



Introduction

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Hello listeners, welcome back to Luke's English Podcast. How are you doing today? I hope you're doing fine and that you're looking forward to listening to this brand new episode of my podcast for learners of English all around the world.

Let me give you a brief introduction to this one just to give you some context and also to tell you some things that you can notice as you listen to the conversation. So as you know, on this podcast, I like to help you to get more English listening practise into your life. Sometimes that means listening to me talking on my own.

Sometimes that means that I'm joined by guests in my episodes. With the guest conversations, my aim is to let you listen to English as it's naturally spoken. I want you to hear real conversations in

English so that you can get used to hearing English at a natural speed, you can get used to hearing English in slightly different accents, and you can get used to hearing the spoken version of English, which of course is quite different to the written version with its connected speech and its spontaneity.

So with episodes like this, you can notice the ways that English is actually spoken in the real world. You can notice the ways that conversations develop and evolve in English. And of course, you can notice bits of English phrases, vocabulary, grammar being used, and then you can pick them up and use them yourself.

And I try to present conversations with guests that you will find interesting. That's the idea. How do I do that? Well, a lot of the time that means talking to people who I have a personal connection with just to get the right kind of friendly, relaxed atmosphere in the conversation.

I find that makes for a more enjoyable listening experience. So that means talking to friends, talking to family, and my listeners seem to really enjoy these conversations. So then this episode features a conversation with an old friend of mine who I only recently reconnected with after not being in touch with each other for over 25 years.

We've recently got back in touch with each other and decided it would be fun to do a podcast episode together. So I'm talking to an old friend called Jez Booker. I first met Jez when I was probably about 16 years old at Sixth Form College.

We were both part of the same extended group of friends, an amazing bunch of people. So a bit of personal history here in this

episode as we talk about a certain time in our lives when we were teenagers and then when we were in our 20s, before and after university, when we were together in a band in the Birmingham area. You will hear us refer to college and university.

College, I want to just make sure that you know exactly what we're talking about there. The word college means something slightly different in Britain and in the United States. In the UK, college is what you do after you finish school at the age of 16.

So at the age of 16, you finish school and you take exams called GCSEs. And if you want, you can just stop your education at that point. But a lot of kids continue their education and they go on to study.

Most of the time they go on to study A levels, which is the next level of qualification at a Sixth Form College. OK, so that's A levels at a Sixth Form College normally for about two years. And then after that, they go on to study at university, study a degree at university somewhere else in the country.

So Sixth Form College is like a bridge between school and university. And students at Sixth Form tend to be treated a bit more like adults. There are fewer rules and you're given a bit more independence.

In my case, I took that independence and I ran with it straight to the nearby park where I hung out with my friends, not going to class and not doing any work. You will hear more about that kind of thing in this conversation. But things to notice in my conversation with Jez.

So Jez is originally from Solihull in the West Midlands of England, near the city of Birmingham, right in the centre of England. So he has a West Midlands accent. That area is called the West Midlands.

And so Jez has a West Midlands accent, which you might notice. I'm actually also from that part of the world, partially. From birth until about the age of nine, I lived in West London and then we moved to the West Midlands.

So I lived in that area in Solihull from about the age of nine until about the age of 19 and then a little bit more when I was in my 20s as well. But my accent usually is a bit more neutral. It has kind of become this sort of neutral British accent.

People often ask me what my accent is and I say it's Southern, standard Southern British English or modern received pronunciation, which it usually is, except when I hang out with friends from the Birmingham area, when my accent changes a little bit, just a little bit, and I start sounding slightly more Brummie. Brummie is the word for basically the Birmingham accent or people from Birmingham. So you might notice that happening in this conversation.

You can notice the way that Jez speaks and also notice the way that I start, my accent starts to shift a little bit. This is mainly the intonation in my voice, which starts to sound a bit more sing-song as we say. So pay attention to that.

This is an example of code switching, which is when people naturally adapt their way of communicating for the situation. That could include just the sort of register of language that you're using.

For example, if you switch to a more business-like form of English compared to a more informal type of English between speaking to your friends and speaking to colleagues at work, or it might involve accommodating the accent a little bit.

For example, when speaking to an old friend from the Birmingham days. So anyway, that's something you can try to notice. Do you hear any slight changes in my accent going through this conversation? And can you notice just the ways that Jez speaks with his Midlands accent? The main points of our conversation are, first of all, our old days hanging out together at college, the band that we were both part of in Birmingham.

Then Jez's career in marketing and his more recent foray into the world of YouTube, vlogging about his passion for the outdoors. So watch out for marketing language in its various forms. That's probably all for this introduction, except to say that it was absolutely lovely to catch up with an old friend like this on the podcast.

I hope that you enjoy being part of it. During the recording, we had some technical problems, but I think I've managed to fix them. The audio quality is reasonably good.

I've tried to make it as loud and clear as possible, and I think it's certainly better than your average Zoom call. Anyway, enjoy the chat, and I will talk to you again at the end of the conversation, just for a little report of the conversation and perhaps to explain a few things that you might not have noticed or that you might not have understood. But without any further ado, then, let's chat to my old mate Jez Booker, and here we go.

Conversation with Jez

So I was thinking actually, how is it that we ended up reconnecting with each other after not seeing each other for, I think it's over 20 years. Do you remember how we actually did that? I think it was because I've suddenly become a lot more interested in YouTube. And so, I don't remember actively seeking you out, but I came across you.

So I started my own YouTube channel, which we can talk about if you'd like to. And I think that's why I just ended up looking on YouTube more and going, what's out here? And my kids have always been into YouTube since day dot, and I've always sort of sat in the background going, what are you watching? This is crazy. I should get into that.

It looks really good fun. And all these young people are making loads of money and having a really good time. And they do good stuff.

Some of the stuff they used to watch when they were young was just weird. Like the ones where guys are in rooms and they're filling them with inflatable balls and they just go, today I'm going to fill my house with salt and dive into it. What a waste of money.

But then you see some of the stuff Mr. Beast doing where he's giving money to people who need it. And I'm like, actually, there's something quite nice about that. And I found myself quite lonely working from home a lot because I work from home as a marketing guy.

And I thought, you know what, I need something that's going to get me out of the house and go and engage with the type of people that I want to work with and have some fun. And also maybe my kids will find it entertaining or inspiring that I'm doing a bit of YouTube because they're in that world. So yeah, my kids give me tips on YouTube.

They'll watch my YouTube content and go, that's boring. Or that's funny. Or how about a bit of this? How about a bit of that? They'll do a bit of filming for me.

So I'm getting them involved. And I think that's why we reconnected because I just spent more time on YouTube. And then you came up, I think, and I went, oh, what's Luke up to? And I remember a long time ago, several years ago, I saw you do that video when you're in London talking to tourists.

I mean, it's really, really old. That's a long time ago. Yeah.

I did a series of videos, um, in right at the beginning of this in 2009. And I went out into London with, uh, like a DV camcorder, you know, like a camcorder with a digital cassette in it. Yeah.

This is really old, olden days. And I went out in the street and I had a tripod and I wore a suit. It seemed to work because people were more, I did others afterwards when I didn't wear a suit and people were definitely less interested in talking to me and much more wary of like, who is this person in the street? Why is he not wearing a suit? This is Britain.

Why is it? I'm not going to talk to him. He's not wearing a suit. Um, and a bowler hat, I guess.

It didn't go that far, but maybe that would be the key to even greater success. Um, but I wore a lanyard, I wore a lanyard, you know, like a thing around your neck with a, with a, like a card on it or something just to make myself look a little bit more official. And it worked and people were much more willing, you know, people were willing to talk to me and they were sort of like open with me.

He's got a lanyard. He's got a suit and a lanyard. I'll definitely talk to him.

Um, and I just asked them, uh, what's, what are the best and worst things about living in London? And, uh, you know, I got some nice little interviews and made them into YouTube videos and they did quite well. Um, and that was ages ago. That's here.

Well, I remember watching that a few years ago and go, Oh, that's cool. What Luke's done. And maybe by that point, you must've done quite a lot by that point.

I might've just looked at that out of interest, but I think because I'm now trying to make my own YouTube channel work, I've looked at what you're doing and then kind of go down a Luke shaped rabbit hole and find myself going, this is really relaxing. I find what you do really relaxing. I'm not, I don't, I don't need to learn both arguably.

Maybe I do need to learn better English, but I think I can speak English quite well. I've been doing it for 49 years, but I feel like watching you, I watch you for maybe a different reason than some of your viewers. Like some people are looking for education and they get that, you know, they get loads of that.

I get more, Oh, this is nice. Listen to my old mate, Luke talking. He's got a very therapeutic voice.

Your voice is just like, yeah, you've just got a What's the word? Maybe you can think of a good word. I don't know. People say that, people say that I've got a calming voice or even a sleep inducing voice, which I'm not sure how I feel about that.

But people do say that, Oh, I listened to your podcast and it helps me fall asleep. Okay. All right.

I'll take that. I'll take that as a compliment. That's not what it's for, but okay.

It's a side product. That's soporific. There you go.

Yes, exactly the right words. Sleep inducing. Soothing.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, you know, I guess that's kind of evolved that way that somehow I think, I think it helps people to learn English.

If they feel a little, if they feel calm, you know, like stress, they say doesn't help you learn a language because just mentally you put up barriers and you can't think straight. So a calming, soothing tone, I think, you know, is supposed to facilitate language learning. So I suppose that's how that's happened.

Yeah. Well, while you're talking, I'm remembering Kirk. You remember Kirk, our mutual mate? I do.

He now lives in Australia and me and him used to work together for my dad years ago. And I remember he just said, I want to go to Spain. Let's go to Spain.

So we went to Spain together and he had a friend who lived in the Northern part of Spain where they have all the bull runs and they turn into a festival of bull running and they have street parties and you sit out on the road eating fried eggs and red wine mixed with Coca-Cola. You've had that? Pamplona is that maybe? Not there, but somewhere like that. Estrella, I think it was.

Okay. So anyway, we went there. We had a good time.

We were living with the locals. So we were wearing the white and the red sashes and like really getting into the culture. Red wine and Coca-Cola mixed together.

Red wine and Coca-Cola mixed together? Usually around 10am, 9am sometimes. You'd get up with the whole family and you'd have the whole bull running thing going through the town. Anyway, my point is we went there and he wanted to learn.

So he was learning Spanish and I remember vividly him getting really upset because this Spanish lady found what he was saying really funny, which made him really tense up because he wasn't saying it correctly. She was pointing that out, I thought in quite a flirty, funny, friendly way, but he took it a bit like, she's taking the piss out of me. And it just, that's what happens to a lot of people there when they're trying to learn a lot or they don't appear to be helping you and they appear to be almost speeding up.

It makes you tense up. So you can't relax into trying. Whereas I'm more relaxed and I don't mind if people laugh at me.

So I just kind of go along with it. If you're going to laugh at me, fine. I'm still going to try and articulate the words I'm trying to say.

So yeah, definitely, I think it helps talking slowly, calmly, and in a friendly way helps people understand. Absolutely. It does.

Yeah. Because language learning is a very sort of personal thing. There's a lot, there is a lot of stress involved.

There's a lot of, potentially a lot of shame involved, a lot of frustration and failure as well, you know, because a lot of it's, you learn through failure. When you fail to understand something, you don't express what you wanted to say, you make a mistake, whatever. And so that can be quite off-putting.

You know, a lot of people don't manage to do it for those reasons, you know, those sorts of stress-related issues can really stop people. What I was thinking is me going into YouTube feels like learning a new language. Like I don't know what I'm doing.

I don't know really how to very well. I'm not too worried about failing, although I don't like failing and I want people to watch my stuff and go, that's really good. I also don't mind too much.

It hasn't held me back. I've gone, well, if that happens, so be it. Like learning a language, I'm willing to make a fool of myself.

So maybe I'm better. I've always been quite good at learning languages because I don't mind if I mess up. Kind of part of the fun.

Can be good icebreaker when you're talking to somebody in a different country to make a mistake because they go, they laugh about it. If they're nice, which generally people are, most people will want to help you figure out the right word or help you communicate in some way with hand gestures or whatever to get the point across. And I think that's the same with creating content, isn't it? A lot of people worry about it to the point where they'd never produce anything and that holds people back.

Whereas I've got to overcome that fear and I'll just go, well, put it out, see what the world says and improve it and figure it out as you go. Otherwise you'll never start anything. Yeah, absolutely.

You've got to do a lot of stuff. You've got to make lots of content, uh, and learn as you go. And sometimes it takes quite a long time to find your voice.

And it's the same thing in learning a language that you kind of feel pretty lost at the beginning. Um, but then eventually if you keep practising and don't give up and you spend time on it and you stay motivated, you will eventually find your feet as it were. Yeah.

Uh, so we'll, we'll talk maybe about your YouTube channel a little bit later. I feel like we need to talk about some other stuff. We, I wanted to go chronologically actually.

So, um, how do we actually know each other, Jez? And do you remember when we first met each other? Let me look off into the

distance, into the mists of time on my memory. I think we must've met in college. Sixth form.

Yeah, I guess. Yeah. Hello.

Just a quick interruption. I hope you're enjoying this chat with my old mate Jez there. You just heard him talking about how spending time on YouTube and then deciding to start his own channel led him to discover me there again after not seeing me for so many years.

And then he quite cleverly, I think managed to compare making YouTube content to learning a language, how it's all related to mindset, motivation, confidence, fear of failure. Very nice analogy. Very well done by Jez, I think.

And at this point I then asked Jez if he remembered how we first met prompting him to stare off into the distance, into the mists of his memory. And it was actually at this point that our recording was then plagued by technical problems. There were internet issues and our call kept breaking up and it really sort of interrupted the recording.

And that means that I've had to do quite a lot of careful editing to cover these little problems. And also Jez had to switch to his iPad to keep the recording going. So that explains a slight change in the video here.

And it also explains hopefully a few more little edits that I've had to do in order to fix the problems in the recording. So I'm very sorry for the interruption to the enjoyment of your listening and viewing experience of this episode. We're going to continue just now.

And it's at this point that we got into some stuff that I found really enjoyable to talk about with Jez. And that's the history of our friendship and some memories of our college days and playing music in bands and stuff like that. So sorry for the interruption.

Let us now continue. Here we go. So where were we? I think we were talking about when we first met each other.

And I remember that we met each other at sixth form college. We must have been about 16 or 17 years old. And you were like friends of a friend I made at sixth form called Jake.

And I was in a band with Jake called Skellington. Do you remember Skellington? I remember the name, but I don't remember any of the music. I remember thinking these guys look cool.

They were a band. I wasn't in a band. I wasn't musical.

But I remember being gravitate magnetised, gravitating to you guys thinking these cool dudes. It was just the most amazing thing. The music we did was we called it funk punk, which is self explanatory.

It was kind of like sketchily played funk music. And that was fantastic fun. So Jake was in the band.

Yeah, the main guy, as far as I'm concerned, because he wrote the songs and played the keyboards and stuff. He was a mastermind. And so you went to school with Jake.

And so I see you as part of Jake's whole gang of the people he went to school with. So I knew you from sixth form. Yeah.

Actually, about sixth form, I was quite a bad student at sixth form. And I spent a lot of time not in class doing things I shouldn't be doing. What about you? How did you get on in sixth form? Did you get good A level results? Not bad.

I mean, me and Jake, when we were at school, he used to be an inspirationally naughty boy. So we used to talk a lot in history and chat and make jokes and mess about. And we used to go skateboarding together.

He was like my skate buddy. And that got me into skate culture because he'd come from London. He'd been living in London.

So I remember he'd been to a power Peralta tour. And he gave me half a poster signed by Steve Caballero and Mike McGill. And I've still got it in my loft.

And I thought this guy's so cool. And he had his mom had his van. And of course, his mom was in a rock band.

And his dad was a rock musician. I was like, these guys are so cool. I'm gonna hang out with him.

And then we ended up like, falling in love like good friends do and being mates, you know, still mates now years later. And what was your question? Just had just just memories of college together. Yeah, college I was, I applied myself like I'd mess about, but I'd still get the job done.

I'd make sure my homework got done. And I was good in class and a bit cheeky in class, but I'd still make sure I did the job. When I got to sixth form.

Yeah, I was distracted by things that I shouldn't have been and got into going out to the pub earlier than maybe I should have done and going to clubbing and dance music came along and was like, wow, this is a whole new world. And but it was a really nice vibe. I remember, I used to be quite good at going between groups at college and going being able to talk to the rock kids and the dance kids and the hippies.

And I used to find everybody fascinating. So I liked and I still do. That's what I love doing now.

I like being able to talk to anybody from any walk of life from anywhere in the world. And it's another reason why language is a great thing, isn't it? Because you can just talk, if you can communicate to somebody from anywhere, even if it's just through hand gestures or with a bit of language combined with a bit of visual aid, you can talk to anybody and you can go anywhere and make friends anywhere in the world. And that's what I love about language, physical language, visual language, design, art, music even is a type of language, isn't it? Absolutely.

Yeah, totally. Yeah, I suppose that's why I was drawn to music and clubbing and art and photography and creative stuff. And that's probably why I honed in on you and Jake and Johnny and Chris and Andy Moore.

Remember Andy? Yeah, yeah. He was in a band. He's still in a band now.

He's just released a little mini album. Really? So I was always drawn to those type of people and found them. I could talk to anybody, but I was always much more engaged with the people who were creative in some way.

It was a really great, really cool, extended group of friends that we were all part of. It's amazing, really. This is obviously the days before, even before the internet, before smartphones and everything.

We were all just being very outgoing and hanging out with each other at sixth form. And then you'd bump into people. You'd just go into Birmingham or something, go to a pub or a club or something, and you just bump into all your mates.

It was a very sort of organic way that everyone socialised and stuff. It was really cool, really cool times. You'd have to phone, wouldn't you? Make a phone call, arrange to meet somebody in town, get on the bus.

Halfway there, your friend would change their mind and said, by the time you got into town, you'd be phoning them going, where are you? And they'd go, oh, we stayed at home and had another cigarette. And you'd just end up going and meeting some other people in town. But it was just, yeah, it was good times.

What I was going to ask you just before we got cut off, you mentioned an adventure trip. Remind me about that. Yeah, so at Solihull Sixth Form, there was some sort of adventure, sports adventure trip.

I can't remember where it was. It might've been in Wales, but I remember it was, I signed up for it and I didn't know anyone else who was going to, I didn't know who was going to be doing it. There was a coach.

I arrived with my bags at college. It was like during half-term holiday or something like that. And I arrived and you were there and Phil was there, who was another one of your mates from school.

And I was like, I kind of half know these guys because they're Jake's friends. So I'm going to hang out with them. That's kind of the first time I got to know you.

And I hung out with you and Phil the whole time. And the two of you were brilliant. You're just so funny and so sort of sharp witted.

And the three of us like hung out a lot and it's just a lot of mad banter and lots of jokes and speaking in different accents. We spent the entire week talking in all these mad different accents. And we had a really good time.

I remember it now. I forgot about that. You know what? I've got, I had photos.

I bet I can't find those photos, but I remember as soon as you started saying that, I remember a photo of you with a canoe helmet on and you might remember it and Phil and a row of canoes. And I remember putting one of my photos in the days when you had to send your photos to TruePrint, get them printed. And I remember getting one back and it was me.

We did rock climbing, right? I'm sure we did. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. All sorts of things.

Canoeing, rock climbing, mountain biking, all that stuff. Yeah. And I've got a photo of me looking back at my own shadow.

The rock climb. And I put that into, I took a photo of myself or the shadow of myself, put that in and won a prize at college. Oh yeah.

Yeah. I'm going to be a, yeah. And I thought I'm going to be a photographer.

And of course I wasn't. That didn't happen. But I still take, I'll get a lot of joy from taking photos and creative ways of seeing things like different angles and yeah.

Oh yeah, man. That's just a whole fresh memory that I'd forgotten about. Well done.

Yeah. We must've been 16, 17 years old at the time. Yeah.

It was probably in 1994, maybe something like that. Right side 93. Yeah.

I know. It's crazy, isn't it? So after sixth form, so listeners, listeners, um, sixth form college, that generally means like from the age of 16 to about the age of 18, it's what you do after you leave school in the UK. We leave school at about 16, usually after we do exams called GCSEs.

And then if you want to continue studying in education, you probably go to sixth form college and you take a levels. And most people take about three these days. It's like AS levels, which are kind of like half an A level.

So kids, these days we'll do about six AS levels. Is that right? My kids are too young to be at that stage. So I'm not sure, but it sounds about right.

Yeah. Yeah. In our day, it was like three or four A levels.

Um, and the results of your A levels will determine what university you can apply for. If indeed you can apply for university at all, depending on your A level results. I got really bad A level results because I was a terrible student at college because I, I just enjoyed myself too much.

It was fantastic, but I had to, I got terrible A level results and I had to stay back a year and go to a different college. And I did two other A levels in a year, kind of crammed two into a year, got the results I needed to get to university eventually. But what happened to you, which did you, you went to university, right? Which university did you go to? What did you study? So at college I did English literature, German, theatre studies, and general, I don't know if you ever saw me acting, but I did a couple of plays at sixth form.

No, I didn't know. I did a two-man play by Harold Pinter about two gangsters in a cellar. Wow.

That was good fun. Yeah. Um, I actually saw my old, I saw somebody new in my old theatre studies teacher the other day and met him for the first time.

And anyway, what did I do? I went on to do German at the University of Nottingham. You did German, did you? I did a year of German with philosophy and I dropped the philosophy after three months because it was too much hard work. I was madly in love with a girl from Birmingham at that point.

And so that was a big distraction. And so I wasn't really studying. I was just busy thinking I wanted to be at home and did I really want to be at uni and should I have stayed there with her and almost wrote the whole thing off.

But after a year of German, I decided I don't want to do German anymore. It's too difficult. The grammar, the grammar was horrific.

We used to get told by this guy with a vest under his shirt who was horrible to us all to the point where we all complained because he was such a bad language teacher. If you want to meet a bad language teacher, that was a good example. He was awful.

I'm sure he knew his stuff, but he was just made us all feel stupid. And we were university students. It was strange.

So I got to the end of that year and switched course. Tried to switch to English Lit. Couldn't switch because they said my grades were too good for that cohort, which didn't make any sense.

It still doesn't make any sense now. And so I ended up doing American studies, which was a combination of literature, European

influence on America, film studies, conspiracy theory, all sorts. Really good history, politics, everything.

Almost like everything you could imagine, but in the context of America and the history of America. Yeah. And I got to go and study in America for, I think it was six months, maybe a bit more, in the University of Milwaukee.

And I had a Saturday morning rollerblading module, which was worth 10 credits, but I was too busy drinking and partying. So I never actually made it to a single class. You had a Saturday morning rollerblading module.

So part of your university course involved rollerblading and that counted towards your actual university studying time. Yeah. It would have done if I'd actually gone to any classes.

I've never made it. It was like, oh, the first, I remember the first day again, it's in town somewhere. I've got a bit of a hangover.

Maybe I'll skip it. So I just lost the 10 credits and did it on other stuff like American history and Native American history. Theatre was in there.

A little bit of everything. That's why I liked it. It was lots of variety.

Lots of reading and just good fun. And I got to travel and go to America. So it was really cool.

Sounds like a fascinating subject. I have to say, like the conspiracy theory part is very interesting. Film studies as well, like traditional American films and like what they all meant.

It's not dissimilar to what I did. So I did cultural studies, basically. I did media and cultural studies, which, you know, sort of crosses over with some of the stuff you did.

So I did a lot of film studies and other things like we did, you know, post-modern theory and all that stuff. But I mean, did you know? Sorry. Yeah.

Yeah. Foucault. The Message is the Media.

Yeah. Marshall McLuhan. Marshall McLuhan.

That's him. Yeah. Marshall McLuhan.

The Message is the Media. A lot of Marx, a lot of Freud, all that stuff. But I didn't know what I was going to do when I left university.

I was like totally kind of lost, really, after university. How about you? Did you, how did you react to leaving university? Well, I wanted, sorry to be technical, I'm just trying to plug in so I don't run out of any power or anything. I wanted to be an actor at one point.

So I kept doing plays at uni and I remember I was Oberon, King of the Fairies in A Midsummer Night's Dream in the courtyard of the University of Nottingham. Yeah. Shakespeare.

Yeah. And I got on the cover of the university magazine and in the papers and I was like, yeah, I'm going to be a star. I was dressed up as David Barry.

I did it like, I had somebody paint my face like a red stripe and I was trying to be, I had pink hair. I dyed my hair red, hoping it would be bright red and it was, it went pink because of the natural colour of my hair. A bit crazy.

But I loved acting and I did quite a few plays and I did a few where I was like the lead role of a couple of things. But nobody ever said, yes, you're a brilliant actor, you need to be an actor. So I guess I need that outside validation or something.

And so I never went down that route. So I went, yeah, I left with a good degree. I got a 2.1. Okay.

Yeah. And I had loads of fun at university. It was just the best.

I made good friends that I'm still very close with now. And so it was brilliant, but I'm not sure I'd tell my kids to go to uni now. Hello listeners, how are you doing? Just another quick interruption from me at this point.

I hope you're enjoying this conversation and that you're able to follow it and keep up with it and everything. So we've just been talking about college days and university days and Jez just mentioned that he loved university, had a great time, but he wouldn't necessarily recommend that his kids, his two sons go to university. And you're about to hear me asking him why.

And Jez is about to talk about fees. You'll hear him talking about fees. That means university tuition fees.

Because for both of us, for Jez and me, we both basically finished university around the same time that the UK government introduced university fees. So this is quite a big moment. And we were quite lucky because we graduated from university just after this was introduced.

So previously, before basically the end of 1998, the beginning of 1999, I think it was before that, basically university education was provided free for students. It was paid by the taxpayer. And then after the introduction of university fees by the Labour government under Tony Blair in the late 90s, then basically students had to pay for their own studies.

And it started out fairly reasonable at about £1,000 per year. But that amount has gone up steadily over the following years. And these days, I think on average, it's about £9,000 a year.

And that's for British students. If you're a foreign student coming from somewhere else, then that's even more expensive. And that includes these days, since Brexit, any EU citizens, so basically any foreign students have to pay even more.

So it can be incredibly expensive. So that I guess is the main reason Jez would perhaps not recommend that his sons go to university, which is quite a big deal. So that's what Jez is talking about when he refers to fees, basically, university fees, and debt as well.

We talk about debt, that's D-E-B-T, the B is silent, of course, it's pronounced debt. So yes, debt is now a thing that university students have to deal with because to study at university and graduate involves probably borrowing lots of money if you can't

afford the potentially £30,000 just to pay for your tuition fees, plus all the other costs. If you can't afford that, you have to borrow the money through some kind of student loan system.

And graduates these days will often leave university with quite a lot of debt hanging over them, which is not a great way to get a start in life, is it really? So that's, that is a challenging thing for students in the UK these days. And Jez and I, as I said, we're lucky enough to graduate just before those changes came in. Really? Well, just because it's so expensive.

When I was there, it was the year before they introduced fees. No, sorry, they introduced fees when I was there, but my dad got a grant from Solihull Council, because it separated from my mum, so he managed to wind it. And it was the year after that, that tuition fees came in, because I remember we were on the steps of Union Nottingham, and I was leading a big gang of people with a loudspeaker protesting against fees coming in.

And we didn't, we could do anything in those days, couldn't we? You didn't have to pay for it. Okay, you had to pay for your accommodation and things, but I think now, if my kids would have to pay £8,000 a year or whatever the crazy fee is, you better have the right course that's appropriate to something you actually want to do, otherwise it's like you're spending money when you could just go and get a job. Yeah, it seems so bad.

We could do anything in our day. Yeah, absolutely. These days, the amount of debt that kids have to get into in order to pay for their university studies, it is, it's just mad, isn't it? It's a real pity.

I mean, so yeah, I can see. I mean, I'm not at that stage yet with my kids, you know, thinking about university, plus we live in France, it's slightly different. But we'd like them to study in the UK, but just the sheer expense, I mean, is insane.

It's like America, isn't it now? It's shocking, yeah. It is shocking. But so then we ended up, after university, we ended up like bumping into each other again in Birmingham, right? I think what it was, was that I came back from Liverpool, where I'd been living a year, I'd spent an extra year in Liverpool playing in a band.

And we sort of tried to make it work. And we didn't make it work. I mean, that's like my life story in a way, musically, getting into bands, trying to make it work, and then something not happening.

It's just not happening. Maybe because there was just something sort of intrinsically wrong about the band, you know? It's really, really mysterious, the whole question of making a band successful, and how bands become successful. And for all the bands that make it, there are so many that don't make it.

And it's, it's a bit of a mystery. Obviously, luck is part of it. But you've got to get the right combination of people, the right kind of dynamic between the members of the group.

It's got to click musically, and in lots of other ways. So anyway, I ended, I sort of, that band I was in, in Liverpool didn't work out. And then I came back home to my parents' place in the middle of nowhere, sort of, I guess, about 40 minutes outside of Birmingham, in the countryside.

And I think it was, I got, I got back in touch with Jake again. And he was living in a house in Bearwood or something. I don't know where he was.

Mosley, possibly. I think it was Mosley. He was living with Dar, I think, and Phil, something like that.

The big, the big, the big house, the big party house. One of the big party houses. I think it was the second house.

There's like several of those houses, but I think it was the, anyway. So Jake had a party, and I came with my brother, because my brother was living at home as well at the time. And we just like, I just saw everyone again after about maybe four years of not seeing everyone and sort of caught up.

And Jake and Dar had this demo tape of these tunes that they'd made together. I think it was Jake and Dar, maybe Jake, Dar and Shan had put these tunes. I think Shan was involved to begin with.

No, I think it was just Jake on his own, and then Dar, Jake, and then Jake, Dar and Shan. Yeah, they put together these tunes and they played them to us at the party. And we're all like really excited about it and stuff.

And I was around. And so basically, I was brought in to play drums in what became this band. And then, and you were part of that as well.

So tell us about this band then, that we ended up involved in. It's funny how everybody remembers different angles of it, isn't it? But I remember listening to that tape in Jake's front room in his house

in Solihull, where we'd always hung out when we were growing up at school. I've known him, hung out in that house through school and then college.

And I remember listening to him thinking, this is incredible. This is going to be massive. It's so different to anything else I've heard.

It was technically clever, different loops, like sampled loops from well-known hits, which you couldn't necessarily put your finger on. You knew the tune, but you wouldn't necessarily be able to name it. Whereas Jake obviously could name probably any tune he listens to because he's got that ear.

But I remember thinking, that sounds incredible. I think I've heard that tune. I think I've danced to that tune at a party or in a club or something.

And then he'd tell me what it was. And I'd go, yeah, that's it. And I was like, this is brilliant.

People love that because it's completely unique and original, even though it's based on a non-original source. And then on top of that was layered vocals by Da and live music by Jake and then later live music by Shan and yourself. And that became what somebody at some point decided to call Yoot Club.

Where that name come from is lost to the haze of time, I think. I don't know. Maybe Jake remembers.

Maybe you remember. I don't remember. Yoot Club.

Y-O-O-T Club. Yoot Club. I mean, I still don't really understand the name.

It's good because it's catchy. Yoot Club. I think maybe kids might have used the word Ute on the street.

It's like a bit of a street slang for the youth. Yeah. Yeah.

But where we got that from, I don't know, somebody probably said it and we thought, that sounds cool. It works quite well in a Birmingham accent as well. Yoot Club.

Yeah, it does. It's stuck. Oh, you've got some of the old posters and things.

So for audio listeners, Jez is holding up a few bits of memorabilia from the Yoot Club days, including a few posters for gigs and I guess flyers and things like that. Yeah. Yeah.

Yes. I remember. Very well.

It was a very cute little monkey with a little stethoscope on him, which we thought was funny. Yes. Yes.

Yeah. Somewhere. This is a newspaper article.

Right. So Jez is, I have to just describe this for the audio listeners. Jez is holding up a clipping from a newspaper article.

The headline is Brummie Breakbeat. Brummie meaning from Birmingham and breakbeat is a type of music which was sort of

popular at the time. It was kind of like dance music meets hip hop sort of thing.

And there's a picture of the band and there's me there at the top. Yeah. Wow.

Fresh, fresh face. Yeah. My brother is in there too.

Because my brother James was, he was part of the band for a while before he moved to London. And so he was kind of like the, he was the DJ of the band. And he used to be there with, with, with Dex while we were playing and he was scratching and playing samples on his record Dex while we were playing.

And there were some, there's some recordings of us playing in the studio and my brother is scratching like little vocal samples into the tunes and it sounded good. He later on, he moved to London and he sort of like left the band. Yeah.

So we went to a festival, which is now a massive, which at the time, I think was the first, possibly the first ever Shambhala. 2001. That's 45 years ago.

It's just mad, isn't it? So what happened with you? You still look so fresh. I don't know. I don't.

Yeah. I don't know. I just, the cameras, the camera's kind, but I don't always feel fresh.

I could tell you that much. So, so what was your role in the band then? I was just a Klingon hanging on. No, I wasn't.

I was the manager. I decided at some point, I know my friends, the main two guys who started it, Dhar and Jake, were legendary geezers and lovely guys and brilliant performers and entertainers, but terrible at being organised. Neither of them could drive.

They liked to relax and not be in a condition to need to drive or be able to drive. And so I went, well, you need somebody to organise your arses. So I declared myself the manager and they went, okay, cool.

So I would make the flyers and the stickers. I printed these stickers in my dad's house, in my dad's office, and we plastered them all over town. And this was before the internet.

Or was it? It was around, no, the internet was there, wasn't it? It was just very early days in terms of social media. Social media wasn't really a big thing. Yeah, that's right.

Everyone just had websites. And so one of the stickers that you just showed said yootclub.co.uk. This is pre MySpace. This is before MySpace.

We're talking about 2000 and 2001. That's when we were doing this. And so there was no social media.

Maybe MySpace had just started to come along or show its face or something. MySpace didn't arrive until the mid-naughties. It wasn't until maybe 2004, 2005, I'm sure.

Are you sure? Because I remember posting something about this and then getting in trouble with the organisers because they thought I'd cut the electricity on purpose to get us to play on the

main stage. Yeah, really? Yeah, everybody asked from all the other stands, tents and stages ended up watching Yoot Club at the main stage. And then afterwards I made a joke online about I cut the electricity when I didn't.

It was just good luck that that happened. But I remember the organiser wasn't very happy and I had to apologise to him. So it must have been something like MySpace or maybe an early version of it or something.

Perhaps. Yeah, the point was, I had to make do with what we had. So I'd stick these stickers on lampposts.

I'd put posters up in bars. I'd phone pubs and go, right, can we get a gig? So I'd organise the gig and get us paid, which was very little money, but we got paid. I'd drive the band.

Maybe I drove you at some point. Yeah, we drove to London and we were on TV. We were on Sky Arts.

Right. Yeah. And the sound was awful.

Yeah. God, I had such a nightmare. I had such a sweaty during that, as I often did.

I often did doing live shows for Yoot Club because, oh dear. So to describe the setup listeners, what we had was, so it was bass. We had Robbie on bass.

We had me on the drums. We had Shan playing the guitar and some other gadgets, which I don't understand. And Jake played the keyboards, but he also controlled different drum loops.

Not just loops, but different samples looped. And in the early days, he would actually play those loops himself. He'd play the loops himself with his finger.

But then we worked out the best thing would be to create a backing track. Jake would create the backing track at home, which would then be played on a DAT, digital tape. And we would all play along to the backing track and Darl would sing over the top.

Right. So playing live, working this out was like so difficult. At the beginning, I tried to play along to a click track, which would be played in my headphones, but I couldn't hear it over the sound of the band.

So I couldn't hear the click track. So I had to play in time to the backing track. Right.

So if I went out of time with the backing track, it sounded bad because then you've got two rhythm tracks that aren't quite sequenced up together, and it sounds very messy. So the trick was trying to get me to play in time with all the backing tracks. So a click track in my headphones, which I couldn't hear, so that got abandoned.

And then the backing track in my headphones, I also couldn't hear it, so we had to scrap that. What we ended up going with was having a monitor, that's a big speaker, sitting on a little table next to my drum kit, right next to me, blasting the backing track right into my face while I was playing the drums. And that was the best way that I could actually hear it and play at the same time, but it was unbelievably noisy and loud.

And I was always desperately trying to keep in time with this backing track. And I realised later, a lot of those loops were not perfect loops. So they'd go around four bars, and then it would be slightly out of time, or it wouldn't come back in exactly in the same way.

So it's like really hard to play along with it because it wasn't regular. And I remember some shows, well, it stressed me out so much, because I'm desperately trying to keep in time to the backing track and come in and out at the right time. And some shows were so noisy, all I was playing along to was just sort of like white noise.

It's like, that's what I could hear, and I'm trying to play along to that. So sometimes it was like really stressful and hard. Yeah, I remember the stress now you talk about it.

Other times it was just wicked and brilliant, and awesome. And I was just like, really glad to be part of this band with all these cool guys. But I wasn't in a very good place at the time.

You know, I was kind of like in between different phases of my life, and I didn't know what I was doing with myself. So I wasn't quite able to really enjoy it as much as I perhaps should have done. But it's a brilliant memory.

I didn't enjoy it as much as you might have thought I did, to be honest, because I was always stressing about... I remember the stress of that now. I remember the stress of being in a bad situation with Rehearsal Studio, which was rubbish. Mother's Studio, what a dump.

I remember the guys who ran that. There was a guy called Taff. Do you remember the Welsh guy? Yes, yeah.

Bit drinking. What a madman, yeah. And then we moved to somewhere Sham knew.

I think maybe Bendy with the Mace had somewhere in the jewellery quarter. That place upstairs was much better. But I remember stressing about... We started in the custom factory.

No, Mother's, then the custom factory, then jewellery quarter. Maybe you weren't around for the jewellery quarter bit. I wasn't around at that time.

Well, I was always stressing about something, whether we were going to get paid or not paid, I don't know. Why weren't EMI phoning me off the hook to make us massive? I had conversations with one or two record companies and they were interested, but then nothing happened. We got on Radio 1 Live, which was cool.

I thought, when you think, oh, now we've got recognised by them. Someone's going to pick us up and we're going to be on the radio and it's going to grow. And it just didn't take off as much as I wanted it to.

Either that, or I was driving while everybody else was drinking beers in the back. And I was driving us to a gig thinking, I want to be in the back drinking and in the band. I think I need to be in the band.

I'm not really in the band, but I am in the band. We're all part of a gang, but I'm not really having as much fun as they're having. But then they were probably stressing about their own thing inside their own heads, whether they could hear the music or same things I was thinking about.

And so eventually, like a lot of bands, it just fell apart. And I don't remember why or at what point really it happened. I think maybe we just got tired of it or maybe I got a job.

I probably got a job. I probably didn't help. Boring desk job, drifted into marketing and you've never been involved in a band since really.

Yeah. Sad, isn't it? What could have been? But we had a good time as I said. We did have fun.

It was kind of an original, it was original and distinctive and of a kind of of the time because it was like this combination of, I don't know what really, so many different influences. There were a lot of samples and sort of hip hop and breakbeat dance music combined with like traditional instruments. Like it was like two bands in one, like a sample based thing, a bit like, I don't know, a bit like the way that Gorillaz works now.

You know, it's all sort of based on samples and just all done in the studio, but also a live band together. And we mixed it all together. I remember the thing once we did a sound check in a pub and the sound recording guy sort of summed it up for me and it became a bit of a catchphrase and he was doing the sound check.

That means like listeners, that means just like testing the sound of all the instruments in the room before the show. And he was at the back of the room with the mixing desk and we were like getting the drum microphone sorted and the bass sound and stuff. And then the backing track.

And he was like, well, he was American guys. Like one thing I don't understand guys, you got a kick-ass rhythm section, but you use a backing track. That was like his summary.

I was just like, yeah, he's, he's nailed it. Yeah. That's it.

And so I kept saying this all the time that just became the thing that I was always saying, like, you got a kick-ass rhythm section, but you use a backing track. It's like a catchphrase. I summed it up like this old style grooves, new style beats.

Yeah. Nice. And that's why I started putting onto things.

Yeah. All of that was good for me because I took that. I remember being in my interview for my first proper marketing job and talking to the manager, the head of marketing about Yoot Club and explaining that I was guerrilla marketing.

We call it guerrilla marketing these days, which your listeners probably wouldn't know what that means. Maybe your, well, the word guerrilla spelled differently to not the, the, the ape, the great ape, but the act of going out and just making do with what you're being scrappy and going, I'm not going to stick a sticker on a lamppost or in the toilets or give a flyer to a bar or go up to somebody in the streets. Like I made the, I remember making these

business cards from a service station on the motorway in a machine.

Well, the guys were in the toilets going to the toilet. I made these and then took them to the festival at Shambhala and gave them out to people around the festival. It's like main stage 9pm.

It says main stage 9pm Saturday. Watch your backwash, whatever that means. It had my number on it, which I've still got the same phone number 20, 20 years later.

Really? 25 years later. Yeah. Wow.

And I was just making do with the material we had with no social media. Instagram didn't exist. Facebook didn't exist.

There was, there was no traction online really of any sort. You just had a website, like you say, so it was just a matter of did somebody find your website? Well, probably not. Because SEO wasn't something I even knew that was a thing.

And even back then it was probably in its infancy. So I went to this interview with my market, head of marketing at this publishing place that published books. And I talked to him through, I remember showing the posters and he was like, that's absolutely brilliant.

And they, afterwards he said, that's one of the main things, reasons I gave you the job because it shows you, you can make do with low budget and be creative with what you've got. Yeah. And I've been doing that ever since really.

I've got to say that, that as well as the band and the music and all that stuff, the, the, the whole thing about Yoot Club was what you brought to it. And that was all of that marketing stuff that you mentioned. So guerrilla marketing, it's like, yeah, like guerrilla warfare fighting in the streets or like fighting a war or battle in an unconventional way, not following the rules.

Like that approach, but some marketing. Yeah. That was like, I guess one of the great things about Yoot Club and one of the memorable things and things that made it special.

So yeah, you made all these stickers and these posters and stuff and they ended up everywhere. Right. So in Birmingham and the surrounding areas, these posters and stickers just went everywhere because we all had loads of them, especially the stickers that you just printed.

So many of these basic white stickers that just said Yoot Club in like, I guess Helvetica font, lowercase black text on a white background, like very, very simple Yoot Club or the website yootclub.co.uk. And we were all armed with these stickers. Loads of us, the whole gang, not just the band members, but all the hangers on and everyone else. We all had these stickers and wherever we went, we would put them in different places.

Jez is showing a photo on his phone. These are the stickers. So because I've been back in touch with Jake, he's, he sent me some stuff and I sent him to stuff.

He said, no, I've still got some stickers. Nice. He's got a whole reel of them.

I'm sure I've got some somewhere as well. But they ended up everywhere. So I've got two little stories to tell about that.

So the first one is that while we were doing this band, that's when I decided that I would train to become an English teacher because I felt like I've got to get some sort of professional training of some kind. I need to find a career path in my life. You know, I feel kind of lost.

And so I trained to become an English teacher. That was a CELTA course that I did. And so I was on this CELTA course in Birmingham with a bunch of other, I guess about 20 other people like me who wanted to become English teachers.

And I got talking to one of them. It was like maybe almost at the end of the course. I got talking to one guy and what was it? That's it.

I think I had a Yoot Club sticker in my pocket and I was just fiddling with the sticker in my hands. And it was like, Oh, I was like, what's that? And he was like, Oh, it's just this band. I'm in.

He was like, you're in, that's your band. And I was like, yeah, yeah. I mean, I'm the drummer.

He's like, you're the drummer in that band. That's you. And I was like, yeah, yeah.

And he's like, Oh my God. I see your posters everywhere. I see.

He's like, I saw this funny poster on the bus stop with this monkey on it. That's you. And I was like, yeah, I mean, yeah, that's me.

He was like, he was shocked because he'd seen these things everywhere. It was kind of like a bit like the sort of local Birmingham version of like the obey stickers that you used to see.

I think maybe that I picked that up from somewhere. I must've got it from somewhere. Like one of us came up with the idea or I came up with, I don't know how it transpired, but because my dad had this printer at work, I was like, dad, can I print a few stickers? Yeah.

15,000 stickers later or whatever. Oh, Jez, we've run out of sticker roll again. Any, any, any idea why? Yeah.

I'll just print a few stickers then. Um, so yeah, we put them everywhere and the posters on bus stops. Yeah.

It was just, what can I do with what little I've got to make people aware? You call it brand awareness now. I understand the science behind it because I've learned marketing over the years now. But at the time it was just like, I didn't know what marketing was.

I was making it up as I went along. Maybe I read a book because you'd go to a library and go, what's marketing about? Maybe I've got the idea from something else. I don't know, but it worked because like you said, people would go, oh yeah, I've seen those stickers.

What does it mean? And you start a conversation off it, or it would just create this awareness of something. So it felt to me like we were growing in people's minds and we were, but at some point it just didn't materialise probably because I got a job, maybe

someone else got a job, maybe it's because you left Luke. You were the magic cleaner that held us together.

And then you went on to bigger, more exciting things. I do often feel partially responsible. I remember at the time I felt like terrible about leaving the band.

Um, but yeah, maybe we were on the precipice of something because I think that we, I think the name Yoot club and, uh, the image of the group and the stickers and the posters had probably reached a lot of people. So people were subconsciously aware of it. Uh, but it just didn't go that extra step, uh, you know, but still, I think we did the best that we could.

Um, but yeah, I decided I had to leave because I just couldn't really do it anymore for various reasons. And also because, um, I had to like the, the English teaching course actually was like very demanding. And I decided that I had to devote myself to that.

And then I went off on a whole other journey. I was going to say, I think that we had Instagram or Facebook at that point in the early days when you could get hundreds of thousands of followers without paying for the privilege of getting those followers. We would have probably got a lot bigger, a lot quicker.

That was the missing, that was one of the missing ingredients plus the life itself and the things that happened to people in the background that you don't know about and the aspirations they've got and yeah, loads of reasons, isn't there? But mate, what I think it's just time to reform the band and have another go. Yeah. You know, maybe just a pity that like some of us live in different countries.

Like Da lives in Germany these days. And he's, uh, he does a lot of stuff in Berlin. He does a lot of standup comedy and he's like set up fantastic standup comedy nights in English in Berlin.

Anyone, any, I see a lot of comedians cause as you stand up as well, I haven't done it for a, for a while now, but, uh, I, you know, often meet comedians in Paris who've come through Berlin or come from Berlin and I say, Oh yeah, do you know Dharmander Singh? And they're like, Oh yeah, Dhar, Dhar is awesome. It's a lot of American comics and stuff. Yeah.

Fair play to him. He's done well. Maybe we need to do like an online.

We should do anything during COVID just have an online jam like everybody else was doing. Yeah. Back to the nightmare of trying to seek, sink it all up again.

Well, we've got the tech now and you'd have no excuse now, mate. And you know, audio cause you're a podcaster. So you'd be able to between all of the mighty brains in that gang.

We would nail it now. Yeah. We'd make it work.

Yeah, definitely. The other story I had about the Yoot Club stickers was that, so I lived, my parents' house at the time was in a little town right on the edge of Birmingham, Solihull, like really far away. And it would take you, I guess, about 45 minutes to drive from the centre of Birmingham to there.

So it's right out in the sticks, as we say, but that's where I lived. And I've, of course I had all these Yoot Club stickers, but there was like virtually nothing to stick the stickers on in this town, just like what? Trees, bushes, you know, like a hedgehog. Twirls.

Yeah. And said, Geoff, quick, grab that, grab that hedgehog. But there was the sign for the, there was a sign which announced that you were entering the metropolitan borough of Solihull, which is where we were basically all from, and I crossed over this main road and stuck a sticker on the sign and it said, welcome to Solihull, but I wrote, it was, it said, welcome to Yoot Club.

So I put the sticker right under welcome to, and that sticker stayed on there for, for years, like years and years. Obviously the sticker died after a while because it was made of paper, but for years, there was a little black rectangle that used to be this Yoot Club sticker on this sign. And every time you drove through down this main road, you can always see the sticker and the sticker also ended up in a, in like all these brochures that Solihull produced.

They produced these sorts of welcome to Solihull brochures and stuff with full of pictures of different parts of Solihull. You could get them in the libraries and whatever. And I remember getting one of these and flicking through it and just by coincidence, seeing the sign with the Yoot Club sticker on it.

And it says Yoot Club, like they took it before the sticker died. And so there in the brochure, you know, the sign, welcome to Yoot Club. Well, I say that's, I mean, do I need anything else? I've sort of, we've made it, haven't we? To make it into a Solihull brochure.

Yeah. And to know that generations of local kids were asking them for their friends and their parents, mom, dad. Who's Yoot Club? What's the sticker mean? Why do I keep seeing it everywhere? Yoot Club.

Yes. I remember them. I saw them once at the Jug of Ale.

The rhythm track was brilliant. I don't know why they bothered using the soundtrack. Yeah.

They had a kick-ass rhythm section, but they used a backing track. Learn from that son. Take from that what you will.

Yes. That's great, man. That's so good.

That was brilliant. So yeah, I basically went, yeah, I went from there to marketing, really. I drifted from the band thing, which I would love to carry on with, into marketing.

Publishing was a thing because I kind of started out as an author agent. So I used to, weirdly, my, my remit was basically, this was about 2000 and it was when websites became big and flash, macromedia flash was a big thing and designers were using it in really interesting ways on websites. And my job was to go out onto the internet, research web designers, and then find the best quality ones and approach them to write books about their creative process.

It's a cool job. I got paid quite well and I got my name in books and now I think about it. I could have brought them.

We did a book. I don't know if you were involved at this point, but we went to the Jug of Ale. That's a pub, by the way, listeners.

With a pub, yes. A famous pub in Moseley that I don't know if it's there anymore. They do live music.

We had Yoot Club. Yeah, we did. We had Yoot Club on stage, somebody filming it with a proper decent camera and audio.

And then that was put into one of the books I was working on. So I was still, Yoot Club was still the thing then. And I managed to get them into that book.

So it was teaching people how to use Premiere or Final Cut or something. Yeah. Did you, did you see that? No, I never saw that.

I think this is after I left because I did my teaching course and then pretty soon after that, I ended up on the other side of the world in Japan on a completely different adventure. And so, yeah, I just sort of like completely disappeared. So there's a lot of stuff that I don't know about.

Yeah. So the day Yoot Club made it into a computer book about editing software with a CD I don't know what you were on in it. It took some of the band that you could then use as actual assets to practise.

Man, I don't pay for that. So combined with the Solihull brochure, the Solihull brochure, the bus stops and this computer book about how to use whatever it was, some software. Yoot Club made it with Final Cut.

Why are we talking about this band like it wasn't a huge success? I mean, look at the, look at the fame that we achieved. It's a thing. I should be patting myself on the back, not, not wistfully looking back on it.

Like it was a bad time. It was brilliant. It was a brilliant fun.

And like I say, then I forgot about that until I started talking about it. I've still got the book in the loft. I know I can picture out where it is and everything, but this is the thing.

I took that sort of learning from what I'd done with Yoot Club, wove it into that job there, and then that job went bust because the internet bubble burst. I think it was around about that time. And I remember looking for a house.

I was living in a house with Kirk in Moseley, our mutual friend. And I went to look at the house next door, which was on sale for something ridiculous, probably 75,000 pounds or something. And I was like, I'm going to buy that house.

And the day after I got a letter from that publisher saying, you've lost your job. Everybody's made, like most of the team had been made redundant. Yeah.

So that was a shame because that house is probably worth 575 grand now. Right. Yeah.

It's a nice house. Little terrace in Moseley, back streets. Anyway, I went from there immediately to this place where I met the guy who appreciated my Yoot Club guerrilla marketing.

He gave me a job, took a chance on me. And then I've been in marketing ever since really, playing with low budgets, big budgets, working on magazines, working on campaigns, TV, radio stuff, billboards, print, digital, social media. All aspects of marketing I've got involved in over the years that I've drifted from publishing into travel and transport, worked for National Express for like 10 years at the time.

We haven't seen each other. Yeah. I heard that you worked for National Express.

I don't know how I heard about that, but yeah, National Express. I mean, that's like a British institution. I don't know if listeners are aware of this, right? So National Express coaches.

I travelled a lot on them when I was a student. Everybody did. Yeah.

So I moved on from there a long time ago, but I mean, I've still got some friends who work there and it's a great company to be honest, but, and I've learned so much about marketing. It's ridiculous. I've literally got involved in everything that you can think of.

And that's been good for me since like in terms of now I've gone freelance. I know a little bit about everything in terms of marketing. I'm not the world's best marketer.

And I don't know everything about everything, but I quite like being a generalist that can. I've gone from scrappy stickers on lampposts to like multi-million pound campaigns and big budgets and then little budgets and then freelance. I've worked with charities.

They've got no money at all. So I'm back to kind of Yoot Club mode of, okay, that's not a big problem. We can do what we can do.

And now you've got social media, you can come up with free content and make your own stuff and you can create what you want through your phone. And it's kind of taken me full circle in a way, but, uh, okay, I can do that. I can work with some brands who've got loads of money and they understand the value of marketing and others that don't fully understand the value of putting yourself out there properly and then individuals that may be a bit lacking confidence in terms of promoting themselves online, whether it's on YouTube or LinkedIn or whatever.

Um, so I'll do a little bit of mentoring, which is quite satisfying because I can work with an individual and boost their confidence and make them feel better about how to promote their thing, whatever their thing is. If it's a band or a business, whatever it is that they might want to talk about for the world, um, do that in a fun way. So that's nice.

And yeah, just working with charities, it's quite nice to be able to say, I can pick up my phone and create a video and you don't have to worry about it or travel to wherever they are and create content. I mean, I went to, I think I told you about a lifeboat charity that I work with called Atlantic Pacific. Yeah.

So, so you ended up working with this charity, um, doing volunteer work, which is great, and you worked for a lifeboat association. Is that right? What was it? Not quite. They're, they're, they're non-political, a non-government organisation.

They're a charity. They have a base in Atlantic College in South Wales, uh, where they teach. They have something called a summer school where they teach people from around the world, how to control a lifeboat, a rib lifeboat, a rigid inflatable hull lifeboat.

So listeners, a lifeboat, just in case you don't know, is a boat that will rescue you if you're in trouble in the water. And they're amazing. Royal National Lifeboat Institute, RNLi lifeboats.

They'll send out a lifeboat and it's in the water in seconds. And they're incredible the way they fly through the water and rescue people and stuff, absolutely amazing. And they've got a lot of experience and a lot of, um, know-how.

And so, yeah, you can imagine that there's a lot of, let's say, yeah, tradition and knowledge about lifeboat rescues from the UK being this island surrounded by the sea. So the association, this nonprofit organisation, uh, was based in South Wales and they were, they trained people how to drive lifeboats. Well, so the guy who started it with, there's two people started it, Robin Jenkins and Kate Sedwell.

And they're a lovely legendary couple of people who just built the thing from nothing really. So he, he used to be an RNLi volunteer when he grew up and he grew up in the area around South Wales where the college, Atlantic College is. And he lectures there and teaches young kids about lifeboats and the production, how to build them.

And the first ever rigid inflatable hold boat was built at that college. So he kind of took that knowledge and then got sent to Northern Japan by his boss years ago. He was someone at the college sent into Northern Japan after the major tsunami in 2000, I want to say 2011, I think.

So the tsunami wiped out a big, you know, the damage it did. If you can remember it, I'm sure. But he got sent over there to see if he could combine his design knowledge with his lifeboat knowledge and do something valuable for the community there.

It's really cool. They came up with this idea called a lifeboat in a box, which is a shipping container with a lifeboat and all the things you need to operate a lifeboat. And then teaching the locals how to do that because there's no equivalent of the RNLI in Japan.

Right. I don't know if you ever would have needed it in your time in Japan, but. So they have a coast guard, but it's not the same thing.

Um, so he, he set that up, they set that up, um, him and Kate and a bunch of really good people and that I was lucky enough to get sent over to Japan to go and learn about that and to go and create video content and interview some of the students that come from around the world to go and learn how to. Operate a lifeboat and also do the things you need to do to sort of prepare for natural disasters. So that was pretty cool.

And yeah, I discovered them after like during, during COVID because, um, my mom died just before COVID suddenly. Then I went into COVID lockdown in the UK and lost all of my paying clients from being a freelancer because of COVID. Yeah.

And that's when I found Atlantic Pacific and decided, well, while I wait for the world to go back to some kind of normal, I'll do something useful. Um, so yeah, I just helped them with all their marketing and got involved in things and went into Japan and helped them there and Wales and London and. Really cool organisation doing something useful.

What was it like in Japan? How long, how long did you stay there? It was about 12 days, I think. It wasn't ages, but it was long enough to experience the culture. It was brilliant, mate.

You know how much fun it is there. It's so much fun. It's just like a different, yeah, different headspace, different food.

I love food. So I was really excited about the food. We got very well looked after by the locals in Kamaishi.

Um, or north of there, but it was, yeah, friendly, fabulous sort of design. And I love the bullet train. I love the madness of Tokyo.

I spent a lot of money in Tokyo and I don't like spending money, but I just found myself wanting all the things in all the shops because of the way they seem to run things, it kind of creates this natural desire to have all the things. And I don't mean that in a greedy way. I just mean, it's just lots, lots of little, well-designed, trunky things that I don't really need that I ended up coming back with.

I completely understand. Everything's like the attention to detail and the quality. And it does just make you suddenly want all the things you see.

Suddenly everything is so attractive and appealing, you do end up spending a lot of money on all sorts of bits and pieces. Yeah. I found Tokyo an incredibly expensive city to spend time in and my money would fly out of my, out of my pockets.

Just like the food, the beer, just everything, you know, it was a very expensive place to live, but such a cool place for sure. And how long did you live there? So, uh, after I became, after I got my English teaching qualification, I looked for different teaching jobs around the world and initially, actually, you know what, it was you who, who, who, uh, inspired me originally. I remember having a phone call with you.

I was in my parents' house talking on the phone to you. And I was, I guess I'd already decided to do the teaching course or whatever. And you told me about a friend of yours who was an English teacher living in Barcelona.

Do you remember this? I remember that guy. Yeah. And you told me that, oh, he's got an amazing life because he teaches English in the morning, in the afternoon, he goes to the beach.

And I was like, right, that's me. That's, that's what I want to do. So I was thinking, um, I'll find work in Barcelona.

And then my dad was talking about Poland because he knew Poland fairly well. So I was thinking, oh, maybe I'll find work in Poland. Sounds interesting.

And then I went for a drink with Neil Waters, another mutual friend of ours. And I was in Solihull in this, in the Sadler's Arms or

somewhere with Neil. And I was saying to him, oh, you know, I don't know where to go.

I don't know which place to choose. And, you know, it's like, I was looking at some places in Poland, maybe Barcelona, but I didn't really find anything there. And, but there's loads of jobs in Tokyo and loads of jobs in Japan, like lots of jobs available in Japan.

And I was saying, but that would be amazing. Like that would just be crazy. And I was thinking initially I'll just go somewhere fairly close, you know, like somewhere in Europe was my idea.

And maybe just for a few months is what I was thinking. But Neil was like, why don't you just, just get a job in Japan? Just go for it. And I, and that's all I needed.

He was just, he literally just said, just, just apply for a job in Japan. Go to, go to Japan. And I was like, yeah, yeah.

All right. All right. Then.

Yeah, that's how easy it was to persuade me. It's like, oh yeah. All right.

So that was all it took. And then I just applied for jobs in Japan, convinced that was going to be the best thing to do. And I was like, well up for it.

So excited. And I got a job with a company that sorted out your accommodation, your health insurance, your visa. And they just basically put you somewhere in a school, somewhere in the country.

You kind of get, you get to express some preferences, but they have the final word on where they, where you go. And they put me in a job in a school. In a place called Zushi, which is just down the coast from Yokohama, which is just down the coast from Tokyo.

Is that where they invented sushi? It's not the way they invented sushi. No, it sounds like it, but it's no, it's Zushi with a Z. Um, and basically they, I was really lucky because they put me in a really cool spot, which is on this part of the coast, sort of like, let's say between Tokyo and Mount Fuji. And it's like this place where there's a big long beach, the whole area is like lots of beaches and there's loads of surfers.

So in the summer, it's like this cool place where you've got the city, but also if you go to the beach, uh, they put up all these Hawaiian style beach bars and there's like a whole sort of surfing vibe down there as well. So I got, I was like, it was easy to get to Tokyo, took me about 45 minutes on the train, but then I was close to the beach and all that stuff. And not far from other cool spots, like a place called Hakone, which is near to Mount Fuji.

And so, yeah, I just had an amazing, uh, two years, uh, there. Um, but I decided I had to come home. I never would have thought that I had any input into your thinking, but I do remember that now that you say it because the trip that I was talking about earlier with me and Kirk in Spain, where I met that guide.

Oh, really? Yeah. It's, um, yeah. So the one where Kirk was trying to practise his Spanish and I was having to go, but he was leading cause he'd learned, he'd been practising before we went, we met the guy there, I'm sure of it.

And I was like, this is a cool life. I said, why don't you do what? I'm working in a, whatever I was doing then, thinking I've got this all mixed up. I need to leave.

I need to leave. And I did think about that, I think, but I think I was in love with Rach by that point, so I decided to stay put. Yeah.

That's your wife. Yeah. My now wife.

Yeah. Yeah. And 25, 30 years later, whatever it is.

Um, yeah. Yeah. So like I've thought over the last few years since being freelance, I've been at home on my own quite a lot thinking about what other people's choices have been in terms of their careers and what they've done and it's silly really, but I've looked at my neighbour and gone, I mean, this is when I've been having low points where I'm thinking, why did I choose to do this? Because I was going in this direction and I was going to be a marketing director.

And then it all kind of came to an abrupt halt because of redundancy again. Um, my second redundancy. And then I changed paths and then I got freelance up and running and then COVID came along and then it all fell apart again.

So effectively got made redundant by COVID. I lost it all again. So I've sort of lost, I've built things up and I've lost them three times really in big ways in my life.

Yeah. Um, I'm not complaining. It's just the way it is.

I've had to make do with that, the fallout of that. But because of that, I sat around at home thinking a lot and thinking. I could have been a doctor.

My neighbour's a doctor. He's doing okay. And then they moved into a bigger house and I thought, Oh, that could have been me.

And then I look at other people and their, where they are on the journey and think, I've done this with you, with a YouTube, with a YouTube, I'm looking at you going, if only I'd started my YouTube back then, maybe I'd have loads of followers as well. And you just have these processes, thought processes where you think, what if I'd made different choices? And it's silly really, because everybody could do that about everything all the time. And it was, it's a sort of dead end process.

So I try not to do it, but I also try and flip it on its head and go, how can I get inspired by what you're doing with you? With your channel and what other people's choices are and go, okay, what can I learn from that? So it's been cool having your feedback on my YouTube and just going, telling me to slow down. So when I listen to your channel, I think I like this because I can hear clearly what he's saying. And I have to, I'm actually since watching you reminded myself when I'm doing my own filming to slow down.

Yes. And I'm not getting it right. You'll see my next episode and go, that's far too fast to get.

But the point is I'm trying to take inspiration from people. Some of that comes from my dad, right? Because my dad was a BBC man for like 30 years or more and he worked on BBC Midlands Today. That rings a bell.

Yeah. Okay. Midlands Today, which was like the regional news programme from the BBC, which we got in the Midlands.

You know, he worked on a lot of production for news programmes. And so a lot of the time he would be reviewing videotapes of people doing reports. And whenever the news was on, we'd always watch the news.

He would always comment on the presenters and talk about which presenters were good and which presenters were not so good. And one of the things he's talked about was the way that, I don't know, he would just comment on what were good presenting skills. And one of the things I noticed was that he liked people who took their time a bit more.

And he just instilled that idea of what's required in broadcasting, that broadcasting is different. It's a slightly different communication skill than talking to someone face to face. When you're talking to someone face to face, you can be super quick and it's all about being reactive.

But when you're on your own talking to an audience through a camera, you kind of make everything, everything's expressed in much bolder, bigger strokes sort of thing. So maybe I got some of that from him, but also just from English teaching as well for 25 years, you just learn how to talk to a room full of people. And that sort of has transferred into doing my podcast.

But I mean, you, you're very articulate. You're very good at communicating. So you're brilliant.

I think you just, all you need to do is just keep doing it and you'll, you'll just naturally, you'll naturally find the rhythm. I've been hearing that in my head because I've said, I've just shown Rach my latest effort. And she said, oh, you got to shorten it, speed it up a bit.

I'm like, yeah, but Luke told me I need to slow down and let it breathe. So she went, oh, I listened to Luke. I don't know.

There's a bit of both, there's a bit of both. I want to, I want to make it snappy. So it's quick fire, almost like a magazine, like flicking through, oh, look, there's something else.

And it's a different thing to what you do completely. I'm going out and talking to people outdoors in kind of places and going, let's just have a laugh and talk about food and talk about what you do later. And it's a live conversation about their experience to a certain extent and also giving them a chance to talk about their thing.

If they're talking about their charity or I'm trying to talk to like people who do good stuff, not just big brands selling rucksacks, but like a walking therapist that I met, for example, I want to showcase those kinds of people. And so I just want to have a laugh with it. And I want to make it fun to watch, to go, okay, I want to keep watching this because it's fun.

People come to you for something else, they're learning something and they get entertained as part of it. But it's, I guess the first purpose is learning English, isn't it? For me, for my channel, it's more like I want to encourage people to get out and see the world and talk to people because I know how good that is for my head. I like talking to people and I've lost that.

After COVID, I remember at the end of COVID as they were releasing lockdown, I had been grieving the loss of my mum and spending a lot of time at home on my own because my wife's a teacher and the boys go to the same school as her. So they were out of the house all the time. I didn't have a dog.

I was just on my own, rattling around the house all the time, going gradually more and more stressed. And I lost the ability to talk. And I remember going to my local park run and talking to somebody and going, oh, I've forgotten how much I enjoy this.

Just having a laugh and taking a piss and talking to somebody new that I've not met before. Oh my God, it felt like a big cloud was lifting to a certain extent. I've been trying to make sure that I remember that feeling because I've drifted back into staying at home at my desk.

I mean, it'd be lovely if anybody's interested in what I do to come and check me out. It's a channel, the idea behind it was, what I was talking about before, I was feeling lonely at home. I'd been working, the clients that I'd built up before COVID came along and wrecked everything, were good clients, but they were disparate sort of councils, government organisations, travel companies, private businesses, just a random mix of things that came along and went, Jasmine, I need your help, or just looking for referrals.

When I lost them, I thought, you know what, what I really need to do is find a niche because I think I need to go and focus on something. And actually, that's when I went back over my life and decided, I think I'm really passionate about our food because I was

a chef for a while, years ago, but I've always been into food. My mum got me into it massively.

Food, marketing, but doing marketing good things. And the outdoors, like me and Rachel have always camped. We got married in a farmer's field and had a camping wedding.

We've upgraded from tents to camper vans to motorhome. We've got a working dog. We've got teenage twins.

We love being outside. I love mountain biking and trail running. And surfing and skateboarding and, oh, hang on a minute.

Well, then I combined all these things and go after brands like that and individuals that do good stuff that are in that world. So I then went, right, I'm all about the outdoors. I always have been, I just haven't said it.

So now that's my personal brand. And as part of that, I knew I needed to get out more to help my state of mind, to make myself feel better because I was feeling lonely and isolated being working at home. And I've lost that thing I used to have of working in a team, in a company.

And so I thought, how am I going to retrain that then? And do something that maybe nobody can make me redundant from. You can't get, nobody can make me redundant from my own YouTube channel apart from me. So I thought, right, I'm going on YouTube and I'm going to go out to events and cool things that are outside.

Like I want to go to the World Bog Snorkelling Championship and I want to go to mountain biking events and I want to go to running

shows and all this sort of stuff because I know I want to be there anyway. And if I meet people that want to work with me, brilliant. But actually I'm not going just for that.

I'm going because I love going to do things anyway. And I'm going to have fun while I'm there. I'll probably come back with a new bit for my bike or something for the camper van.

Or I'll take the kids with me. Like I took them to the outdoor show and they loved it. And Roach comes along with me and I want to take the dog to these things.

So it's like, well, this is great content because people can just follow me along this experience of me doing fun stuff outside. Hopefully it'll encourage more people to get out. So I'll call it Get Out.

Hopefully people will go, you know what? YouTube is not that difficult because if he can do it and I'm making a hash of it and making it a buzzer go along, but he's having fun with it, maybe I could try that if I want to kind of inspire people to try that as well and just showcase good eggs that I meet along the way that are nice people doing good things. And hopefully I'll get to the point where I've got loads of subscribers and I made loads of money and I can sit on my back on my paddleboard with my dog and float downstream. But actually that's not what it's about.

It's more about me needing to do something to get me out and hopefully get some work along the way with cool people that I actually want to work with, rather than just waiting for the world to find me. So I'm back to kind of YouTube guerrilla marketing my way around the world going, hello, I'm Jez, come on my YouTube

channel. Maybe do you want to work with me? Do you need some marketing help? I don't want to go in with like a business card approach and go, hello, I'm Jez and I do my thing.

It's just boring. I want to have something more fun. So it's like, I can talk to people about my, my, I keep wanting to say Yoot Club, but YouTube, I get them on it because they get something out of it.

And if we want to work, do you want to work with me as well? Brilliant. But that I'm not coming in with the hard sell trying to get you to do, to be my next client that might come out of it naturally. If it does, then great.

That's a good way for me to get to know people as well and go, I don't want to work with this guy anyway. He's an idiot or this woman's amazing. I want to work with her.

And do you know what I mean? So it's kind of a vehicle for me to put myself out in the world, have fun and hopefully inspire a few people along the way. Brilliant, brilliant Jez. I love the way that you're, you know, outgoing and that you sort of take control and you just decided to do this thing.

I hope it's a big success. And for my listeners and viewers, uh, they should check out your channel. It's called get out.

I'll put a link in the description so people can find it easily. And it's basically just like videos of you going out to different events and different locations in the English countryside and meeting people and seeing some cool stuff, you know, it's just, it's great. I think that people listening to this podcast, if they want to get a sense of what England is like, what life in Britain is like, then it's not just

London, you know, and the cities, but there's like all sorts of cool things happening in parts of the countryside, different festivals and events and cool locations.

You talked about bog snorkelling, which is like a hilarious thing that people do. That's like swimming in boggy water, which is like a mix between water and mud. And there's, and that sounds like it could be awful, but it's actually hilarious.

And there's like a big community of people around these events. And there's a lot of humour involved in people swimming and racing each other through this muddy water. Um, and other crazy things like, you know, there's the, what's the one about people chasing cheese down a hill? Well, this is it.

I haven't, I haven't been to the bog snorkelling championship yet. It's my, it's on my hit list as is the cheese rolling championship in Gloucester. I think it is.

I mean, that's, that's quite a world famous one. So maybe some of your viewers might, or your listeners might have seen or heard about that, but I haven't been to that. It's deadly.

People break bones every time they go. They chase a rolling cheese down a very steep hill. It's mental.

So those are the types of places I want to go to at the moment. I'm going to slightly tamer things like the running show, but Kendall mountain festival is pretty cool. You get some crazy things going on there.

And yeah, it's just like you say, getting out of London, getting out of Birmingham, going out to see the UK. There's loads of fun, cool, quirky things going on. And yeah, with a bit of humour thrown in.

So I don't like outdoorsy stuff that takes itself too seriously. And I don't like taking myself too seriously, as you know, mate. Life's too short.

It is. Yeah. Nice one.

Apart from the audio, it's been amazing to catch up. We've had a lot of technical difficulties, but it was really cool to chat to you. And just a lot of life story in this episode, but it all kind of comes full circle because we first met each other on an outdoor adventure week.

Rock climbing, mountain biking, canoeing and stuff. And then all this mad, this mad adventure through music, through guerrilla marketing and all that stuff. And then here you are doing all of it, all of it together in one package.

I mean, is he a guerrilla? That's marketing, guerrilla marketing with guerrillas. I didn't make that connection either. So audio listeners, Jez is referring again.

Jez is referring again to the Yoot Club poster, which I did. I tried to describe earlier, but it's like a baby. It's a chimpanzee, I think.

It's a little baby chimpanzee who appears to be lying on a hospital bed or something, with a stethoscope over his head. There's a, someone's like a doctor's putting a stethoscope on his chest and he's making a funny face like, Ooh, that's cold. And yeah, I

remember that we took photos of, of all the members of the band trying to do that face of the monkey going.

Yes. I haven't got that yet. There's photos somewhere with all of us going, Ooh, like that.

Um, but it's going to say one last thing. It does go full circle, doesn't it? And until you said that I hadn't made that connection, but I think what happened to me around college time was I went, let's go clubbing. And I got heavily into clubbing.

And then I stayed inside in dark rooms, dancing all night. And I drifted into it a bit of an inside lifestyle. And I've come full circle back to where I feel like I feel healthier and better in the outside and, but with some of that music and creativity and alternative culture thrown into the mix as well.

So it feels like where I should be. Yeah. Brilliant.

I'm talking to you, mate. It's been brilliant. Loved every minute.

Yeah. Me too. All right.

Stay in touch, dude. Good luck with the channel. Hopefully some of my people will come and check out your videos.

I'd love it if they were. You're very welcome. Everybody is.

Nice one, dude.

Ending

So that is that. Thank you again to Jez for being part of this episode.

I really enjoyed catching up with him and I hope for you that feeling came across. I hope the kind of nice vibe, nice friendly vibe came through in this episode. Let me know how this has been for you.

How was it following this conversation? Did you find it difficult because of the speaking speed? Did you find it difficult because of the audio quality, which I had? I did enhance Jez's side of the conversation. He recorded his side of the conversation with his Apple AirPods. That was the microphone he was using.

I tried to enhance the quality to make it as clear as possible. But, you know, whenever these podcasts are recorded remotely like this, there's always that element, that technical element, which can sometimes be a barrier. I think it was really clear, but I also understand that in enhancing the audio, it might have made the sound a little bit more muddy.

But maybe I'm just nitpicking. I really, really enjoyed it. Did I say this already? I really enjoyed talking to Jez.

I think that he's a great guest on the podcast because he's a great speaker, a good presenter, right? He's kind of got the gift of the gab and a very outgoing, friendly, personable type of guy. And that makes for a really good episode. But you can let me know how it was for you in the comments section, as usual.

Now, in the ending part of this episode, I'd like to just spend some time perhaps giving an episode report and explaining a few things

here just to kind of wrap this up nicely. So what shall I say at the end then? What shall I say? Well, first of all, you'll find some links, OK? You'll find links for Jez's channel on YouTube. I'll put links in the description so you can go over and check out his videos of him visiting different places, locations, events and things in the outdoors.

Lovely footage of the English countryside. And you can join Jez as he meets interesting people and sees interesting things. It's a very nice channel.

It's just started. So do Jez a favour and watch the videos, like, subscribe, leave a comment, just saying that you enjoyed watching. All of that really helps to boost the algorithm and it can give Jez's new channel a good chance.

Let me give you this report then of what we talked about. So just a kind of overview, a summary of the conversation. We started like this.

Jez talked about how he, I guess we talked about how we reconnected with each other. And Jez said that he probably found me on YouTube, actually, because he became interested in making his own YouTube content because his kids love YouTube. His kids watch a lot of YouTube and he sort of ended up noticing some of the things they were watching, like, for example, a channel like Mr. Beast, who is one of the most famous YouTubers in the world.

Mr. Beast is famous for his is like unbelievably ambitious and also extremely expensive videos where, for example, he fills some sort of environment full of full of balls, you know, like plastic balls that you would find in a ball pit. So filling a house, for example, with

balls and then trying to, you know, find your way through it and just sort of extraordinary things like that. And a lot of competitions that involve giving away a lot of money.

So Mr. Beast was an example of a channel that Jez noticed and he thought, oh, this could be interesting. And he may be spending time on YouTube. He noticed some of my content and ended up sort of like catching up with what I've been doing.

Jez talked about working from home in marketing and wanting to have a creative outlet that would get him out of the house and reconnect with people. And these are all reasons why he decided to set up his YouTube channel and his kids help him by giving him feedback and helping him with ideas for editing and stuff like that. I talked about the early videos I first made on YouTube for this channel, the interviews in London.

You can still find them on my channel. There's a playlist. I think they're called London native speaker interviews.

And I still use those videos in my English lessons from time to time, where I went out and about and spoke to people and said, you know, how long have you been in London? They all said they'd been in London for two weeks for some reason. I don't know why everyone I met had been there for two weeks. Some people I met had been there their whole lives.

But anyway, it was interesting to talk to some local Londoners and you can hear those accents. And Jez talked about how he enjoys my content, not for the educational reasons, not because he thinks he can already speak English, you know, but he said that it's

because of the relaxing and therapeutic effect that it has on him. And he mentioned my calm, soporific voice.

Soporific was the word he used. And it just means something that makes you sort of sleepy, calm, relaxed and sleepy. That's soporific.

Which led us to a conversation about the importance of relaxation and no stress when learning a language, because stress and embarrassment can make you pull up emotional and mental barriers that prevent learning, which caused Jez to share his story about travelling to Spain with a mutual friend who became nervous because when speaking Spanish to locals, they laughed at his mistakes and that led to him feeling nervous and it blocked his learning of Spanish. And so that was all part of the conversation about confidence in language learning. So, yes, learning a language and starting a YouTube channel, are they similar? Well, yes, in many ways they are.

They both require some experimentation. They both involve having a bit of resilience. For example, if you make mistakes or make a fool of yourself, you need to be able to keep going.

You need to be resilient and a willingness to fail publicly. So maybe those things are quite similar. Then we started talking about our memories of sixth form college in the 1990s, talking about making friends, skateboarding, playing music, going clubbing and the general creative culture that was around at the time.

And there was a bit of nostalgic reflecting on the days before smartphones and social media. Listeners, are you part of the same generation as me? Jez and I are both sort of like late period

generation X. Pre-millennial, late period generation X, we both came into adulthood just as the Internet was beginning to become a thing. I didn't start using the Internet until I went to university when I was about 19 years old.

That was my first experience of using the Internet. So most of my childhood, in fact, all of my childhood was offline. So if you are part of that same group, get in the comments section and leave your own nostalgic comments.

If you're not part of that group, if you are a millennial or, you know, one of the later generations, what do you think? I mean, what do you think when you hear older people talking about, oh, the good old days before the Internet? What do you think of that? Does it sound good or does it sound annoying? Anyway, we talked about that. We talked about the time when Jez and I first really met each other and got to know each other on an outdoor adventure trip, which involved canoeing, climbing, mountain biking. And we sort of bonded with each other through humour and mad banter.

Banter is just like informal communication culture between younger people normally in Britain. And banter often involves taking the piss or just talking a load of nonsense. Taking the piss means making fun of each other or just talking a lot of nonsense, being very stupid and humorous.

And there was definitely a lot of that kind of thing. I talked about the UK education system a little bit. Jez talked about studying German, studying theatre studies and studying American studies at university, including modules on politics and film and literature and conspiracy theories, which sounded pretty interesting.

We both talked about university, how it kind of was an important part of our lives and also reflected on the fact that these days going to university is extremely expensive. So we're kind of like there was a little discussion about the relative merits of going to university versus the expensive costs of going to university these days. Then we started talking about the time when we were in this band together in Birmingham.

The music was a mix of breakbeat. Breakbeat is basically kind of like a style of dance music that probably involves a lot of samples from funk music and hip hop. So breakbeats are ones that have their kind of funk beats, basically, where there are in musical terms, in drumming terms, they're called ghost notes.

So instead of which is a sort of a standard rock beat, a breakbeat would have these little ghost notes. All those little bits, those are elements of breakbeats. They're like hip hop beats or funk beats sampled, looped and played at a slightly higher speed.

Very common in the sort of music culture of the late 90s, a lot of breakbeats in dance music. So our band involved hip hop, breakbeats and live music all performing together with backing tracks, that's pre-recorded tracks with loops and stuff and live music played over the top. I had to try and as the drummer, I had to try and keep in time with the backing tracks by either playing along to a click track.

That's literally a track that just goes like a series of clicks and you have to play in time with that. It's set at a certain BPM, beats per minute, beats per minute, BPM. So trying to drum along to a click

track or drumming along to the actual backing track itself, which proved to be quite complicated.

But one of the things, one of the main things we talked about regarding Yoot Club was Jez's role as manager, organising gigs, booking gigs and trying to promote the band and his approach towards guerrilla marketing, which was actually on reflection, really interesting because it was so his approach to marketing was obviously putting up posters for the band everywhere, but also getting the band's name and website known everywhere by sticking these very basic, simple stickers all over Solihull and Birmingham. And they were on bus stops and they were on this, that and the other. And famously, I stuck one on the welcome to Solihull road sign and it stayed there for absolutely years.

And it made it into a Solihull tourist brochure. And I realised that Solihull is twinned, the metropolitan borough of Solihull. I mean, it's kind of like a town, really.

It's twinned with several other places in Europe. So, you know, the way that towns in different countries are twinned, I don't really know what that involves, but there's a connection, you know, where towns sort of like you get an English town is twinned with a German town and they share a lot of things and they kind of become brothers sort of thing, brother or sister towns. Well, Solihull is twinned with Collais, is it Collais in France? Is that how it's pronounced? And also Main Taunus Kreis in Germany, near Frankfurt.

Now, if you are from either of those places, Collais in France or Main Taunus Kreis near Frankfurt in Germany, get in the comments section because we are, in a sense, sort of twins, right, because

we're both from twinned towns. And I was wondering if even a Yoot Club sticker made its way all the way into the heart of Western Germany, did a Yoot Club sticker find its way into some tourist brochure in Main Taunus Kreis near Frankfurt in Germany? It's possible, don't you think, that that Welcome to Solihull sign with the Yoot Club sticker might have found its way into a tourist brochure for Main Taunus Kreis in Germany. So who knows, maybe YouTube got all the way into the middle of Germany or maybe into France as well, I don't know.

But that was an interesting episode. And it was really like Jez's early experience in marketing, which he then followed as his career, right. And I thought that I could just mention some of the terms, some of the words and phrases relating to marketing that came up.

So we had guerrilla marketing, that's G-U-E-R-R-I-L-L-A, unconventional, low budget, promotional methods where there are no rules at all. And the other use of the word guerrilla is in guerrilla fighting, right, fighting in the streets, street fighting. You know, you think of someone like Che Guevara, the revolutionary leader, Che Guevara, who used guerrilla fighting tactics, you know, so sort of unconventional fighting techniques that involve breaking the normal rules.

So also guerrilla marketing, brand awareness, that means making people know about your name or product, raising awareness of the brand so that people become aware of the brand and certainly seeing your posters and stickers everywhere raises brand awareness. It makes me think of similar marketing methods from the early noughties, that's from sort of 2000, 2001. Yoot Club stickers were all over Birmingham in the year 2000 and 2001.

And I think this is similar to something like Obey. Do you remember that? You know that company Obey? These days they make t-shirts and clothing and stuff. But in the noughties, Obey was stickers.

You saw these stickers everywhere, like a weird face and it said Obey in capital letters. And you saw these stickers in cities everywhere around the world. I lived in Japan, as you know, 2002, 2003, and I saw a lot of Obey stickers in Tokyo.

Originally, it was a picture of Andre the Giant, the wrestler, and it said Obey Andre the Giant. Just a weird viral sort of sticker campaign, which later became a clothing brand. But Yoot Club were doing that at around the same time.

So in a way, we were right there with our finger on the pulse of the zeitgeist in marketing terms. So anyway, brand awareness, traction. This is about gaining momentum or gaining popularity, getting a grip on the kind of culture, right? Traction, that's something that causes movement.

So if you gain traction, it means you sort of make connections which cause your brand to start moving and become well known. Organic growth, so that's when growth happens naturally without forcing it, without sort of synthetic or contrived ways of doing it. So organic growth is just something that grows totally naturally, maybe with audience participation, right? Engagement.

We talk about engagement. This is about the way that an audience connects with your brand. That's interaction and participation with the brand and connecting with an audience.

That's engagement. So a good level of engagement. So like, you know, Obey, there was a lot of engagement there because people were sticking the stickers everywhere and they were doing it naturally.

It became a trendy thing. People started to notice them. So it was a very engaging form of marketing.

Promotional material. We talk about posters, flyers, stickers, adverts and so on. Word of mouth is one of the most popular marketing methods, marketing mediums.

That's just letting people know because, you know, people finding out about something because people are talking about it by word of mouth, right? And yeah, that's probably enough in terms of marketing vocab that probably came up. What else? I don't really need to say much more. We talked about Jez's career in marketing, working for different brands and things like that.

And then, of course, his YouTube channel again at the end where he was able to basically connect his love of the outdoors with his desire to work in a marketing context with brands that do outdoor things like clothing brands or lifestyle brands for the outdoors. And so in a way, we came full circle to coin a Shakespearean phrase. We came full circle because obviously it was during an outdoor adventure trip that Jez and I first got to know each other.

And these days he's back in the great outdoors with his YouTube channel, which is called Get Out. And also a pop-up food stall as well called G-O-A-T, Get Out and Taste, otherwise known as GOAT.

So check out Jez's YouTube channel to keep up with him and his outdoor activities.

Yes, indeed. That's it then for me and this episode. But please do get in the comments section.

Oh, one thing. I found a photograph. Well, I didn't find a photograph.

Jez found some photos from the Yoot Club days in his loft. He was going through his loft, clearing out some old things, and he found some old photos. So I'm now going to share at least one photo of... This is a picture of us from... This has got to be around the year 2000.

So this is about 26 years ago in a chip shop. Now, listeners, audio listeners, you can't see this, of course, but I will put this on the episode page on the website. You can click the link in the description.

It will take you there and you'll see this black and white photo of some of the members Yoot Club in an efficient chip shop somewhere in Solihull around about the year 2000. There's Robbie, the bass player on the left. There's Phil, who is not actually in the band, one of the hangers-on.

Then there's Jake, the musical genius, and Dar, the lead singer extraordinaire, who these days lives in Berlin and looks basically exactly the same. Shan, the lead guitarist and rhythm guitarist. And then there's a picture of me from 26 years ago, desperately trying to decide what I'm going to order from the fish and chip shop.

Yes, that Yoot Club circa 2000. Yeah, good days, good times. All right, but that's it for me.

Have a look. Did you notice any accent changes during this episode? Did you notice the way my accent slightly shifted? Did you notice any differences between Jez's accent and my usual accent? Yeah, let me know in the comments section. But that was more or less a Birmingham accent that you were listening to there.

Obviously, there are many different types of Birmingham accent, but that was a sort of Solihull accent that you were listening to there from Jez, even though he doesn't live in Solihull these days, but I think he still kept the accent still kind of with him. Um, all right, leave your comments in the comments section. Well done to you for listening all the way through until the end of the episode here.

I really enjoyed this one. But that's it for now. Until next time, I'll now say thank you for listening and goodbye.

Bye, bye, bye, bye, bye.

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