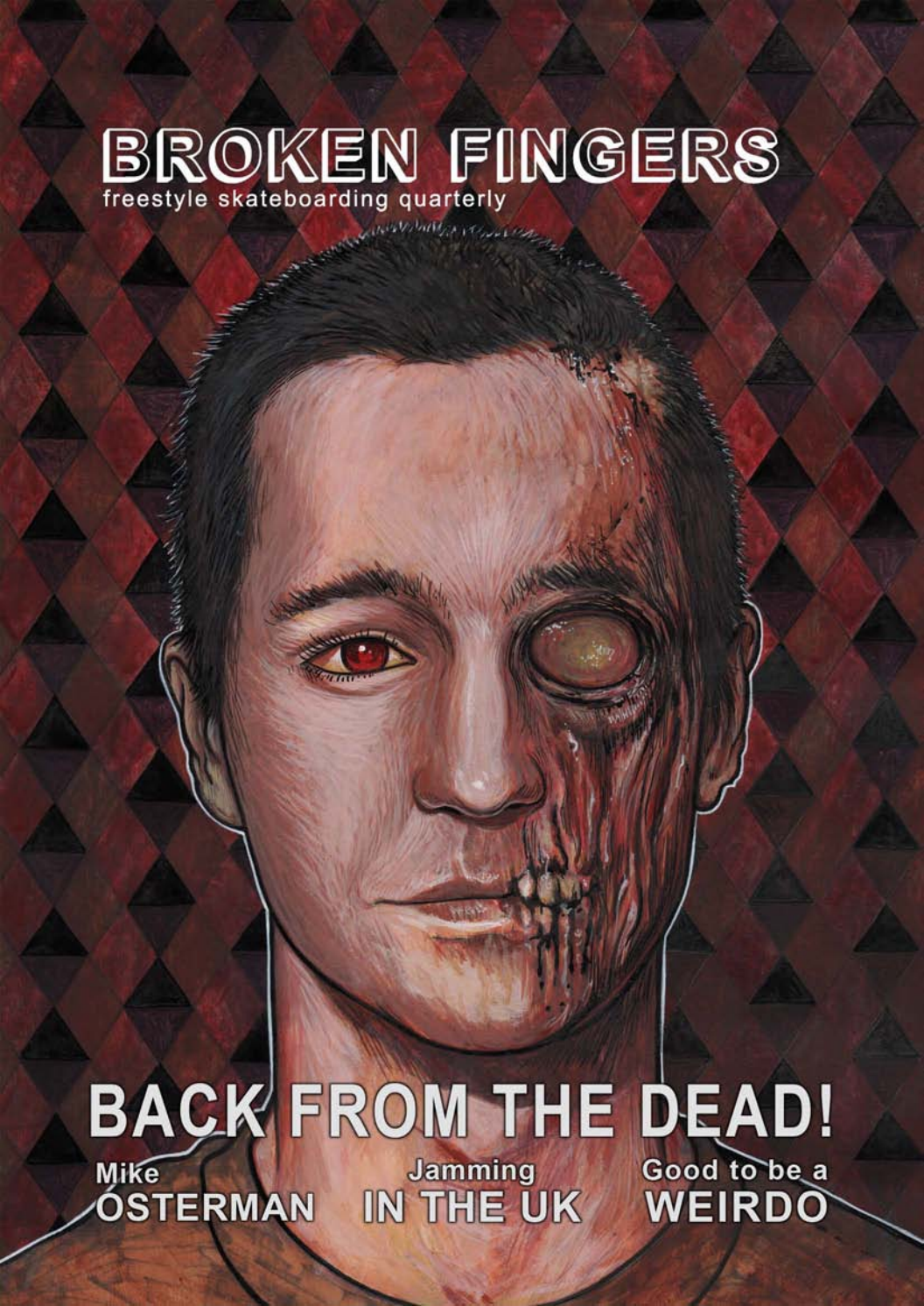
BROKEN FINGERS

freestyle skateboarding quarterly



BACK FROM THE DEAD!

Mike ÖSTERMAN

Jamming IN THE UK

Good to be a WEIRDO

Mike Osterman

MODE
SKATEBOARDS



Photo: Paige Jesteen Photography

modeskateboards.com



Benton Farquhar (Truck transfer) Photo: James Farquhar

BROKEN FINGERS

freestyle skateboarding quarterly

Broken Fingers is a nonprofit collaborative project that is dedicated to the coverage and dissemination of flatland freestyle skateboarding. We as a group seek to provide content that exhibits best the variety, complexity and excellence represented in the freestyle skateboarding community.

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Albert Kuncz (50-50 Truckstand) Photo: Dutkai Dániel



Connor Burke (Coconut Wheelie) Hollis Brumfield

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Mike Osterman (Renna-gade Flip) Photo: Jim Goodrich


Photo: Paige Meisenheimer

Mike OSTERMAN

Bob Loftin

>>>>Mike: This is Mike Osterman and I'm a 21-year-old biology student from Plainfield, Illinois. I first was exposed to freestyle skateboarding while playing Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3. Later, I stumbled upon several online freestyle forums where I discovered a growing community of kooks like me. I'm obsessed with the diverse styles that exist in flatland skateboarding. Every person takes a different approach to the flat with their skating and I guess I try to steal a little bit from everyone. When I'm not skating, I love screen printing and studying tattoos. At the moment, I spend most of my time studying for classes and working to pay for skate trips.

So I guess Jeremy wanted me to ask you some questions for this magazine we are doing. First of all, I have never talked to you so thanks for getting on.

>>>>Mike: Yeah it is weird to think about I hear your voice so often with the podcast It always feels like a conversation in some ways.



Mike Osterman (Railflip) Photo: Paige Meisenheimer

It is strange, and you know I had never met really most of the guys (in the modern freestyle scene) until I went to Philly. Like I had never met (Keith) Renna or any of those guys. I have known you guys for so long over the internet that I feel like I know you already, but some of you younger guys I don't feel like I know as well.

I guess the obvious question that I like to ask people is why freestyle?

>>>>Mike: Um, I don't know. I kind of wasn't very good at street skating and we didn't really have a lot to street spots to skate on. When I started skating, it was just me and my friends skating around our neighborhood and we didn't have anything good in riding or walking distance. So anything we did was a handrail, a curb or flat ground. I kind of had already started doing freestyle, and then saw Rodney Mullen doing freestyle tricks in Tony Hawk Pro Skater or in videos online. So I kind of figured out in time that it was already its own established thing and it became even more important to me then.

It seems like you and some of the other guys around your age, you kind of beat a lot of the even newer guys to the punch. It is crazy how many people found out about freestyle through THPS, but it seems like you Gokey and a few others you guys have been practicing a long time now.

continued...



Mike Osterman (Truck transfer) Photo: Paige Meisenheimer

>>>>Mike: Yeah, that's weird to think about.

How old were you when you started it all?

>>>>Mike: I started skating when I was probably 11 or 12, so about 10 years ago, but freestyling didn't come about 'til a couple years later so when I was 13.

So at this point in the freestyle scene it seems like to me that you have always been around.

>>>>Mike: I didn't catch on that there was a scene until Capital and Casper were already gone. When I first got a freestyle board for Christmas, my Mom had surprised me and ordered a Capital Punishment board, the one that has the big stamp on it, and it never came in the mail because they were already out of business. Isn't that great? So my consolation prize was getting a Kevin Harris single kick which is the thing I have been stuck with my entire freestyle life in reference to my skating; the boards I ride and like.

Yeah I was wanting to ask you about the whole single kick thing. I don't think Gokey is still riding a single kick. I think he may have given in and decided to ride the double kick, but you are a single-kick man.

>>>>Mike: I love them. I go back and forth now and then, after four or five single kicks I will go a couple weeks with a double kick and then I will go back to a single kick. I just think there are a lot more possibilities with having a completely different nose and tail. Especially having the differences in the concaves.

Yeah, we have talked about that a lot before on the Freestyle Podcast and yeah it does open a realm of possibilities you do not have with a kick nose. And it does have a kind of different feel. I remember when they started doing the double kicks everyone was like, Oh Bob, you must love these double kicks, and no not really. Sometimes I have trouble like on nose wheelies trying to find the sweet spot. I think because I learned to skate on single kicks with shorter noses.

>>>>Mike: I agree, the approach to a lot of tricks is completely different than with a double kick, and I can babble about this all night.

Single kicks aren't that easy to find. Who is making them? You guys?

>>>>Mike: I think Witter (Decomposed Skates) is making a few but I think we (MODE Skateboards) are the only ones making a single kick with concave.



Mike Osterman & Kevin Harris (celebratory hug) Photo: Jim Goodrich

I was looking at a pic of your model running down the board and it was really strange seeing a flat-nosed board with concave.

>>>>Mike: Yeah, I love it. My current MODE model is cut from a really big longboard mold so you don't get that little pocket between where your bolts end and the kick starts and the concave just kind of runs into nothing. When we initially started going through prototyping, I had a really wide nose almost how Matt Gokey had his "Goken" board back in the day, that was a really broad and blunt nose and eventually I really tapered it out and rounded rails out quite a bit. I felt like that wide nose worked with a traditional concave-less single kick but once you started adding concave to it, and especially concave that just flowed into nothing you tended to get a lot of bouncing when you are doing railflips, and there was this kind of weird feeling you got when doing certain rail and casper trick that you really needed that taper for.

So, while we are talking about equipment what current trucks and wheels and what not are you using on that thing?

>>>>Mike: Right now I am riding Tracker FulTracks, so like the Darts. I just switched to the Seismic Focus wheels, but I was riding the Sk8Kings 95a Crown Jewels.

Cool, So Which Seismics are you using the Blue or the Red?

>>>>Mike: So I had totally blown out the Jewels, cocoed them down and had to switch to something and all I had laying around were the Seismic blues. I would prefer the reds; I really like hard wheels.

The blues are pretty good, I have been using those.

So, we have talked a little bit about equipment. The Roundup so you won, that is awesome. How was that experience?

>>>>Mike: It was cool! I don't know, every year it gets weirder, and I keep thinking it is gonna feel like oh yeah we are just gonna meet up again. But every year like something else happens that is super weird. Me, Jesse (Whalen) and Daniel talk about that. This year the contest itself was cool; it feels like family and now kinda the same general people go every year. So it is like a big family meet up. On top of that we got to stay an extra day and go into the city of Vancouver itself and got to see a lot of stuff that was really cool. I turned 21 in Vancouver, so there was just a lot of drinking afterwards that didn't need to happen. It was really fun. Once the contest ended, it turned into a whole celebration of freestyle heritage.

Okay give me your top three freestylers.

>>>>Mike: Masahiro, Terry Synnott and Tommy Harward.

That is a pretty strong top three. For me, Terry is my favorite but there are a lot of good skaters now. The one little Japanese kid that won the amateur; holy cow, man.

>>>>Mike: Yeah, he (Isamu Yamamoto) is the man. He like, does not stop. If he was not skating at the contest, he was sleeping. He would just wake up and skate again.

Yeah, I was really blown away by that kid's run, especially since that is like the equivalent of me riding a 42" board.

>>>>Mike: Yeah, it was like half his size, it was huge, and he was doing fakie gazelles like half the speed of everyone else and sticking them perfectly on that huge board for him too, that was crazy.

So getting to the contest itself; you like the format?

>>>>Mike: Yeah, I do. I think we still need a two-minute format; it is good to have variety but for the people who are watching freestyle now and the people who we are trying to get started freestyling they just really can't sit through a two-minute routine.



Mike Osterman (Coco wheelie) Photo: Paige Meisenheimer

Yeah it seems like when you do the one-minute routine. What were they, one minute one and a half?

>>>>Mike: One minute this year.

I know some say you can't put as much artistry in a one-minute run but it creates an urgency that isn't there with a two-minute run.

>>>>Mike: Yeah, I think it is more exciting too. I think artistry is great; I think that is why we need to have two minutes for more choreography and things like that but if you have a 10- or 12-year-old kid watching it at a rodeo, he doesn't give a shit about artistry; he just wants to see crazy tricks. We are competing with the very extremes of skateboarding outside of freestyle; street and vert skating and we can't compete if all we are doing is wheelies and artistic stuff.

So the thing with MODE Skateboards, how did that all get started? Did Terry approach you or did you approach Terry?

>>>>Mike: Terry got ahold of me after the Philly contest in 2010, and he asked how things were going with Reverse and I had been riding for Reverse for just a little while. I guess I was on my way out sort of? I don't know I was not the most mature or responsible at that point, and I guess I was kinda on the way out. I don't know how else to say it. He mentioned MODE and seeing that Terry was one of my most favorite freestyle skaters of all time... He mentioned maybe sending me some boards and I was like, for sure, whatever you got. Whatever you want to do, I am totally willing to contribute or to be part of it. So we start from there. So the end of 2011, I think I was riding for them, and they started out by sending me some of their single-kick shapes, which were smaller, and then sending me some custom shapes every now and again.

So you were on Reverse, and then you went to MODE, but you have sort have been in the Small School club for a long time.

>>>>Mike: I got on Small School 2008, maybe? A long time ago.

When I e-mailed Jeremy and begged to be on the team, you were already on it I think.

>>>>Mike: I don't know, I remember you had that monkey wrench shape, and that was like one of the last boards that I bought. Yeah, I stole the Bonelessone graphic, the sock monkey doing a boneless and I asked him to put it on a board for me and that was the last board I probably bought before I started riding for small school.

Yeah, yeah so how did you get hooked up with Jeremy back in those days?



Mike Osterman (G-turn) Photo: Jim Goodrich

>>>>Mike: I think I made a sponsor-me video, because I was a dork and I thought sponsor-me videos were cool. It ended up being a video I put on YouTube I called "Mosti" and I sent it to Jeremy and he was down to put me on. It is a blur looking back that far. Yeah, he was just kinda cool with it.

Yeah, he is fun to work with on projects.

>>>>Mike: Absolutely, and when we rode for the small school he was so generous and so willing to just try things. That was the worst thing because I still love just to experiment with boards so it makes it so difficult just to buy product. I am always just tweaking things. He put me in that mode of, ah, I got to shave down the nose, I got to try this, got to put some side cuts in it. You guys had that Monkey Wrench shape I was talking about. He was willing to try all those different things.

Yeah, and he made those things by hand too.

>>>>Mike: He put so much work into it.

So what is coming up for you? Are you going to go to Philly?

>>>>Mike: Um, I hope so. Right now I am kind of just in this weird limbo. I am waiting for my money to come through from Vancouver and it is going to go toward anything I can do. I really want to go to Philly, and if school works out too I really want to go to Philly. I am filming some footage for what I think will be a MODE video. I am filming along with Connor Burke, Sean Burke and Jesse Whalen for our little project QLC.

Oh, I didn't know about that, tell me about that. Is that a secret?

>>>>Mike: It is a little video project, just kind of a crew thing. We don't really know what to call it yet, but it is just a little creative entity called QLC, which stands for Quarter Life Collective, or Quarter Life Crisis. We are trying to set the tone for the future of freestyle. That sounds so lame. But we want to try to develop a look and style of freestyle that we like, and try to flood Hellaclips and the main stream video sites with as much footage and freestyle as we can.

That is great man, that sounds good, all great skaters, should be a good video. Are you just gonna throw it on YouTube or something, or is it gonna be a "hey, send us $5 for this" or what?

>>>>Mike: Oh, it will all be free. YouTube or our Vimeo page, whatever Connor really wants to do he is the mastermind behind the video editing and stuff. We are gonna all collaborate on other artistic things within it.

That is a great group to be working with.

>>>>Mike: They are great guys. We are all from that same cluster of that generation so we all have pretty similar ideas about what we like about freestyle.

At the same time, pretty diverse styles. That is nice, not all clones of each other. You were saying earlier about trying to encourage new people to come in and take an interest and the more different kinds they can see, the more different styles the more likely they are going to take an interest.

So you might be going to Philly, and you are pretty busy with your studies?

>>>>Mike: Yeah it is pretty fun so far. I am about to start my application process for vet school. That is why I had to reschedule this interview because I just got off work where I am interning at.

Well there is a lot of work ahead for you there; getting into vet school is tough, isn't it?

>>>>Mike: This is going to be my senior year and then I am going to have to get ready for vet's school. Which is going to be kind of a crazy year ahead of me.

Very cool man, very cool. **BL**



Mike Osterman (Coco wheelie) Photo: Jim Goodrich



Connor Burke (Broken Fingers) Photo: Hollis Brumfield

Good to Be a Weirdo

Bob Loftin

During my latest episode of binge reading, I've been reading a lot of books by comedians. Most comedians, at least the ones I like, seem to be kind of screwed up. And by "kind of" I mean really, really broken up in some basic way. Weird childhoods, drugs, personality disorders, etc. Not all of them. But most.

When I sit down to write something for my blog, sometimes I'm at a loss to think of anything worth writing. This usually happens when I've been reading the stories of some semi-psychotic comedian. I guess it's good to be able to experience the extremes of modern American existence through a book, rather than going through all that shit yourself. I have no desire to be strung-out, drunk, or homeless. But sometimes those things can lead to some good stories, apparently.

I've never been drawn to that kind of life. All I've ever really want to do is skate. Even as a kid, I knew that the more I fucked up, the less skating I'd get to do. And nothing was allowed to get in the way of skating.

I started skateboarding when I was eleven, and since then it has mostly dominated my life. Now, approaching 50, I feel the same. I sit here, doing my work — good work that I enjoy — but under it all, every day, almost all the time, I wish I were out skating. Some guys devote themselves to career and money. But sitting here, officially in middle age, my mind drifts to skateboarding almost constantly.

Though I'm a pretty good skater, as you might expect for 39 years of experience, I've never been sponsored. I've never made any money at skateboarding. While I've not yet broken a bone skating (I am apparently gifted with a thick, strong skeleton), I've certainly lost my share of skin, gotten my share of contusions. My shin bones are covered with calcified lumps and scars. I can still see the scar on my elbow I got skating a banked wall when I was 13.

About nine years ago my wife and I moved back to the suburb in which I grew up. I find myself skating the same spots as in the old days. The school parking lot where I learned freestyle tricks in the 1970s. The mellow little ditch where I learned to pump transitions. The alley behind our old house, with its banked driveways that served as my skatepark.

All these years later I've returned to these spots, which mean more to me than they did back then. Is that sad nostalgia? No. It's not sad, and it's not nostalgia. It's just the truth. I could drive fifteen minutes up the freeway to a huge concrete skatepark, where I'd spend most of my time dodging the dozens of skaters, bikers and scooter kids, but I choose my old spots.

After 39 years, I'm back home. I'm skating the same spots. At 50, I still daydream of skating constantly. Skateboarding is the beautiful curse.

I'm a skater. **BL**



Albert Kuncz (Airwalk) Photo: Dutkai Dániel



Benton Farquhar (Nohanded 50-50) James Farquhar



Mike Osterman (Railflip setup) Photo: Paige Meisenheimer



Connor Burke (Hang Ten Nose Wheelie) Hollis Brumfield

Tony Gale – Nosehook Impossible
Tunbridge Wells, England
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Simon Mrozinski (Rail handstand) Photo: Tony Gale



Simon Mrozinski & Callum Bowran (Jamming) Photo: Tony Gale

Jamming in the UK

Callum Bowran

Rain. It's a feature of the British summer that is often unavoidable, and it seemed set to jeopardize this get together.

Those with a better memory than mine will be able to tell you the last time there was a proper UK freestyle jam (NASS events excluded), but I would hazard a guess at almost 10 years or so. A lot has changed since then in the scene, and we've suffered many casualties - Ash Gibney, Guy John, Matt Wells, Aneurin Vaughn, and Ryan Fitzpatrick to name but a few. The UK seems to have been in a bit of a freestyle slump, with the main culprit being the thing we as skaters probably fear the most; 'real life."

Luckily, a new guard has entered our ranks, breathing life into the scene, spearheaded by Latetricks.com founder Alex Foster. With this, a jam in Bristol was proposed.

So to the weather. In the lead-up to the date, all weather forecasts indicated rain. Not just a little bit. A lot. A hell of a lot. The whole thing was almost called off and re-arranged, but an undercover skateable spot was found so we decided to stick with it. As it transpired, it remained dry throughout most of the day.

I met Tony Gale and Simon Mrozinski at noon at Temple Meads, the main train station, as they'd caught the same train as it passed through their respective towns. Tony, previously of The North (though he'd argue it's the midlands), now lives in the garden of



Tony Gale & Calum Bowran (Jamming) Photo: Simon Mrozinski

England that is Kent, and had been traveling since about 7 a.m. that morning. I think there's a lot to be said for the dedication of freestylers to spend time traveling from one piece of flat to another just to have the company of another freestyler. Pleasantries were exchanged and it wasn't long to wait until the arrival of Matt Smithies, leaving just one person missing. Alex Foster had set off from the proper north early that morning, but wasn't due to get to Bristol for another hour, so with that our merry band of four set off to our first skate spot: the infamous Lloyds Bank.

Lloyds Bank is one of those spots that everyone growing up skating in the UK knows and wants to skate. It was with great excitement that we headed there, with obligatory conversation as we walked. Topics included the recent World Round-Up, and more obscure discussions such as the "The top 10 tricks that should never have happened" such as Philly death slides, coco wheelie grabs and pogoing down stairs (yes, I know, guilty as charged).

As we neared Lloyds, the unmistakeable smell of barbecue filled the air. Our hearts sank as we rounded the corner to find the spot completely blocked off and overtaken by "Grillstock," billed as "a meaty experience with loud music and low lighting." Might sound good to some, but for us it was a disaster. The bizarrely named "@ Bristol" science centre backs onto Lloyds, and though almost certainly a bust, offers large open spaces of smooth marble, so bags down and boards out, we started to skate.

Now, whilst Tony's been skating freestyle for a long time, he's been in hiding for the past few years for one reason or another. I had seen him last December at the Ledge Expo demo, but it had been a long time since I had seen him skate in an unrestricted space. That man skates fast. Not just fast for a freestyler, but fast fast. I reckon he'd easily give Primo or Pierre a run for their money. There's no punches held either; soon as wheels hit the floor, there were 540 shuvits (FS, BS, hang 10), Gazelles both ways, 360 double fingerflips, 360 oldschool flips ... the list goes on! It's exciting to watch, and in my opinion, there are very few freestylers I find exciting in that way.

With Tony flying around like a madman, it's very hard to not just stand there in awe and feel more than a little intimidated, but another great virtue of the freestyler is that there is a huge variety in styles and tricks. Simon, for example, has matured in his skating to no end, with really unique smooth tricks integrated into footwork, whilst still maintaining a technical edge. Two personal favorites of mine are what can only be described as a mix between a machete and a switchblade with a bit of a big spin and Paulino thrown in for good measure (you'll just have to ask him to show you), and the open-handed carousel, so casually thrown that it's a wonder the board moves at all. It was also apparent that Matt was enjoying the open space, rolling around throwing underflip variations in abundance, so it was a great shame when a security guard in a high vis jacket came to kick us out. We knew it was coming, so couldn't complain that much, but as none of us was actually from Bristol, we didn't know where else to go. As luck would have it, the security guard's boyfriend was a skater, so she went and got us a little map and circled all the local haunts. The college green was the closest, we settled on there to wait for the arrival of Alex.There were already a



Tony Gale (Nohanded 50-50 truckstand) Photo: Simon Mrozinski

few skaters up at the green, and I'm usually very conscious of getting in the way of others, especially locals. I needn't have worried though, as they were a friendly bunch and seemed quite receptive to a bunch of freestylers invading their space. Tony and Simon were geeking out over old cameras and started taking some snaps to document the event.

Considering I don't think that Alex has ever been to Bristol, he managed to find us with little problem and joined in the skating escapades. Alex has had the same pair of shoes since I met him I think: an old pair of iPath grasshoppers that are more duct tape than original shoe. It doesn't bother him though, with tail-handflips to casper, proving the lack of nerve endings left in his toe.

Now that we were all together, it was decided to move on to a larger spot with a bit more flat, so off we headed just as a naked cycle ride of 100 or so people was setting off. I know the English are supposed to be eccentric, but this was just something else!

Onto the next spot then, a large flyover just outside of Bristol offering us shelter from the few showers that were starting. When Brits go abroad skating, others are always amazed at how well we seem to adapt to so called "bad" or "rough" surfaces. I'm going to let you in on a little secret - they're a lot better and smoother than most of the surfaces we skate on every day, and this spot was a case in point. Uneven, sloped to one side, smashed glass and gravel littered about... so down the bags went and out the boards came!

It's always nice to make a little video of a jam (which can be seen on the Latetricks Youtube channel *), and this seemed as good a place as any. Tony took some pretty nasty slams getting a hang ten wheelie to 540 shuvit, which on that surface is nothing short of remarkable. In traditional mickey-taking English fashion, he also took a few kicks in the ribs filming a tribute to AJ Kohn. It's a wonder he's not got any serious injuries!

As the day marched on, it was time for me to leave, a lot dirtier and sweatier than I began, leaving the rest to carry on before setting off themselves. Driving back home and reflecting on the day's events, I think it's safe to say it won't be too long before the next gathering, hopefully with more joining us. After a little hibernation, the UK freestyle scene is waking up again. **CB**

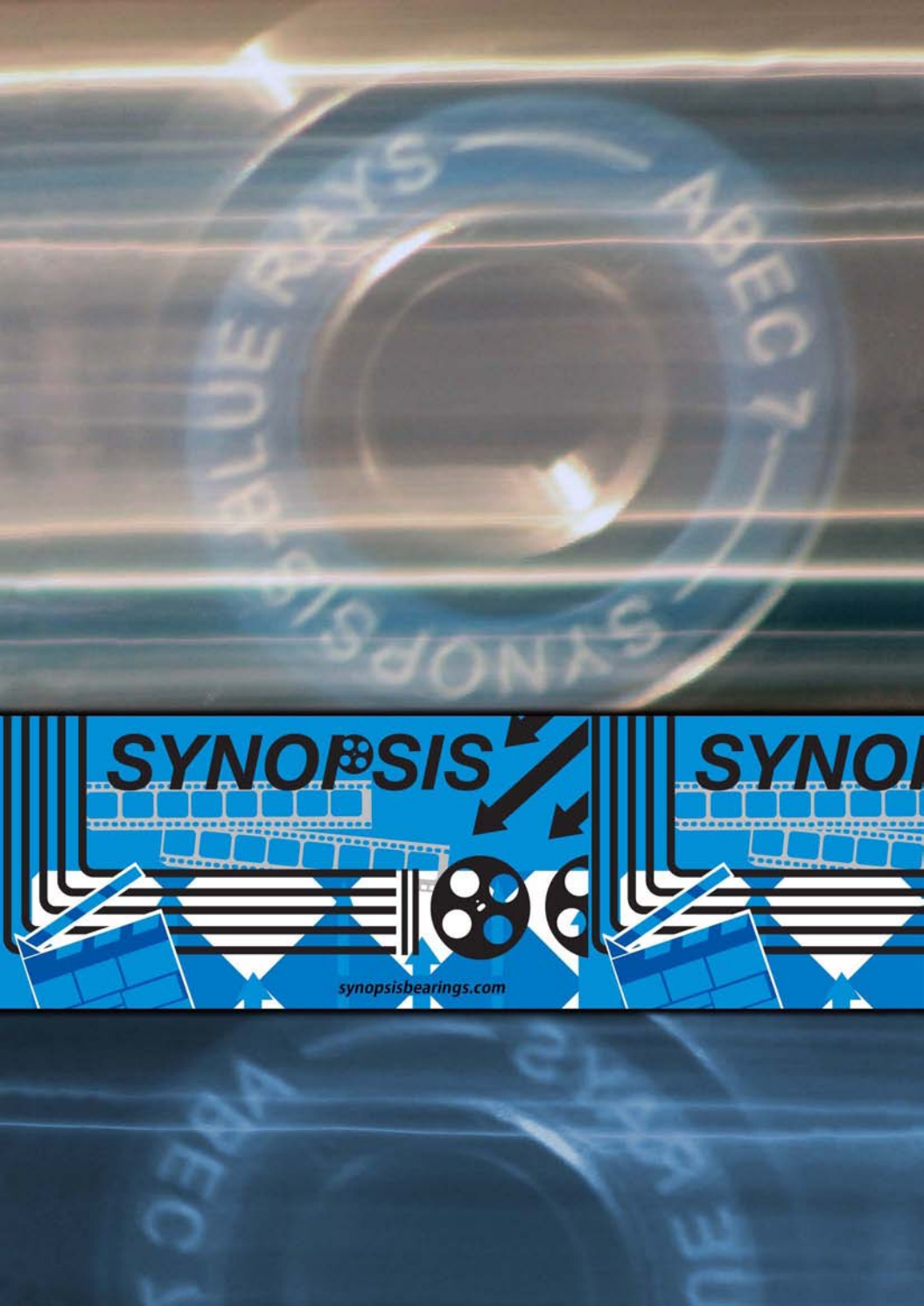
*http://www.youtube.com/user/FSLateTricks



Callum Bowran (Truck transfer) Photo: Simon Mrozinski



Benton Farquhar (TV Stand) Photo: James Farquhar


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Albert Kuncz (Crossfoot pogo) Photo: Dutkai Dániel



Simon Mrozinski (Sidewinder) Photo: Tony Gale

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