

One & Other Project

Track 1:

[Recording length: 00:35:37]

[The interview was conducted skype to skype without video].

My name is Verusca Calabria and I'm interviewing today on the 6th of April 2010 at about 12 p.m. Ollie Campbell on behalf of Random House Group for the One and Other project, so Ollie so you know why we are here today, don't you?

Yeah I do. You want to find out my oral history.

That's right, yes we already conducted an interview with you before you went on the plinth and we are interested in getting a bit more about the context of the time.

OK.

So if I can begin by asking about the concept of the 'Gunter'.

Yeah so Gunter was, the thing about Gunter is, it's not really himself into explanations. That is one of the slight problems but he was, he came about 5 years ago in response to a short film competition and Gunter got basically very excited about this because the, it was quite a restrictive film competition called Straight 8 and he, the format was you had a single roll of film, Super8 film and you recorded the image straight onto that and then without seeing it, without ever seeing the image and ever editing you made a sound track the same length of the film and you sent them both in together to the competition and the first time we ever saw the vision and the sound together was in Cannes on the beach and that just appealed to Gunter's sense of the restrictions involved and he rather liked that so we came up with a piece of art and that's online at the moment and, hopefully forever and, people can see that and that's the starting point of Gunter, that's when he came about.

Ok can you send me the address of where this film [interrupted].

Yeah sure it [guntr.com](http://www.guntr.com).¹

OK so how did you come about with this idea in the first place for the film

¹ <http://www.guntr.com/>

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competition?

Well we just saw the competition and then in it, the short film basically explains who Gunter is, introduces him to the world and in it he introduces a piece of art but the main concept being that he removes himself from his own art.

And you mentioned 'we', are you working with a collective of people?

Oh yes, [giggles] yeah [pause]. Mainly with a friend called Nick White.

And how long have you two worked together then?

We are part of an art collective called the *bowel movement* [giggling in the background], that's my brother in the background laughing.

[The interviewer chuckles] I could hear somebody there.

My brother is one of the members as well. There's me, my brother Jules, Bob, Ed, Harry - that's the main hard core members - and I wouldn't say we are prolific but we like, we like making things, and there were certainly my brother and Ed were a big support on the day of the plinth and Harry. What am I saying, but we co-opted quite a few other people on the day.

OK so tell me more about the history of putting together this collective, the bowel movement?

So it started when we were about 18, I guess and I'm now 34 so that's one of those a long time ago, 16 years or 17, 18 and it was just making ridiculous films and pranks and encouraging each other in slightly crazy things. One friend Ed, gosh I didn't even mention Ed, rubbish, he put, for example, he painted the *Cernes Abbas giant*, it's a big pagan, what do you call it like a big chalk figure on the side in Dorset on the side of this big hill, it's sort of Stone Age and it's a sort of fertility symbol and the guy has a colossal erection and he went out there with some friends and painted a condom on it. Things like that it's not particularly classic art, it's more, I think, we quite like disruptive art.

And what's the reason behind that?

There isn't really, this is possibly, we are not really big on explanations just doing

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things that seem like a good idea at the time.

OK can I just check something with you? I could hear you much [more] clearly earlier, are you close by to your microphone or your computer, are you using headphones?

No I haven't changed, what would it be worse? Where is the microphone on this?

Oh yeah, you sound much better now.

Is that better? I tell you what, I'll come closer how is that?

Better, much better, yes for when I have to listen back and transcribe.

I've lifted the computer up and can now sound closer.

Fantastic thank you, so just now to bring you back to the time on the plinth.

Yeah.

We interviewed you before you went up but just to think about your time when you were up there, can you describe what happened and how you were feeling?

Yes, so I was in quite a manic state actually. It was quite crazy, there was a lot of preparation but only in the sort of night before, in a way. There were a lot of people involved. I had to thank so many people really including you know so my brother [who] had smuggled a chicken onto the plinth. I was waiting for that. I was, I was going to get naked. I didn't know, I thought that was still illegal it was all, there were a lot of things involved, I had all these things in my head. I was surprisingly tense, way more than I thought I'd be. Umm I just really focused I suppose, almost professionally focused. It was a bit odd. I had a lot in my head. I knew what I had to do and I didn't want to [inaud] up and right from the start, you know, right from the whole approach, I was in character, umm, and, you know, just knew what I had to do, I guess and I pretty much had a very full hour so we went up there. My brother gave me the box with the chicken in which he brought up from home and I thought I didn't know we were going to get away with that. But obviously all [the] time I was then worried which I hadn't really thought about, I had this chicken in my backpack so all the time I was worried about that. Obviously [I] didn't want to hurt it and that actually cramped my style in the sort of wildness of things I could do because I obviously had to be careful of Thrifty, which is the name of the chicken, and I got up, the other thing was

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because of the green mask it really obscured my vision so when I was going up there I couldn't actually see a great deal when I looked around which was a little frustrating so I couldn't really see. I couldn't really make out friends and supporters and who was where exactly, I did sort of orientate myself so I felt quite alone, I suppose, yeah I got on there and there were a lot of practicalities to be honest. I'm stripping bare the artifice like any art I suppose is always like a swan underneath the water, there's furious peddling and I took up some big metal thing weight to hold down the tent but off course my intention to weight down the tent because I knew I was going to be hurling myself around, I didn't actually know I was going to take the tent with me into the netting. That was not entirely sure, but I knew I was going to move the tent around. I didn't want to be tied down too much. It was quite windy on the day, umm and the, I had to stomp around with these big metal weights and that made a great sound on the metal platform as I didn't know it was metal and it was resounding loudly and actually, in retrospect I would have liked to use that more because I thought actually people that went up there they used it as a justification or they shouted. But somehow the sound of the plinth wasn't used that well, somehow, I don't know, it was used more like a platform rather than anything integral whereas the actual [sound] that metal platform [had] with the [inaud] was pretty impressive and [inaud] out of me. I wish I'd done it more, it was so loud, it blew my ears.

OK Ollie you are cutting out a little, unfortunately you are cutting out, have you got other applications open, are you using broadband? Can you hear me?

I'm using broadband? Let me see I can hear you fine, I'm going to close my browser, hang on, that's Skype, I wonder if I need to restart my computer, quit that.

Well I can hear you fine now so let's continue and see how we go.

Hang on I was going to quit a few of these, hang on there's a few things open. I'm on a Mac, it's not mine, QuickTime player is open, oh my god I hate this, OK that's quit, that's good, preview quit that, gosh all sort of things are open, *I Tunes* is open, no [another voice in the background can be heard].

Have you got someone there still? Can you ask your brother not to speak because unfortunately it will be picked up I can hear him, sorry, he's not supposed to be there.

Yeah, Jules don't speak, OK that should be better, OK cool, make sure your phone is off [talking to his brother].

It sounds better hopefully it will work out.

OK cool.

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Let's try otherwise we might have to do it another day because of the time of the day, so to bring you back to your time on the plinth, you talked about the chicken in your backpack, what happened to the chicken during the time of your performance because I never saw the chicken?

So I came up with the chicken, the chicken was inside the tent with the whole blown up animals and people in a cupboard box and basically I had to look after that whenever I was moving the tent around and hurling the tent around. I was obviously, I would often be holding the boxed chicken, the chicken in the box just to make sure it was all right, basically it was very quiet. It didn't flutter or make any, you know, it didn't panic at all, I think the dark probably kept it calm. It did shit quite a lot to be honest when I opened the box there was just chicken shit all over the tent really quite a lot actually I kept finding bits anyway and then, yeah it was fine it didn't, I mean Thrifty [the name of the chicken] is pretty used to people, I guess. I mean we don't pick her up that much, but she has always been around people so I guess she was pretty happy. I thought she was going to fly better to be honest, but she, I think we did clip her wings, but it was ages ago and I sort of assumed they'd grown back. She seemed pretty good. I think maybe she was OK at flying. She just wasn't used to it, I thought she might glide further.

So basically I saw from your performance that you actually jumped off the plinth.

Yes.

So what happened to chicken, was it left inside the tent?

Oh no, I see. What happened was, I was releasing all the animals and the people and then I released the chicken as basically, as a real animal, instead of a blow up animal and she flew out and perched on the edge of the wire and then when I toppled over into the netting she and then I got out and shooed her off the wire she flew down into the Square where my brother and Ed and Harry [were]. But actually the first people to, I think the chicken was taken to, someone got hold of it and gave it to the One and Other crew and they were so sweet they looked after her so well and gave her a little box and it was just brilliant and there was some guy there into birds, not specifically chickens, but birds, I can't remember his name, and he looked after her and they gave her water and everything. She is very happy now, in fact she is no longer with us, she's now with Ed because of no reason, but so she's now in Wiltshire and she is very happy indeed. I think, she enjoyed the day out in London, you know [both interviewee and interviewer chuckle], because they generally have a fairly, you know, country time of it the green fields and she went to the big smoke which is quite a thing.

So what was the significance of throwing animals, both living ones and plastic

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animals and dolls out of the tent?

Well the fundamental principle behind the whole thing was that Gunter was protesting at the ambiguity of his own art and beyond that any concepts or any sort of interpretation really has to be left up to the viewer. It's [not] to go into it too much, it would rather ruin the effect, I think it is definitely in the eye of the beholder. I remember one of the fellows reviewing it afterwards attempted to, [when] someone asked him, you know; what do you think it means? I can't remember the name of the guy, it was some poet or something and he gave up, he didn't even dare attempt it.

Was he someone working for the media?

Yeah he was part of the One and Other [team]. You know he was sitting there with, what's his name, the interviewer, the Sky Arts coverage, there was an interview afterwards. So you remember they used to do coverage of it?

Yes.

So I haven't heard any professional attempting to, attempt interpretation, but I certainly wouldn't like to dictate one. It's really up to Gunter to release a statement perhaps, but it's not really his style.

OK that's fine so did you get any other media attention then?

I didn't no. Not really. The BBC and some papers mentioned a guy hurled himself off the plinth but there were no photo or anything so I think the main coverage came from Sky Arts or there'd been BBC online. To be honest, by then, I think it [had been] running so long that, you know any [short of] self-immolation or something pretty drastic would have had to happen for it to become news per se, which is fine. I have to admit the one thing I was really quite into was to make the live aspect of it to be the main thing. That it was very much of the moment if you were there in Trafalgar Square at that moment then you would, there would be an event and I loved the idea. What I really liked about One and Other was the fact that if you were walking along the street, a tourist especially, that you would come across this thing and you just would not know what was going on. Even at [the] best of times, the plinth, you would know, necessarily know, what was going on. If you had no idea and there was certainly people hanging around walking by and the sort of few chances I got to look around there were people perfectly capable of ignoring what was going on up there which I liked and you would just stumble across it and I really, really loved that nature, that aspect of art and that sort of public art, if you like that the random nature of it. It doesn't necessarily fit any particular sort of form and then I thought the plinth was great for that, that you didn't know and I liked the fact that there weren't too many signs about it, you know there's art going on here and there was that little

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plaque on it really and, therefore, it was something different you walk through and there would be someone doing, I'm talking generally, there would be someone singing or just sitting there or painting or jumping up and down and occasionally they'll be hurling chickens at you or paper aeroplanes or whatever. But sorry you talked about coverage, as the coverage, nothing in particular but I think yeah it was alright.

Did you use any social networking to let people know about it?

I'm sure I put a shout out on *Facebook*. There was point where I asked for various things on *Facebook* so I put a shout out saying I need a chicken, what else did I ask for? I think I asked for inflatable sex dolls and a pop up tent. I needed lots of underpants, that was one of the ideas. There were various things so I used that and people came back with suggestions and to be honest there was even a point where you went on and asked for suggestions actually of what I could do up there, umm and it's remarkable, actually, that people, the ideas that came up most of them were fairly sort of standard but there was one fellow who [inaud] brilliantly, John Stefani, he, you know, in a few minutes he was coming up with great ideas whereas none of which I could quite get to work. He wanted one where to fly a kite in the shape of a pigeon I did try it with a stream, sorry in the shape of a banker with a stream of pound notes behind it and then I would have a hawk on the other arm and send that down to take down the bankers, all very symbolic ,but and there are hawks they actually use in Trafalgar Square and I did give him a ring and said, you know, can I borrow a hawk? But unfortunately they couldn't do it [chuckles].

So why the nudity on the plinth?

Why the nudity? Well beyond obviously the deeper meaning, I'm hoping people, I mean, if people don't really understand what I was doing up there - maybe I should get Gunter to try and write something - but one aspect of the nudity which is certainly [inaud] was the fact that I did some life, I was doing a life drawing pose and that was obviously a classic model and every statue tends to be modelled on someone. There's a lot of nude statues out there so I had all my friends down below giving out pads of paper to everyone and then I struck my pose and everyone drew me so in the end I got a lot of, not a lot of pictures actually, I think a lot of people kept their pictures actually but I think a few pictures came back to me of drawings of me up there because a lot of people went up there and drew me from the plinth and it would be quite nice to have live art. I quite like the idea of drawing people in and making people an active participant in the show but that was only 10 minutes of it in the end and that was a sort of addendum to the art as it were. I mean the other thing as I wasn't quite sure of the legality of it because the last I'd checked, the last guy had been told to put his pants on by the police and I knew One and Other were talking about this and obviously I didn't check again because since the guy who was told to put his pants on was on there, other people went up and it was fine apparently and I checked the law and as far as I can tell, you are allowed to do it as long as you didn't

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upset and startle and alarm as a sort of rule and you are technically allowed to be naked in public and I had another couple of friends down below, Ollie and Charles, another Ollie, they were there to support me so when I stripped off they stripped off as well apart from little placard saying things like 'free willy' over their bits and so that was just to say, you know, don't be absurd; nudity is fine. But of course it was slightly pointless in some respects as it turns out the police didn't care at that point. I definitely wanted to make that point because I think any laws banning nudity are a bit ridiculous.

OK thanks for that, so.

Sure.

I wanted to ask you about this decision to jump off the plinth.

OK, yeah.

Was it something you had planned in advance or something you decided on the spot?

Well I can tell you I had other ideas, I had ideas of putting a rope ladder down and getting a friend to come up. Yeah I thought that would have been kind of fun and then we could both strip and nip into the tent but that would have been a first I think, umm, but I couldn't find any girl who was up for it yeah. Umm so I sort of had ideas for going off the plinth I suppose but I had it was, it certainly wasn't a definite it was a, I think I can't quite remember because I had sort of given up, I was waiting for the platform to come along and pick me up, I was almost unconscious, it was very odd because I don't remember making a decision to actually jump off. I was, I saw it [the cherry picker] coming towards me, because at the very end I was laying down naked just looking at the sky thinking, I couldn't be seen because I totally forgot about the camera [chuckles] and I thought no one can see me I'm just here I'm going to take a few seconds to relax because I couldn't see the forklift coming. I hadn't seen it so I thought I'd obviously have one minute before the forklift arrives. I couldn't see it anywhere laid down and the next thing I knew it had appeared so obviously it had snuck under there and I hadn't noticed it approaching and I am very sorry about that because I didn't mean to eat into the other guy's time at all so then I got up, I leapt up and I was getting all my stuff together I was going to throw the tent off and all my stuff off the plinth. I didn't wanna hassle anybody to take it back. Umm I was thinking of setting fire to it but that was another story, that I thought would be a bit dangerous so anyway, so the forklift rather surprised me. I was taking all the stuff I had on the plinth and was chucking [it] into the tent to pack it and I was gonna get on the fork lift and there was just some sort of geek electric [makes noise of electricity] something in my brain that just clicked and I just went, 'ahh, I can't do this' and I just jumped, it

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was kind of weird and I just didn't know how best to swing down and I just leapt and I swung down with one arm in retrospect I saw it and it was kind of crazy because I didn't really know what I was doing and so I didn't actually go or looked where I was landing as I swung I realised there was some barrier below me and I basically had to release immediately so it looks like, I mean I've watched it and it looks quite fluid but what I'd done is leap I ripped my hand as well I had a great big rip on my hand from the metal I think and it was just one of those crazy slightly mindless swings but so, yeah, it was somewhere in my mind. But the decision to actually do it happened about a millisecond before I jumped basically, yeah.

So what happened immediately after you jumped off I saw from the cameras that you sort of ran around the Square?

Yeah that's it. I had no idea I leapt. I thought I ran around the Square a bit like a headless chicken, I suppose. Umm tales were flapping [?] and then ran off, by which point some police sort of perked up. I think they were possibly the ones that had been attracted by Charles and Ollie who had been naked, you know, upstairs protesting and so I ran off and up the street and the police couldn't catch me. I guess they were sort of a bit unprepared of how fast I was and then some friends caught up with me and we pretty much [all] the *Bowel Movement* were there and we had a quick de-brief and then I thought the police had given up and then I turned around and there they were sort of stomping up. So yeah, I just legged it and then I heard sounds of police sirens behind me so I sort of jinxed through because I used to live around there and just took a little back street where the police car couldn't go but I realised that obviously any kind of, it was fairly obvious my description 'naked man in zebra skin coat with blue trim and a massive hood', legging it down the road. There wasn't really any sort of ambiguity between 'was he wearing a red shirt or a blue shirt?' so I thought obviously any copper in the area would, who had a radio, would know about me but so I jinxed up a few streets and yeah disappeared basically and then some friends found me and [I] sorted myself out and basically got away from the police but apparently they were zipping up and down asking people. But I think they were presumably worried about some sort of basic semi-naked guy running through Soho. I don't know what they would have done if they had caught me. They actually arrested my friends; Charlie and Ollie got arrested. They tried to go inside the National Portrait Gallery I think it was and at the point I guess the police tolerance was reached. They weren't entirely naked, they were semi naked but I guess there is some sort of public decency rule. But they were released without charge, that was fine but, yeah, there was a good load of nakedness. It did rain that day I remember which is a bit of a shock as I was sitting there naked. In fact the only time it pretty much started raining as soon as I got naked and stopped as soon as I put my robe back on. But no it was good fun. I didn't quite, actually at one point I did actually ring a lawyer friend and said 'have I broken any particular rules?', something I should watch out for? And he said now I'll be fine and One and Other obviously, I had left all my stuff back at the base you know back at the whatever it's called, the portable cabin, so I had to go back there and get all my stuff and obviously pick up Thrifty the chicken. Umm and they said they kept ringing saying we haven't even done the interview and taken your photo and what's going on so I had to just check that they

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weren't any police lying in wait but in fact I did wonder passed the police at one point and I saw Charles and Ollie and they were sort of, they were trying to bundle them in the back of a black Maria, and I was a bit you know, whatever, poor denying Christ as I walked straight past them and didn't really acknowledge them and the police were looking twice but by then I changed into a suit so they could not be sure it was the naked guy in ropes so they sort of ignored me. It was touch and go actually they sort of started off, they weren't sure I think Ollie went 'Oi!' and I just walked on by [chuckles] but, yeah, it was fine. There was I presuming they are not after me now [giggles]. I don't think there's a warrant for me, yeah

So Ollie are you saying you had your interview after your performance?

Yeah, I had an interview after. it was after yeah, because I think beforehand I think somehow we ran out of time beforehand, she actually, one of them amazingly somebody there said actually said to me you're not going, I remember vaguely somebody saying you know are you a jumper, it wasn't like, 'are you going to jump off the plinth?' but it was something like 'are you going to run away afterwards?' Or something like along those lines which was remarkably pressing considering no one had actually done it so I think they maybe saw the glint in my eye because I was quite hyper.

So presumably you didn't get a chance to engage with any of the audience in the Square since you were running away from the police?

Well that's it, yeah. I mean it would have been nice I suppose to go and you know see who was about. That is one thing that I regret in that I followed my script and my plan and pretty much to the letter. apart from one main deviation was the, I accidentally lost one of the, I was having a fight with the man, sorry the man and the woman were having a fight and I lost one of my naked dolls over the edge and then I had to go and retrieve it. I threw one over and then I carried on having a fight but unfortunately I was fighting, originally I wanted to fight a man but I ended up fighting the woman which obviously became entirely different sort of statement about you know, brutality of man against woman whereas before it was meant to be something else, umm what the hell was I saying?

I'm glad you brought that up because it was one of the things I wanted to ask you about this symbolism of using these dolls.

Yeah originally, the whole.

[Connection is lost – the interviewer asks the interviewee to resume the interview the following day].

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Track 2

[recording length: 00:40:40]

My name is Verusca Calabria and I'm interviewing Ollie Campbell on the 7th of April 2010 at 9 in the morning as a second interview because we had some problems yesterday with the internet connection, Ollie thank you for being here this morning.

That's alright.

Good morning, I just really wanted to cover a few more elements of the interview that we haven't had a chance to do yesterday so just to bring you back, we talked about your time on the plinth, your time just afterward and we were just up for discussing some of the elements from when you ended your time on the plinth, you mentioned you had a Sky Arts interview.

I had a, I had an interview afterwards like this, an oral history one, is that what you mean?

That's right.

The Sky Arts thing was not an interview with me it was a piece, a poet, umm crumbs, there was a woman and then a poet talking about it with Clive Anderson. It was one of the pieces [of] the week basically or the day or something and they were just talking about it. But he couldn't, the poet didn't dare be drawn into what my piece might mean, yeah I think that's maybe what you were thinking about.

I was yes. Just to think about the impact of the online audience, did you get much contacts or comments on your One and Other profile?

Oh yeah, there were a few comments umm what did they say? Yeah there wasn't anything particularly interesting. I think someone questioned my sanity. What else was there? You know what was the point of it all? Umm some people thought it was quite fun. I think it got quite a lot of hits. Yep someone commented on my very small willy, which was a bit embarrassing. It was very cold and I was very nervous but I didn't actually comment back. I don't think on any of them because for a while there was a bit of a problem because I think I'd locked it by accident when I was doing my profile because I couldn't quite remember why. But for some reason I accidentally locked it so no one could actually get on to my site so the first half an hour no one could get on to the site so that might have slowed down the instant response. But I think there were some Twitter responses. Actually funnily enough it's about the only

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time I ever looked at Twitter and there were people chatting about that lots of OMGs and LOL. Yeah and a lot of worries about the chicken actually, probably most of the twitter comments were about what happened to the chicken and Ed who had helped, and I talked about earlier, is better on Twitter than me so he put everyone's mind at rest. I think he even posted a picture of Thrifty [the chicken] later so that was very important I think to the people out there, a nation of animal lovers!

That's right yeah, you mentioned that you use Facebook and that you had put a shout out about the sort of things you needed, did you get much of a response from your friends, your connections on Facebook after the performance?

Yes funnily enough I was looking at that because at the time I was quite like when I looked at it, it all came in quite quickly. I was quite excited. I went through them but when I looked again I realised there are actually a lot of responses. I thought there was a lot of fun. Umm yeah, you know general feedback and a lot of people posting things. One guy really managed to, somehow he managed to rip the Sky Arts programme later and then put that on the internet as well put that on *Facebook*. So yeah, a lot of people commenting. My mum who doesn't use *Facebook* on the other hand, umm I think actually kept it quite quiet [chuckles]. Bizarrely, yeah she was sort of, she wasn't quite sure how proud she was I think of her son being quite so ridiculous. I think yeah it shot my political career. I think that's the problem. I think that's what she worries about, that's it no chance of running for anything beyond you know a clown show.

OK, so just to really go back about one of the central questions I asked you yesterday but unfortunately we couldn't record it in the end, I asked you whether the experience changed you in any way?

Yeah, umm, well what I said was basically that I had a, I was kind of Gunter in that moment in the performance and I was quite focused on the whole performance and it was quite a full hour and kind of because of that the experience and the situation I wasn't, I didn't necessarily let it affect me as much, it's actually a regret in a way, as much as I would like, so I never really even for a second stood on the plinth and just looked around and absorbed what was going on around and let it affect me. It wasn't helped by the fact the green suit that I wear restricts the vision. Usually it's like looking through a green cheese cloth so you get a sort of vague impression of who's out there. But I couldn't see my friends. I could occasionally hear them, I could hear where people were, you know, so I didn't get that feedback at the time which was, you know, a bit of a shame in a way and at the end when I was laying there at the very end, laying on my back just looking at the sky that was about the only time that I was myself, I suppose in a way. So me personally, I think looking back on it I think that's quite strange looking back on it because it feels like not, almost another person, it's not strictly true because I do remember the time I do remember it very much and it was quite intense but I don't know how much it changed me, it was kind of fun, kind of manic, umm, but what it did do was nice for the collective for all my

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friends. I think it sort of gave us all a confidence that this is, you know, something we could do and something we enjoy doing and yeah it was quite inspirational and in fact and recently we made a short film altogether a lot of the same gang, you know, partly I suppose inspired again by the plinth experience which, yeah, not on a particularly big level but it reminded us how much fun it is creating together and bringing something up on that level it was fun.

What was the film you have just made?

Oh [giggles] it was another short film competition, a 48 hour film competition it was called '[Petals of Blood](#)', yeah, I will see I'm trying to think where it's gone it's on *youtube* actually, I can send you a link.

Thank you.

[Giggles] Yeah.

So talking about the experience and the impact of it on your friends and family, what do you think that was?

Umm well, I think family my aunt and my mum and everyone, they were quite like 'wow'. OK, they knew I didn't have that many boundaries, umm and I guess they realised possibly even fewer than they thought, umm and who else? There was a great artist friend actually he lives in the village in Somerset where my parents live yeah, Mike [incomp] and his daughter Rachel they were quite cool because he's a traditional artist, he's a photographer umm and they appreciated it sort of just on the sheer 'of being in the moment' aspect of it and I suppose the kind of mental state of it and they sort of appreciated that. Actually and they were very supportive and they were very sweet and obviously friends were like, you know, great stuff. We were very entertained we loved it. Umm I don't know how much, I guess most people knew that Gunter already existed so you know and he'd been around for a while so it's not as if there was a whole new revelation about me yeah [chuckles].

OK so what's your collective up to at the moment?

Well plotting and planning really, it's quite funny in London. It kind of sucks a lot of energy out and that it takes a lot of energy to just survive and get by. But we do have, we live in a church in North London which is quite cool. It's a big space and that's where we made the film, it will give us a chance to do a few more things get together and plot and plan but London the size of it and the energy of just surviving there and getting by and working does leave less time for doing your thing plus a lot of people have their own projects as well. I think everyone in my house is writing a

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book [giggles] so everyone has their own individual projects and music projects and other creative projects as well so it sort of depends when these things come together and people can find the time to put them together so people are always making films and doing their own things. It quite depends, it is a kind of loose thing, it comes together when things are needed like for the plinth people all bond together even if one person needs particular support or we might thrash through some people's book ideas or you know poetry or make a film or in fact be in a band. We got a sort of a band as well the Camden Supporting Arts and Social club band which is another off shoot if you like so it's quite a sort of amorphous thing that comes and goes depends whose around people go abroad and so my brother was in Argentina quite a lot, Ed in France pretty much permanently now, Bob was in Scotland and then in India so people get a bit split up. But yeah that's the joy if everyone is up for something and you just have to spark that interest and then things emerge, it's a lot of fun.

So you mentioned a church in London that you use as your studio, what is it called?

Umm well we used to have a place called the Swank which was a place in just off Charing Cross road which was not actually a squat but it was kind of looked like a squat and was kind of swanky and that was three flats and that was filled with friends and that again gave a lot of brilliant sort of inertia, if you like, or the opposite of inertia, energy from which to do things. You know you get enough friends like that, you don't have to be travelling across London and because it was central London people could gather there so that was a lot of fun and so that now we live in a church so it's dubbed the Chunk so that's probably the only name it's got at the moment. It's up in Tufnell Park a kind of interesting place where I've never lived before but yeah that's the north London thing.

OK you mentioned the band, do you play an instrument?

So I play harmonica yeah and if I can sing that would be great but I can't so I only play harmonica. It's about, I think there's about 8 of us in it, it grows and contracts depending who's free again who can make it and who's busy, life styles allowing. But we were all friends first and not necessarily musicians second because there are some very good musicians in the band really good umm but that particular one, Harry writes the songs and we got Phil on lead, he's amazing, they've known each other for ages they are quite tight, Jonnie on base and then Louis and Mon [?] backing singing. We've got Jules on drums, me on harmonica. I'm terrified I've forgotten somebody now that's the problem with, it's quite a large band, no I think that's everyone now, I hope that's everyone yeah so that's a lot of fun that was great because most of us live in the same area I tell you that really, really helps when you can live near friends. That's one thing about London that I, that I'm happiest in London when I got lots of friends who live near it's not a [incomp] to see people you can literally pop around for 20 minutes, have a cup of tea, you can just see friends that easily without it being a mission because again this is the thing; London is so big it can sap all your energy if you are not careful so trying to arrange that is, oh

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Orlando that's who I forgot, I forgot Orlando on keyboard another musical genius he is unbelievable as well, yeah we've got some real musical talent so we used to all live in North Camden and then we moved just down the road some of us and some of us people are still there in Camden. So yeah Orlando, brilliant just messes away on the keyboard and plays about 10 instruments and you just see what comes up and yeah again that's the collective nature. Harry might write a song or I might come up with the plinth idea but then everyone adds to it a lot of fun.

OK so just to now talk about your personal life I mean I know that you are not in London anymore right?

Well I would be in London except I smashed my knee and so I'm in Somerset at the moment with my folks because I'm pretty immobile. I can get around on crutches, I can't walk on my foot and I can't really go on public transport so my nearest tube and bus station are quite a walk so I'm a bit stuck. So if I was in London I'll just be stuck in my house really with the occasional expensive taxi ride somewhere which is a real pain because, yeah anyway it's good to be in the countryside, it's always good at least when I can look out of the window and can go for short walks around the garden.

So tell me about how your broke your knee?

Oh yeah well I was in India, in Southern India in the *Western Ghats* near a place near Bhuti which is a hill station in, surrounding by tea plantations, it's the big tea growing area. The [incomp] hills, absolutely gorgeous with big rolling tea plantations, and this sort of sudden cliffs and drop offs and there's one area that is quite rocky and you've got these huge views so I was bounding along on a sort of path with on these rocks and I just took a massive tumble and smashed my knee open on a rock. Yeah that was, but I was in total happiness, umm a millisecond before so these things change quite quickly and you know milliseconds or whatever one millisecond you are totally happy and the next you've got 6 weeks ahead of you of recuperation and rehabilitation, all that, but they got me out of there and it took, god 16 hours before I was operated on about 10 hours journey to Bangalore which is the nearest big city and I went via a little, the local hospital which was I mean they did really. I was quite high, the adrenaline was still kicking in and one guy kept wondering around because my whole knee was split open and he was wondering around with this huge needle. I don't think he was even a nurse I think he was just a porter with this huge needle with a piece of thread just sort of mumbling. I couldn't understand what anyone said just wanting to sew me up and he kept wondering around another guy with this big needle injection, a syringe just wanting to inject me all the time and 'hang on can we wait until the doctor gets here?' and just trying to fend people off. But actually they were very sweet and smiling and eventually they sort of patched me up and sent me on my way until I could get to the main hospital umm and that was like the hospital in Bangalore people go there from England to get their hips done. It's proper hospital although even there it's quite weird it was an amazing ward which

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was, you know, the sort of private ward whatever paid for by the insurance but as soon as you left it the air con stopped. The walls weren't really painted, the smell of curry and sweat and all that was everywhere and lighting, sort of every other light worked and the lifts were battered so I was in my little oasis when I was in the ward and then I had to get to go out for scans or whatever they had everything there every scanning equipment you like, MRIs and CTs, and you sort of head out the normal hospital from my little oasis and then I realised what everyone else sort of lived in and then I'd get scurried back again, umm, so they catered obviously for everyone but it was, that was interesting, I'm not sure I would recommend it. It's not quite worth the price of admission smashing your leg up but it was kind of an experience, kind of interesting.

So what motivated you to go to India in the first place?

I had been to India before one time in the north and spent ages there about 5 or 5 months travelling around and looking for yoga, a really nice place to do yoga, and meditation, umm, and so I did that and I just travelled around a lot. I just loved the difference of India. I just like somewhere that is other, that isn't England I always need this if possible it sounds kind of spoilt but if possible I do need it, it's not that expensive once you are there, umm, so that's quite good but I need somewhere that isn't England with different input because it's so easy in England even if you are thinking that you are being creative or trying to do things that are different, it's still England and you don't realise that you are actually operating in a very still quite small box. I mean you can vibrate around hugely you can go to you know you can go to squat parties or raves or some sort of urban collectives or go to parks and tree houses or you can go skating into the country you can go surfing or whatever extremes of different places and ways of being or you can go to a political rally but it's still England and it's still actually the same sort of thing so I always find I need to go somewhere else whatever it could be India South America it could be Europe somewhere other and I might not, I know it sounds ridiculous I might not even enjoy it that much because I love England and I love English people and I love English countryside and I'm not, the weather is great when it's great and miserable when it's not but that other that different inspiration I just like to feed on that just everything is different the way people think is just unlike us basically as far as I can and that's just the language barrier and it's a beautiful place. The one problem about India, the sky is often not very nice it's often very hazy [over] the whole of India and that aside, it's interesting and one thing I wanted to [do] because last time I'd been in the foothills of the Himalayas, this is 3 years ago in 2007, and the other thing I wanted to do is [go to] the other hills which are the Ghats which is, are these, the spine which runs down from Bombay down to basically the bottom of India, down the left and also down the eastern side and this is the highest spot in Southern India where I was and I love the idea of tree plantation and it was just beautiful again. You had that annoying haze but apart from that, absolutely beautiful, so I always wanted to go there and again I was going to try [to] look out a bit more. Ideally if I had time, I would have done some meditation and yoga as well which I do like to do to clear the mind so, yeah, a sort of washing through. I find otherwise if I stay in England too long, like I said, it all becomes a bit samey and I forget to appreciate the finer points of England, yeah...

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That's OK go ahead.

Well I was just going to say one observation on India that I always, I mean everyone knows this, who knows me, I talked about it before, but it's [a] land of contrast and you play a game of 'what is India?' and you don't do it deliberately, you just end up having conversations with travellers so you'll be talking away and India is so, is so clean you know they wash themselves furiously but it's so dirty at the same time, it's so you know commercial, everyone is always trying to make money but at the same time it's so spiritual. Umm and people work very hard but at the same time they are really lazy and every time you try say something that seems really extreme the opposite is also true. So it, if you are sort of into glib generalisations, it's an absolute nightmare, which is really nice that you can't control it and box it up and just as soon as you think you've boxed it up, 'oh I see how this works', you are like 'oh god the opposite is also true', that's so annoying and that's great, that's a really healthy way to be I think.

So when did you get into yoga and meditation?

Umm I suppose I have done it, well probably when I was reasonably young 19 or 18 because, yeah, I was doing it on my own from a book, a bit of yoga, and then just the most basic meditation concentrating on my breath and when I was at university everything was quite intense and I just found I had to do it, it was quite interesting, a bit of a life saver. Umm yeah, just, umm, a way of calming the chatter of the mind every day and reminding myself what was important to me and you can get hung up on the day to day little goals and you can forget why you are doing them and you can string all lives together. I suspect it's quite easy to do, I can do it myself and sleep walk through life to some degree just jumping from little goal to little goal from distraction to distraction umm sort of thinking you are living but forgetting actually you don't really know, you haven't listened to yourself properly, well it could be months it could be years and that's when you can get into trouble, I think so I needed that, you know, I meditated when I needed it so it was very sporadic it was never taught properly and to be honest I would never say even now that I'm particularly good at it or that I'm ever got beyond much beyond that level I did do a course in India called *Vipassana* course and I did, I thought I lasted 3 days but looking at my diary apparently I lasted 5 days and that's a totally silent meditation retreat which I didn't really want to do funnily enough at the time, I just ended up doing it because a friend was doing it which is a very bad way to do it, umm, and I was actually more into my yoga than I was and a bit of meditation yoga being a sort of preparation to meditate physically and mentally whereas with *Vipassana*, it's pretty hard core. You just sit there for whatever it is, 10 hours a day or something with breaks. Just silence, just meditating with no physical aspect, no other real aspect to it which I found wasn't for me, not at the time anyway, so they basically asked me to leave which was a bit weird, umm because I kept doing yoga and just little things to keep myself just to get myself in a mood really rather than sort of crow barring myself straight into a 2 hours of meditation. I needed to do a bit of something else so they kicked me out half way

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through so my friends stayed there one of whom loved it and one of whom regrets it probably and thought she probably did more harm than good by being there by muscling through so that's an interesting one; you've got to be gentle with yourself with these things. Actually I think, yeah, *Vipassana*, I don't know if you have heard of it, but it's quite an interesting...

Yeah I have.

And a lot of friends have done it. In India you find that most people have either done *Vipassana* or are about to do it, in my experience pretty much without fail. But there are other ways, there's things like open *Dharma* which have a course in Spain funnily enough which I've never done but other friends have done and speak very highly of and it's quite a good introduction I think which again has more has got Tai Chi and a bit of yoga and walking meditation and just a bit less [coughs] extreme so yeah I did that and then [I] found, [I] tried every type of yoga which is brilliant and sort of found the teachers I liked and discovered you can give all sorts of names to yoga but actually it comes down to a bit like philosophy in a way you find the teachers that just fit you and some work and some don't they might call themselves Atha or they might call themselves Kundalini or they might call themselves Ayanga or whatever all these different names but actually the teacher can't help but put their own stamp on it. But so yeah that was great and that sort of, but then recently I've been well, recently I can't do yoga at all which is actually really annoying the lack of exercise since I busted my knee [bleep noise from interviewee computer]. But yeah that was my India experience.

OK and what were you up to just before you left for India?

What was I up to?

In London I mean work wise?

In London I had been, I'm a private tutor so I've been, I was tutoring people in science and maths going to their houses and teaching them, umm what else I've been up to, I have been god, they're keeping me, yeah I was helping my father with some work he needed. I was doing a bit of building work on a property here down in Somerset so I spend some time down in Somerset which is really nice umm doing sort of, yeah building type work and property management umm so that's basically what I've been up to. In London and creative wise, well to be honest a bit of a lull really as I really needed to get away. I've been in England for a while, over a year I hadn't really left England at all which is very unlike me. I mean it sounds spoilt, but I don't know, it's just the way it is umm, but I've just been in England and it sort of happened my creative juices were low and the theory was I was going to come back full of fire, full of beans from India but I [have] sort of been slightly slowed down the

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corners [?].

So what are you hoping to do when you get better?

Yoga, running [giggles] exercise, that's what I'm really looking forward to, to be honest.

Will you be moving back to London?

[Coughs] I'll be, yes, although yes, I will be going back to London for a bit, umm we are looking to take the band on tour in America in the Southern states over the summer but it depends if people can do it. Basically whether they can get away so that was one possibility which would be really nice. Also it'd be just too hot, I don't know umm, so yeah that would be one plan but otherwise at the moment I do love my teaching and getting better at my teaching and always want to learn ways of teaching and so I'm looking forward to doing that really. I've had to let down some clients I guess but, you know, they are friends as well, you know, I might have taught their kids for a while and the kid, so and I've let them, it's really annoying actually, umm, I've let them down really but I can't do anything about it umm and so I'm looking forward to getting back to that and I also like to do some teaching in schools and I was thinking about doing PGCE but on the job training in London because I'm really interested in getting better at teaching really and it's just so important really how much how important education is and you can go on about it as you know Tony Blair 'education, education, education' and they put a lot of money into the framework, into the hardware and the school and the like but the bottom line is the teachers, a great teacher with a black board and a book can teach you so much I mean there's so much to learn and what's amazing teaching science is that every year, I mean things that were, I teach up to GCSE but things that were off the, when I was at school weren't even known about, you know, are now part of the syllabus and things creep in. It's just amazing the pace of change and to get up to speed to know where we are at in the state of science and the state of play and what we know is a lot to learn. I mean you know just to be a citizen who is informed enough to live in this world you know, it takes a lot and it is fascinating and you've got to [go] back and learn all the stuff people had to learn before, all the basics and all the new stuff and it just is never ending, I love it, the other thing I was thinking of doing as well which I didn't apply [for] was to do a Masters in neuroscience because it's just an aspect I'm fascinated with at university I did [a] physiology and pharmacology degree and I always said I'll go back and do more and study it more and I never have and about now, just before I left, I was getting into it and I was thinking I'd go to India and make a decision and I'd come back and go for it or not and I have come back and unfortunately [because] of the knee and, the sort of, I don't know, the trauma it has shaken me up a bit to be honest, so my mind isn't quite made up as I would like but it is something I definitely want to do. If I don't do it this year then I'll maybe apply next year because it is an area that I'm fascinated in particularly things like spinal, this is before the accident, but after the accident even more so, the fact that obviously if you

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haven't got your health you haven't got anything and you go to the doctor and you say, you know, 'help I'm broken, this bit doesn't work' or 'I've got th'is and those doctors are standing, you know, research dedication and creativity as well and thinking new ideas of how can we do this and ways of attacking cancer and all these things and in neuroscience, I guess it kind of inspired me, was a friend who was really fit, really outdoor he was going for SAS training, Harry, and he fell off a cliff in the dark and the fog and broke his back and for me just that I was like, you know, fix him! That frustration I mean it's quite a, it's quite a left brainy thing as well, but you know we all have both two sides to a brain but it is like 'oh fix him, this is the 21st century', 'fix him' but you can't, you can't fix broken backs, spinal columns, spinal cords. So, but I know in 100 years we will be able to, I mean, I just think that's the rate of things may be less but I know that it has to start somewhere so we I know that in 100 years they'll be standing on the shoulders not of giants I suppose actually it's not giants at all it's often standing on the shoulders of lots of little people who all add up to a giant and I quite like to be part of that process just inching forward that we know more and that's great it's like a detective puzzle as well intellectually. It's interesting as well we are just finding out how does this work, how our bodies work we know about the cosmos we know about evolution, we know about all these different animals, there's so much to learn so there's a million thing in science so I could be involved with but that for some reason it particularly intrigues me I think, it's the level of intellect that I can deal with so I can't do physics or Huber maths or things that require massive abstract thought, but by the same token bigger things sort of animal behaviour or sort of larger levels, I find maybe less intellectually stimulating. I'm not saying they are not intellectually rigorous and I'm not saying they are easy but whatever reason, but I think this is just the right level of reductional [reductive] thinking, I suppose, and solving a problem so I need to satisfy that side of my brain as well the science side, yeah, so that I guess is my vague plan for the future.

OK thank you very much Ollie.

That's all right, thank you.

That's OK.

You've been a good listener [chuckles].

Thank you very much.

END OF RECORDING

Petals of blood and some other videos on 'baking hot plains' :
<http://www.youtube.com/user/bakinghotplains>



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also few other films

http://www.3piece.dreamhosters.com/video/the_door_cd.wmv

http://www.3piece.dreamhosters.com/video/violence_broad.wmv

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qHLYpF8TNE&feature=player_embedded