

Name: Catherine McIntyre

Date of Birth: 1984

Place of Birth: Gibraltar

Date of Interview: 8th March, 2018

Interviewed by: Victoria Holton

Duration: 00:10:39

00:00:03

Today's date is 8th March, 2018. This is Victoria Holton and I'm interviewing..?

Catherine McIntyre. I was born in 1984 in Gibraltar.

Lovely, so if you'd like to address your questions to me, that's great – answers, I mean. Would you like to tell us about roller derby, please?

Roller derby is a full-contact sport played on quad roller skates – so, the old-school style, not inlines. It's played on an oval track, mostly by women, and you have two teams. You've got fourteen on each team and five of those skaters go on track at one time, and one of them is the jammer – they score the points – the other four are blockers and they have to try and stop the other team's jammer getting past them on the track. So your jammer's trying to get through the other team's blockers and your blockers are trying to stop the other jammer and also help your jammer as well. So once the jammer's got through that pack of skaters they have to come round the track, skate round the track to the back of the pack, and then they have to get through again and they score points on each skater on the opposing team that they pass. So obviously your blockers are trying to stop them any way they can – get in front of them, hit them off track, things like that. So you wear full protective equipment – so, you've got helmet, elbow pads, knee pads, wrist guards as well – and so there's lots of hitting involved, there's lots of positional blocking and it's just really fun.

Could you tell us whereabouts are the actual places that you do it? If you start it off with whereabouts in Milton Keynes it is, please.

So, we train at Courtside Sports Facility, which is at Bletchley College on Sherwood Drive – it's just opposite the fire station and the police station – so we train there on Friday nights and then we play our home games usually at Bletchley Leisure Centre but also we've been to Houghton Regis in Bedford as well, when we couldn't get the Leisure Centre.

And approximately how many teams do this, sort of, nationwide?

Oh, that's a good question. I'd say there's probably around a hundred and fifty, two hundred teams nationwide.

And whereabouts do Milton Keynes sit in the sort of league tables?

We have gone a bit lower recently – we've had a lot of changes in our team, so we're not at the heights we were before. And so there's a national league called the British Championships. In the women's division there's five tiers. We were steadily in tier three for the first couple of years and this year we're in tier four.

Let's see if we've got anything else here. So is there a specific reason why you got involved in that as a sport, compared to other sports?

I think...I'd always had an interest in sports – maybe not participating in sport 'cause, I don't know, I just felt like there wasn't really many sports out there that I was interested in taking part in – but I watched a film called 'Whip It', which has Ellen Page and Drew Barrymore in it, and I thought... Oh, well I watched that film and I...there's a social side to roller derby that I never really saw in any other sports and that film gives that side of it over really well. So when I watched that I kind of thought, 'Oh, I'd like to go and watch roller derby and be involved with this group of people.' So I googled 'London Rollergirls' and I found them and I thought, 'Oh, maybe there's somewhere nearer that I can go and watch,' so I just googled Milton Keynes roller derby and we actually had a team, so I was like, 'Oh, okay.' I emailed them and I said, 'Oh, when can I...can I come and watch, do you play?' or whatever. They emailed me back and said, 'Actually, the best way to get involved is to come and skate.' And I did actually have my own skates at that time so I thought, 'Okay, I'll go along and skate.' And then I went to see them and they were all really friendly and it was all really nice and it's just one of those sports where, like, whatever your shape, whatever your size, whatever...whoever you are, there's a place for you on track, or even off track – it takes seven referees to officiate the game and eleven non-skating officials, so we...there's always volunteering roles in any sort of capacity. So it's just a really inclusive and welcoming sport where it's all about empowering women and just being a really nice place

where everyone can be involved and get involved, so they're just really welcoming.

Is there a particular age group to the sport?

No, that's the other thing, I guess. You have to be over eighteen to play the adult sport – I mean, there's junior leagues across the UK but Milton Keynes doesn't have one – but you...to play the adult part, you have to be over eighteen and then whatever age upwards really. Our oldest skater is in his sixties, so yeah, whatever age you want to play up to.

00:05:15

So is that a mixed men and women team or is it two separate teams?

So, in roller derby you generally have leagues – well, it started in America where obviously there's further distances to travel to play each other so each city would have its own league and then they'd play internally, and then they have a travel team that goes to other leagues. So it's kind of that setup but Milton Keynes, we have the women's team and we also have the men's team as well.

So when did you first come to Milton Keynes?

I was almost three years old when I came to Milton Keynes. As I said, I was born in Gibraltar – my dad was in the Navy. He moved back to the UK – they already had their house in Milton Keynes – he was a chef in the Navy and he came to Milton Keynes because he thought, you know, there would be jobs and opportunities here for his line of work. And my mum's family were local as well: she grew up at Calvert in Buckinghamshire; her dad worked in the brickworks. So we moved back to Milton Keynes when I was almost three years old.

So what did you think – oh, I suppose at three years old, you don't really have an opinion of Milton Keynes when you first arrived, do you I suppose? So did your family...were your family happy when they first moved here? Was it a good place for them?

I think we've always been happy here, yeah. We...well, my mum and dad have been in the same house since then; they've not moved. As I said, there were jobs and opportunities for my dad and my mum and I've...I suppose when I was a kid I didn't really think about Milton Keynes and what it meant to me. I think you don't really notice at that age and what's around you at that age is what's normal for you, so I never really considered Milton Keynes anything out of the ordinary. We'd go to other cities and it wouldn't be like the same road structure. I'd always be a bit kind of like: 'Oh, this is a bit different. What's all this traffic about?' 'cause, when you're driving round Milton Keynes, it's just not like

that. And then I think, when I was a teenager, I did get a bit sort of grumpy with Milton Keynes. I thought it didn't have any culture or history, or anything like that, which is quite ironic considering my line of work now. And all I wanted to do was go somewhere else; I just wanted to escape. So I went to university in Manchester and then I came back to Milton Keynes after university and I started working as an archivist at various places. So once I started working as an archivist in Milton Keynes I came to realise just what a unique place it is and I've appreciated it a lot more in the past sort of five or six years than I ever did when I was young, so...

Are there any specific elements of the archiving that you're doing in Milton Keynes that are particularly of interest to you?

Well, because I work at the City Discovery Centre, the new town aspect is something I didn't realise that I would actually feel quite passionate about, so Milton Keynes as a new town is just so unique and it was obviously the most successful new town, designed in such a way that was unique, too, internationally really, so I quite like discovering all of the ideas and stuff behind what the architects were doing, what they were planning, things that happened, things that didn't happen. I really like that aspect.

Is there anything that you would have done with Milton Keynes to make it different to how it is today? Is there anything you...having that knowledge?

I think the only thing that's really kind of a bugbear of most people is the public transport. Like, I don't know what you could do with it – I'm not a town planner or a transport planner or anything like that – but I think it's something that, when I was a kid, I felt like I couldn't get to the places that I needed or wanted to go to – it was into the city or it was out of the city centre. So I think if there was one thing I would improve it would be the public transport, and do differently.

And how do you see Milton Keynes in the next...in your imagination, how do you see Milton Keynes developing in the next fifty years?

I...oh, it's only going to get bigger, isn't it? As it's doing at the moment. I think... – well, I would hope that it sticks to its original principles, or at least goes back to trying to stick to those original principles, like grid roads and landscaping and green open spaces and things like that. I would hope that it sticks to that. And hopefully it will improve its culture and its heritage provision, and things like that, just so that we can continue to carry on the good work I think that we really did last year with MK50; and instilling a sense of pride in Milton Keynes and its newer heritage as well

because people don't quite realise exactly how special that is for a new town to have such a unique design principles behind it and I just really hope we can continue to do that.

Do you have any special questions now? [Unintelligible]

No, I thought that was nice; a nice ending there.

Yeah, a nice ending. Thank you very much.

You're welcome.

00:10:39

END OF INTERVIEW