were about when you first came into skateboarding, so mid...early noughties, so who were the people on the scene?*

The people that, like, stick out in my head are obviously like my sort of generation I'd say and...so like, Paul Norris, Carter, I remember Tim quite a lot as well. Then maybe a bit later, people like John Aldrich, Jay Bancroft – those guys really were like...they were the ones I was watching all the time, they were a bit closer to my age and then, obviously, you've then got Rob Selley, Paul

Haywood, those guys that like...I didn't see them that regularly, like, but when I did it was kind of like, I knew who they were, I had been told about them, I'd seen them in magazines and stuff, so it was like, when they were there, that was a kind of time I'd let myself just sort of sit and watch, just to see, like, what that kind of level looks like in real life, not just in videos and pictures in magazines.

*You mentioned that before, so the idea of a quality level being at a certain standard in the city that was important because it meant that you, with your own eyes could see what was going on. So how did that influence your skateboarding do you think? Did it make people better on..? Did it help the early generations grow, get better?*

Yeah, I think definitely watching other people that were better than you and skating with them and talking to them and receiving criticism and feedback, if you will, like – not that you really...it's as formal as that but, you know, people will openly say like, "Oh, if you just put your foot here; you put your foot here," so there is definitely like a growth spurt as soon as you start entering that sort of circle. And it's something I always say to kids nowadays who are like: "Oh yeah, I can't do this. I'm not really good enough to skate here." I heard some kid at the station the other day say, "I'm not really good enough to skate here."

I was like: "That's not a thing; you need to get that idea out of your head. Like, the only way you can progress is to watch and learn and take in as much as you can, like, sit there and watch people. Don't, like, go to a shop, buy a magazine and sit and read a magazine when you're at the skate plaza with, like, pros from the UK. Like, you just sit there and watch it and you'll take that in and you'll..." The spur is like watching a child learn to walk, you know; like, they will do it so much quicker having watched then a sibling do it, you know?

*Okay, excellent. All right, okay, so pre-Buszy, what...like, try to set...imagine you're talking to someone fifty years in the future who has nothing to go on, try and tell us the context of skateboarding in Milton Keynes at that time. So, when you're skating at the train station, there's no Buszy and Skate MK hasn't started so there isn't even the controversy that there was that led into that. Where does skateboarding sit in this city in terms of like, was it on the edge of what other people were doing? Like, at school, when people found out you were skating, were they shocked by it, surprised by it? Was skateboarding niche, was it big, because of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater? Like, try and paint that picture for us of where did skateboarding fit in Milton Keynes at that point where you were starting getting into it?*

I think when it was starting to be...my realisation was that I am a skateboarder, I am always going to be a skateboarder, like, it wasn't...it wasn't unaccepted but it wasn't accepted, you know, there wasn't loads of people in my school. It was like, I think once I was in, sort of, year nine onwards, there was me and one other guy and he just sort of fizzled out anyway, so it was just me left pretty much, in the school, that skated. So there was...it was like, you weren't an outcast, I was never treated differently in school or anything. Certainly outside, when you're skating up the city, you get treated a lot differently to any other person riding his bike down the parks and stuff, you know. You're going considerably slower than a bike goes, probably a lot less dangerous than a bike goes, but there was always a preconception that we were up to no good when...you know, how much 'no good' can you actually get in at like twelve, thirteen years old, you know?

*So tell us more about that then. So tell us what was the reaction of the people up at the city...up the city, at the weekend when you're skating, come across...you might come across some people like in the week in the summer, shoppers at the weekend around the centre and going down to the parking, what was the interaction like with Milton Keynes people?*

I kind of...like, if I think about it now, I kind of find it a bit funny. I probably shouldn't, you know, 'cause like, I think people genuinely, it was like they feared for their lives the way they'd jump out of the way. Just from the moment you hear a board hit the floor, people are all jumpy and it's like, there was no reason to be jumpy. It's like, well, I'm going about half...I'm going slower than like walking pace 'cause I'm opening a can of drink, I just, I can't...I need two hands so I put the board on the floor. And people just, yeah, they'd lose their minds about it. And especially like going through the shopping centre and outside the shopping centre, people were very jumpy as soon as they hear that noise – they're quite loud I suppose. But, you know, we're kind of courteous about it most of the time. But yeah, security guards as well, you know, you definitely got a feel for which ones took their job very seriously. But we just...we didn't see things as having boundaries in the city, there was no...to us, there is no such thing as, 'You can't go here; you can't go here.' It's like, put a fence up then. You can't have your steps from your building lead onto the public pathway and expect me not to walk up 'em, like, there wasn't...so I guess we kind of might have instigated some sort of animosity but it was never a vindictive way, it was just...we just...exploring, you know, you're kids exploring your surroundings, getting to know what we classed as ours, I guess.

*That's very interesting, sort of, saying the boundaries thing. That's something that I think about. Just so we've got something to contextualise that answer, that was really good – I'm trying to think how to do this – it would be great if we could get something from you that leads into that, so... 'cause you didn't really mention the time and the place that you were talking about so, for example, it would be nice to have something from you along the lines of: "Back round the time I started in the early...like 2002, or maybe it was 2001, the experience...when you went up the city people reacted to us in this way..." and then tell us how they reacted. So I'll ask you the question: 'Back in the day when you started skating, before Buszy, when you went skating in the city, how did people react?' You could just start by phrasing the question in the answer.*

My mind can't do dates, Linds...*[laughs]*...

*Oh right, so don't worry about that then.*

I can't remember dates but...

*Just say right when you started because that will be... [unclear]...in your interview 'cause you mentioned it. So yeah, so the question is, yeah, around the time I started skating, when we started skating the city, people reacted to us and how did they react?*

Yeah, so around the time when I started skateboarding, reactions we got were, like, people were quite jumpy about skateboarders, they were very like...it's like there was just a stigma that you're automatically doing something you shouldn't be doing, like, they had no idea who we were. We could be people who grew up to be, like, police chiefs, you know, like it's just we were just choosing to do this, or we're choosing to do something else. So yeah, there was...yeah, it was kind of like a fear of them, of skateboarders, you know, people would try and skirt around the edge of you. I've seen people use different underpasses to the ones we're skating under and it's like, if you're going to walk past we're going to let you walk past...*[laughs]*...like we're not just going to walk past, heckle you and just like throw skateboards at you and stuff, you know what I mean? I mean, it's just...

*There's that perception...*

Yeah, it's just...yeah, it's a preconceived one that's like put...it's like a social thing, it's not...there's no actual facts to back that stigmatism up, against skateboarders, you know, not that I've ever witnessed, anyway. I've seen skateboarders do like super-kind things, seen people pick up people's shopping when their bag splits open, like. All I've ever seen is just nice and courteous

and sort of like a family outside of your immediate family, you know.

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*All right, so how do we get from...how do we get into the situation that we were in when Skate MK started? So, the talk, I think, round 2003, people started talking about banning skating and the council did the – which we'll go onto – the consultation that Richard led, and Andrew, and all that sort of shenanigans, which kind of went over the next two years. So when that all kicked off, like, what were the circumstances that took us to that point where the council were like, right, we've got to do something about this? Do you...were you involved with that? Do you remember that time? Were there key things that happened? Did someone get arrested? Did the police turn up at something? Were there posters? Take us from that. It might have been already happening when you started but can you remember that, yeah?*

I think there was definitely already a lot of like negative thoughts towards skateboarders in Milton Keynes. Even when I started, that was probably going on – I was a bit blind to it. But as the years went on, like, I remember being outside Burger King in Central Milton Keynes and being approached by, I think, a couple of security guards and a couple of policemen. And we were just sitting on the bench eating dinner and we were just surrounded, like that, like a wall of massive people in uniforms demanding names, demanding addresses, demanding telephone numbers, demanding everything from us. We didn't know what we should and shouldn't say. In hindsight, it'd have been like a: "No, not giving you anything; I have no reason to give you anything," but, being kids, we, you know, did the right thing, we gave all our details: they were policemen, that's what you're supposed to do. So we gave all the details and, lo and behold, a letter comes through my front door threatening ASBOs for skateboarding in Milton Keynes, saying that I'm the one causing damage, I'm the one that is being seen all the times, like they've got all footage of me, they've got all these pictures and then... [unclear]...saying that if the activity, within the shopping centre especially, doesn't cease then, you know, ASBOs will be given and things like that. It was right around that time that I think my mum showed me an advert in the Citizen saying that they needed...there was a consultation to start, so yeah, it kind of snowballed from there, like I knew that we weren't popular people. I'd been walked out of the shopping centre before – even though I wasn't even skating – I've been walked out of it by security guards saying, "We don't want you in here." I had the skateboard with me but, yeah it's...there was definitely things going on before the consultation point started. I think it just reached that point where it was like, someone's got to intervene 'cause you can't treat kids with ASBOs for skateboarding.

*Do you remember what the threats were at the time? They were threatening... 'cause my understanding was they were threatening a bylaw like: 'You can't skate in the city.' Is that what you remember?*

*They were trying to create a bylaw to make it illegal over the whole city.*

Yeah, I didn't really understand any of that side of it. I just knew that I was going to get an ASBO if I kept skating indoor... [unclear]...

*Which is enough... [unclear]...*

*[Laughs]*

*Okay, well let's go onto Skate MK then, unless anyone's... have I missed anything on the way? No? Okay, so... right, so you're now getting involved, do you... right, so the consultation event, which I think I went to with Richard and Neil Bowen, do you remember going... did you go to that and what was that like? Did you remember going to that one?*

Was that the one at the Buszy?

*No, there was one at the Snowdome? Was that right?*

I don't think I did the Snowdome one. No, I didn't do the Snowdome.

*I think I met you there, I remember meeting you at a meeting but you must have been there.*

No, I think it was... I think that's when... the first thing I went to was like a meeting in the civic offices, I think would have been the first thing I ever went to.

*Okay, could you tell us about that?*

*I actually found the footage of that meeting on an old 8 mill' tape while I was digitising it, so I've got that and I've got you in that, so it's quite interesting. So let's talk about that. Tell us about the first meeting that you went to for Skate MK.*

Yeah, so I remember Mum showing me, in the Citizen, an advert about these meetings that were going to happen; how to get in contact. I don't know what point technology was into then, I don't know if you had to email ahead or what, if we just turned up but it's another thing, like, when skateboarding became serious for me; it's one of those things that I never knew when it became a



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thing. Like, I remember being told about it and going to a meeting and seeing people that I knew there, and my mum, and yeah, it just sort of went from there and it just sort of snowballed into the thing that it became and it was like, we'd all meet up before the meetings and we'd all go and skate around and then; "Oh, it's like six o'clock, we'd better get, like, get up to the offices and things.'

But I remember definitely thinking like...feeling like it was something special was going on there; there was definitely something about it that made me think, somebody's taking us seriously, we've now got...almost like we've got a grown-up on our side now, you know, like I'm starting...like, I'm what, probably, what, fourteen, maybe fifteen now and we had someone on our side. Like, we had Richard who – we spoke about it before, me and Richard – like he was...he could speak to people that would never speak to us, you know; the people that want to threaten us, he can speak to them and put us across as not what they think we are, you know. But yeah, the first meeting, I don't remember a lot about it but I just knew...I just sort of, I guess, just had a feeling like that it was good, something was going to come out of it. That's probably what made me keep going. I think, if I thought it was naff and nothing was going to happen, I wouldn't have gone.

*And the process was quite convoluted 'cause I think we probably spent a year trying to get young people to tell us what they wanted and that wasn't that successful, was it? Because basically everybody told us they just wanted a skate park, which we were convinced they didn't want – they needed something like the Buszy instead. And so that was kind of a...it was...it took a while, didn't it?*

*It was about distilling the essence of Milton Keynes.*

*Yeah, yeah.*

Yeah, I think, like...

*Did you guys get that or...what was it that you were trying to get out of the process? [Unclear]*

I think we... – exactly like you said – I think...as it started, what we wanted was, we wanted a skate park; we wanted somewhere for us to go and skateboard. But, being so young, how do you put together what you think would be best? You know, we didn't design Central Milton Keynes, so how did we know that was the best thing? We just know it's the best thing 'cause somebody had already done it for us. So being able to, like...I remember they had the talk in the library from – I can't remember his name; the guy that designed... [unclear]...he's written a book, Professor, Doctor something?

*Iain Borden.*

Iain Borden, and he, listening to things like that and having old...like, some of the older people around us like...like yourself actually, that can make us think in a different way, to throw out these catalogues of skate parks and start to think like, you know, you're losing spots hand over fist, you lost the Beige, like, that's gone, you can't skate there anymore. So that...it's that kind of thinking that made us think, 'Oh yeah, well maybe we need to start actually thinking, 'What do we like in Milton Keynes to skate?' and that's what we want. We don't want a skate park anymore, we want...this is what we want, you know?

*Yeah, I know that I fell into the trap of still looking at skate park components that...not really thinking that we could actually get away with doing street. All right, that's good. Okay, do you remember...what were the key...do you remember any of the key events along the way that you got involved with? There was the art event at the bus station where people made stuff out of clay. There was the trip to Scotland. Everyone kind of said to me. "Why did you go to Scotland?" and I said I don't... [unclear]...*

I don't know either... *[laughs]*.

*...but it was a lot of fun.*

*But anyway, do you remember what all the key events were, during 2003, 2004 like that moved us towards this?*

*[All talk at once]*

Yeah, so they had...there was quite a few key events during the time that Skate MK was sort of really...really hit the floor running. They had little like sponsorship events they did where I think people cleaned wax off the blocks outside John Lewis and I think Centre: MK donated some money about it – I unfortunately was on holiday when that was going on so I kind of missed that bit; I would have liked to have been involved. There was the, like a design workshop at the bus station. They had big boards up and everything and...that was quite a nice one actually 'cause I remember speaking to a guy from my school that rollerbladed and even he got involved in it and I thought that was quite good as well. 'Cause not many of those people got involved 'cause it was never advertised as 'Skateboarders please come to these meetings' it's like 'Street sports kids please come to these meetings' you know, it was like...there was a lot more of that side of the conversation missing. There was the trip to Scotland, which again involved actually a couple of BMXers as well, which was nice, again, to see some more, sort of, street sports people getting

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involved in the whole process. The meetings, yeah, weekly, fortnightly meetings were always...I kind of looked forward to them in a weird way, it didn't feel like a work thing, you know, but yeah, I think that they were sort of pretty pivotal points.

*And then what happened...you know, tell us what happened as a result of that process. So you had lots of consultation, you developed like a cohort and I think there was an important part of it where the...everyone got to know...everyone got to know each other really well, like to do things like the Scotland trip, so it felt like a big unit, but what did they...what was the result, what do we...what did that lead to? 'Cause obviously we got Rob involved after about a year...[laughs]...you'd try and ring him up...a couple of...when we had plane tickets for him to come to Scotland and Germany, he didn't turn up. Yeah, and I rang him, he was like: "Oh, I forgot," but...so it was a long process but, yeah, what was the result, what was the product?*

The result of all of that sort of time we spent together and the time we spent being able to talk to people like Richard and Andrew – who knew how to get to the people that have the money, basically, to put it the long and short of it – they helped us be able to vocalise what we wanted to say and how we wanted to be portrayed. 'Cause they knew that we weren't bad people, you know. Like we were just a bit mischievous or something but we weren't bad and we wanted to do good out of it.

One thing that always sticks in my mind about the Central Milton Keynes, like the shopping centre people, is something I hear in work even these days, is like, don't come to me with a problem if you've got no solution with you. Like, you've got to...you have to have an idea of what you want, otherwise you're just being negative about it. So I think, having that like close-knit team of Skate MK, like, we were helped to be able to vocalise what we want, why we need it, the importance of it, to be able to stand up in that council meeting in the chambers, in front of all those people, holding a bit of paper, shaking, trying to tell them why I want 'x' amount of money to build a skate park; like, it needed all of that. Even if nothing design-wise came out of that trip to Scotland, or any of the, like, the workshops that we did and the ideas we put on Post-its, even if nothing ever came of any of those, just building that community I think is what it did, you know.

*Okay, that's really good. Tell us about the Buszy then, the design for the Buszy. My memory was that we finally got Rob to come into the city, into the civic centre. He drew out a diagram, you drove him down the Buszy, he chalked it out on the floor and that was it, that's pretty much what's there. And then...but then there was a period afterwards where we had to get it from that to built, which was about a year and a bit. What was your recollection of*

*that? So were you happy with the bus station plan? So, take us from Rob Selley getting involved, to the Buszy plans and how did everyone...you know, what did you think of those plans and did you feed into them, were you happy with them, did you expect they were going to be as good as they were?*

I think, when we first started to be shown visualisations of what the Buszy could look like, it was kind of like, yes, you've...somebody's finally done it, somebody's finally cracked that little part of all of our brains open and gone: "Like this." And it's like, yeah, it's exactly like that, that's exactly...it almost...like, it looks like Milton Keynes, you know, like, if you look at it from straight above, everything is sort of in a nice, like, tucked-in line, it's all square, you could almost imagine the manual pad being that central strip down Milton Keynes. Like, it looks like it, it feels like it, it sounds like it, the slabs are the same, the granite's the same, it was all like, somebody's figured this out. And I don't even really remember an actual point of...like, the first time I saw it and like being like...it was just, this is it, the guy's gone and done it, this Rob guy that I've seen and everything, never met him, never spoke to him...*[laughs]*...'cause I don't think I even really had had much communication with him until it was actually fully built I think but...yeah, it was like somebody had finally got all we needed and figured it out. 'Cause, in our head, we still wanted a skate park – and we didn't want a skate park... *[laughs]*...we wanted our own Milton Keynes basically, you know.

*So when it was developed, like, tell us about...it's finished, it's open...you know, tell us about the opening day and how it was...how, like, skaters received it and how it was received outside of Milton Keynes and your memories of that. Like, how did the skate...British skate world respond to the Buszy, from your memory?*

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I just remember it being packed, every weekend was packed with skateboarders and teams, and sometimes you knew people were coming, sometimes you'd just get out of the car, get off the bus and you were like, "Oh," like, "so-and-so's here," and stuff like that, like, it was...you just sort of exploded. And there was people filming all the time, there was photos all the time. You almost, like, every single time you bought a Sidewalk, someone had a photo in it. And then, more and more, it was people from Milton Keynes having photos in it, of like at the Buszy and it was...I think it was nearly monthly somebody had a First Light from Milton Keynes. I wouldn't say as a direct result of the Buszy but having that kind of a space and being able to then, like going back on what I said earlier, watching people react with those blocks and stuff, like, gave people more ideas and pushed people more because, you know, you're seeing it and it gets you...unlike watching any skate video really.

*Just to pick that up a little bit, just describe to us what those two things you mentioned are. What is Sidewalk and what is First Light?*

Okay, so around the time... – well, till most of my time skateboarding actually – Sidewalk was a UK magazine, released monthly and First Light was where they would...it used to be called First Blood I think. I think Mark Calape had a First Blood, and maybe Sean, but Sean might have had a First Light – I can't remember – anyway, but First Light was where they were...it is like somebody in the UK who is going to be something and it's their introduction to everyone else in the country. So we'd quite regularly buy...somebody would buy Sidewalk from the shop at the station, we'd all sit around reading it, and we started to see mates in it and you started getting excited and then everybody buys a copy of that magazine, everybody's got that magazine stashed at home. I've got one of all the boys, I think; anyone who ever had one, I've probably got a copy of it. Yeah, it was exciting to see that and exciting to see the Buszy...like, I'd buy the magazine anyway but, if it had any picture of any spot in Milton Keynes, I'd buy it, hundred per cent.

*Who were the teams, like the more famous skateboarders...like, give us some...drop some names for us at those first years at the Buszy, like, who did you see there?*

Plan B, I remember Girl Team being down there... – again, it's like dates, my mind can't pick them together. I just remember the times and...

*Do you remember the ...*

...the excitement.

*Sorry to interrupt, that's a cardinal sin here, but do you remember any key moments at the Buszy, like key stuff that people did for First Time – someone did this, someone did that, someone came and did this, or..?*

No, again, I can't do facts and figures and stuff like that but, I don't know, it's just...like, you see, to me it's a feeling of the time, the excitement, just being there and watching it and it's like almost overwhelming sometimes, you know, but...

*Excellent, okay, for you personally then, how did it...how did you see your skateboarding – because I saw everyone's skateboarding before Buszy was there and, you know, I watched all videos online as they started to appear in, like 2005, 2006, and I saw you guys skating and the level that you all went to, which*

*was higher than anyone was skating, even Rob, when I was skating, which was...we were just blown away by it, the older generation. But how did the Buszy, in that period, and all these exposure to really good skateboarders and coverage and sponsorship, how did that affect Milton Keynes skateboarders and you in particular? How did it change the effect of skateboarding?*

I think seeing that much activity, especially of such a high level, it just like accelerated any feeling that I already had that this was something that's always going to be part of me. Yeah, it just went berserk almost, like, I didn't give up on things like school but I certainly didn't try as hard anymore; that was just...I came straight home. I just...I remember I had the full-on routine, like I used to just sprint home from school or college, whichever one I was in at the time – probably college I think, by the time the Buszy came along – yeah, just get home as soon as possible, grab my board, straight back on the bus, straight up the city, and I was there till almost last bus and then home again. It was just...I just wanted to be there all the time, with my mates, all the time, skateboarding all the time, and it didn't even just...we'd want to be at the Buszy all the time, I just wanted to skateboard all the time, even more so than before it was there. So I remember we would travel outside of Milton Keynes a lot more after being...after it was built. Like, it encouraged us to seek out more unique things and go to more street spots than just thinking, 'We live in Milton Keynes so we skate in Milton Keynes,' like, you had such a bigger thing than just the Buszy.

00:35:07

*And who were you skating with? Give us some names, who was the like Elder Gate Crew or whatever those guys were called?*

So, yeah, part of EGC was...yeah, so you'd got John Aldrich, Paul Norris, Carter Hewlett, Jay Bancroft, myself – there's so many people that are part of it. Like, there was...there's not even...there's no initiation or anything, it's like, everyone can be...and Rich was part of it, you know what I mean? It's just a thing; anyone that's part of that scene, you are it, you know.

*Well take us into, then, how you got involved with the council, 'cause you went and worked in the council, right, for quite a long time?*

Yeah.

*Maybe a year, maybe two?*

No, I would think a bit longer.

*A bit longer.*

I don't know. How long, Rich?

*Four or five I think.*

Yeah.

*So what was the process, what led you into the civic offices? It's quite scary going in there first time, I remember it myself, but yeah, take us through that.*

Yeah, so I was approached by Richard Ferrington shortly after I'd finished college – I was probably like nineteen, twenty or something – skating all the time and that was...I didn't know what to do with my life, you know, and it's not even...it wasn't even a situation where Richard knew I was at a loose end and didn't know what I'm supposed to be doing, you know, but I'd formed such a good relationship with him, one that I'll always carry, like, my whole life I reckon, you know, that...I mean, I just remember him coming to my front door and being like, you know: "What are you doing at the minute?"

And I was like: "Nothing."

And it kind of just went from there. In my head it was literally like: "Are you not doing anything? Okay, well, on Monday you need to be here at this time."

And me just going: "Okay yeah, all right Rich."

And yeah, I remember going into the civic offices and going into the offices part and just seeing stacks of paper like and just being in there like: 'This is odd, isn't it?' And then Richard went on holiday on, like, my first day and I was left with Neil Sainsbury.

*So what was the job? Like, what..?*

Yeah, so...

*Describe to us what it was he actually asked you... – it sounds really cryptic: "Could you just come to the office on Monday?"*

Yeah... *[laughs]*...it was kind of... *[unclear]*...like that, yeah.

*"You are now the senior landscape... [unclear] at Milton Keynes Council."*

Yeah, so the job was put to me as a design trainee, so I would get exposure not just to skate park stuff. Like, that kind of was a small part of it but it opened me up to other things as well, so even just like, we did the square in Broughton outside the chip shop, I...Richard let me have a go at designing how that area was going to look, 'cause they wanted to redesign it: the parking didn't work and stuff. And it really made me have to like realise how the

landscape of a city, like the urban design of it, how it all fits together and how you have to figure out that a lorry has to be able to turn round here and a car has to have enough room to reverse out and paths have to be 'x' width and stuff like that. So it was...yeah, it was a design trainee position that could, you know, help grow somebody from, you know, not really knowing what was going on.

*And were you involved in developing skate honeypots, things like that, as part of your job there?*

Yeah, so part of my job, while I was there, was to look at a project inspired by like the moving units, stuff that was done in London. So, blocks that were pre-designed to me – Sean Smith had designed them – but they were designed in a way they could be picked up by a forklift truck and you could pick them up, move them, put them down, reconfigure an area. So when I start...I think I'd probably been there about a year maybe, by this point, we started talking about a south city skate plaza, which is situated behind the other council building in Central Milton Keynes. And the idea of it was that we had a few elements that are there – so we'd put banks in instead of just your normal retaining wall, there's a manual pad, and the rest of the blocks can be moved around and reconfigured accordingly. So we were part of that project. There was also the one in Broughton, a skate park in Broughton, which I worked on with Rob to...and that was, yeah, built as another one. And yeah, they were sort of the main ones that got actually put down in situations though.

*And was there a sense that what you were doing was new and unique? I mean, I've never heard of anyone working in a council and developing street spots for a city for the skaters to skate. I don't think anyone...I think those skills have gone as well, which is a bit of a... [unclear].*

00:40:00

Yeah, it's...definitely that position was pretty unique; still is, like. If I ever tell people about what I used to do, they're like: "Really, that was a thing? You can do that?" And it's like, well you can really do anything, you know, you've got to be that positive guy but definitely I knew there wasn't...I couldn't, like, move to Bristol and work for Bristol Council on their skate park department. It was definitely was like an out-there thing but it...the whole Skate MK think was out there; that wasn't a normal process to build a skate park. Usually it's like: "Oh, we need to build a skate park for the kids."

"Okay, here's a magazine. Choose what you want. This is your budget. And then we'll dump it on the floor for you."

The whole thing about it was unique so, of course, it had to continue to be unique and...it's not that the job was disguised as a design trainee, they legitimately needed someone, like, in there



that could learn how to do things and just do menial tasks, like I'll go and photocopy this, get this ready for this meeting, like, get this tender out for this survey. They needed someone to do those kind of things but then you can have that reliable person that you've known for years 'cause you've worked with this guy like, you can have that reliability. Like Richard coming to me, I feel like, 'cause I'd put in all of that effort, like he was: "I know I can rely on this guy to come in and work," you know. So yeah, it was definitely a unique position and still is and it's a shame that it's not still implemented and implemented everywhere because...

*What's the legacy of it, in Milton Keynes? That's the final question I think I've got. What do you think the legacy of the Buszy, the South City Plaza, places...things like Broughton which are a bit more Plaza-y but, yeah, the Milton Keynes approach?*

I think it...the way we did it is now like the normal way to do it. I can't...I've not seen anywhere where people are buying skate parks out of catalogues anymore. It's just not the done thing anymore; I don't think I've seen one in years. Where I live now in Brighton there's four or five parks that are made by skate park companies. I didn't know whether they ever made a freeform concrete, not like a skate park company like the catalogue-based ones, and I think the way that we do it in Milton Keynes, like, should be adopted more and, you know, physically ask the kids like what kind of...what *kind* of park do you want? What do you like now? And I think us being able to tell a story to them, like, our realisation of, we didn't know what we wanted either but you just need to...like I said, you need to crack that part of their brains...all these kids' brains open, you know.

*Okay, really good; really, really good. Anyone got any other questions?*

*Just thinking, if we could just have one question about your favourite skate spot in Milton Keynes and your favourite trick.*

*And then maybe the one about, what has skateboarding given you, 'cause that's clearly relevant here.*

*Could be the nose grind at the Buszy, it's got to be.*

*Yeah.*

*What, the favourite trick, what, I've ever seen?*

*Yeah, that you've seen or that you've done.*

*No, that you've done.*

Oh, I've done. Oh, I don't like talking about things like that. Right, so...

*Talk to Lindsay.*

*Nose grind down the block on the side of the steps behind Lidl's. When I saw that I was drinking this drink and went... [imitates spitting out drink]... [laughter]. [Unclear] I don't know, that day I thought, 'Did you just do that?' and I actually looked again at the video 'cause I didn't actually believe what I'd seen. I think you did that, right, kickflip, straight on down the... [unclear].*

*And where was that?*

It was at the Buszy, yeah.

*So tell us about that, yeah.*

I don't know what to say about it. To me it was just...

*[Unclear]...my favourite place.*

Yeah, so my favourite skate spot in Milton Keynes I think would have to be either the Buszy – but I kind of feel it's...that's like a bit expected that that's going to be it – I think, from when I first started, eleven year old Josh wants to say the train station; teenage Josh wants to say the Buszy, and then I think, thinking back now, what I'd like to skate a lot would be the old curve block that was at the theatre. Just the theatre in general actually – not the stairs; I wasn't a stairs guy – but yeah, be able to skate the curve block and then tricks over the block and then the alleyway as well with the two...yeah, that I reckon, one of the best spots in...that was in MK.

*You know where that curve block is now?*

It's dumped in some field somewhere isn't it?

*It's actually at the bottom of the...you know the [unclear] – you know, we used to call them the [unclear] – the four step, little sliding concrete bar..?*

00:45:02

Yeah, yeah. It's in that grass bit behind the Beige, isn't it?

*I went there with Wigg and we were taking photos of it and I was chatting loudly and someone came out of an office and went: "Can I help you?" I started trying to explain what we were doing and they were just like: "I'm calling the police." [Laughter]*

*Do you want to get that one about what has skateboarding given you, 'cause it's kind of relevant to your job?*

Yeah, I think skateboarding has given me friendship, I think was the main thing, you know, like I have a very, very small, close-knit group of friends that...it's not...it doesn't make it any...make it harder to make friends as an adult but it's certainly, like, I compare people to those guys and they'll always be mates, do you know what I mean? And friends I wouldn't expect, as well. You know, I never would have ever expected – I was speaking to Richard about this on the way here – we wouldn't...me and Richard Ferrington would never have ever crossed paths, had it not been for Skate MK. Same as like Andrew Ames but, like, Richard drives to Brighton to see me and see my kids and stuff, you know, like that's the kind of thing it's given you; it's like that sense of like a weird community that skateboarding is. It's a very odd bunch of people, I think, and who it involves, you know. What was the other part of the question?

*That was kind of it.*

*That was great.*

*[All talk at once]*

*Excellent.*

Cool.

00:46:37

END OF INTERVIEW