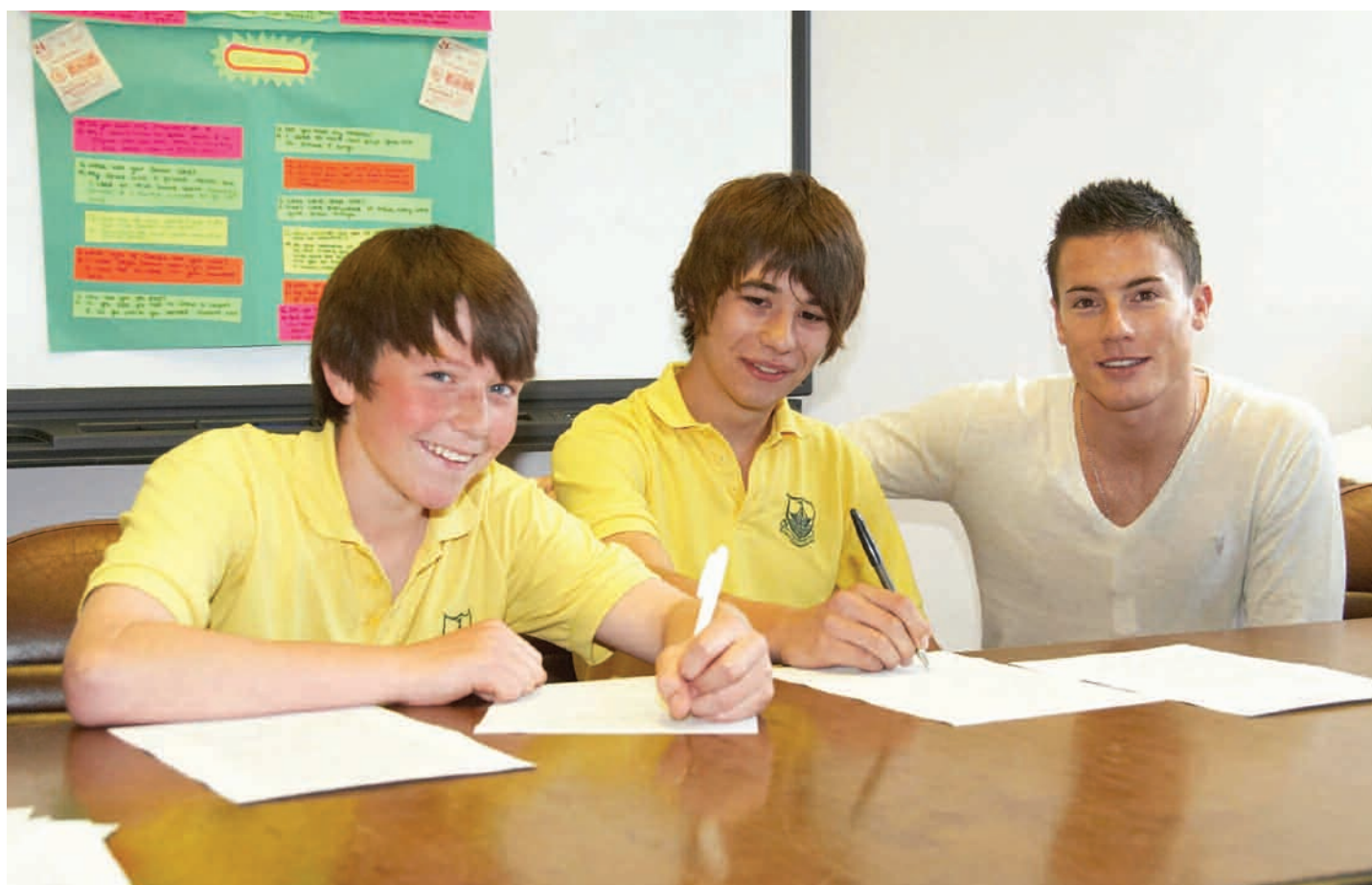


# World Superbike champion **James Toseland** lent his support to the Tell Me Project when he was interviewed by Ramsey Grammar School students



Ramsey resident, MotoGP star and Crash band member James, 28, was interviewed by Joe Priestley and Mark Donnelly, both 15, Laura Collister, Rebecca Flint and Haley Robinson, all aged 14 and Jessica Corner and Kyle Withington, both 13.

James, who was born in Doncaster and raised in Sheffield, spoke of how when he was eight his grandmother inspired him to play the piano and how a few years later his mother's partner taught him to ride a motorbike, tuition that set him on a path to become, aged 23, the youngest World Superbike champion in 2004, a title he regained in 2007.

He told Kyle Withington his favourite subject at school was music. 'I enjoyed it and found it easy because I had been learning since I was about six years old. I did have a very nice looking English teacher, though!' He added: 'At school I just did enough as

motorcycling dominated my life and I was dedicated to that from about the age of 11 or 12.' And when asked if the name of his band had been influenced by motorcycling he answered: 'I met the band - who are also a Robbie Williams tribute band - and they were called "Shazoom" which didn't really fit with the motorcycling scene. Bon Jovi had just released the album "Crush" and we felt that "Crash" sounded good and linked into the motorcycling theme.'

Asked by Laura Collister and Jessica Corner what he felt he had achieved from racing he said: 'Everything. I turned professional at 16 and my house and lifestyle have all come from motorcycling.' His early days of racing had to be worked around school as he explained: 'It wasn't easy, as a big race clashed with a food technology exam. The headmaster refused me permission to miss it so I did the exam in the morning then shot to Brands Hatch to qualify in the afternoon!'

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A question about his interests outside racing and music prompted the reply: ‘Family and friends are very important to me but it can be difficult finding time. I also have a lot of good friends from school.’ And when asked who his favourite motorbike manufacturer was, he answered: ‘Yamaha - and they also provide quality instruments for the Yamaha Crash Band.’

Joe Priestley and Mark Donnelly wanted to know how James came to the attention of big name racing teams. He said: ‘By doing what I was doing on my bike and doing it well. I began beating more established names and couldn’t be ignored. Basically I was recognised through practice and dedication to what I was doing.’

James explained: ‘MotoGP isn’t a job, it’s a passion.’ The interviews also revealed highlights of his non-racing career were performing with Jools Holland in front of 200,000 people at Newmarket race course and singing ‘We Will Rock You’ at the O2 arena in London with the original members of Queen (minus the late Freddie Mercury); how he found writing his autobiography therapeutic; his ambition is to become MotoGP champion, and that the secret of his success is: ‘Hard work, dedication and passion – and a real love of what you are doing.’

The Tell Me Project is a Freedom to Flourish initiative that aims to create a unique archive of the Island’s social history through young people interviewing older people about their memories of the past. The project is funded by co-sponsors the H&S Davidson Trust and AXA Isle of Man whose head of human resources, Emma Walker said: ‘We were delighted when James kindly agreed to take time out of his busy schedule to be interviewed for the Tell Me Project. James’s participation brings a new and exciting dimension to the intergenerational element of the project in which we are keen to involve as wide a cross section of the community as possible, although schools will always remain at the heart of the programme.’



Asked by Rebecca Flint and Hayley Robinson why there were so few top women riders James answered: ‘I don’t know and don’t want to sound sexist! Of course some may argue it’s a lack of strength but I’m not sure, as Pedrosa is not very big at all. Becoming pregnant can also have a bad effect on the aerodynamics! There are women champions in other motor sports so maybe this will develop in MotoGP.’ And when the girls posed the question: ‘What has been your favourite moment in your career?’ James replied: Winning my two World Championships. The feeling as I crossed the line and became the best in the world was indescribable. Having achieved that goal I soon started looking to the next one, MotoGP champion. I did enjoy battling with Rossi in Australia last year. He’s said to be the best ever so to pass him twice was brilliant.’

Hugh Davidson said: ‘James’s work with young people both here and further afield in his home town of Sheffield combined with his entertaining childhood memories introduced a valuable new element to the intergenerational nature of the Tell Me Project. It’s also fair to say James embodies many Freedom to Flourish values. His dedication to succeed and the encouragement he received from family and friends demonstrate how, given the right support and resources, he was able to achieve his full potential. We were enormously grateful that James was able to share his experiences with the students and inspire them so that they, too, may reach their full potential.’

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