England Netball 90th Anniversary Oral History Project

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

14th November 2016

Interviewer: Brian Worrell

Interviewee: Sue Campbell

BW: My name is Brian Worrell, an England Netball honorary life member, and I’m interviewing Baroness Sue Campbell on the fourteenth of November 2016 at her offices in Loughborough for the England Netball history project.

Sue, could we start by you introducing yourself with your name, where you’re from, and what jobs you do.

SC: \*laughs\* I’m Baroness Sue Campbell, I am, at the moment, Chair of the Youth Sport Trust, which I’ve been involved with since its first day in 1995, when I was its chief exec, and I’m also Head of Women’s Football. Previously Chair of UK Sport during that wonderful period, 2003 to 2013, so saw the Beijing and London Olympic and Paralympic games.

BW: That’s lovely, thank you, Sue.

It’s great meeting up with you again and for you agreeing to be interviewed. The project is about capturing the experiences and stories of our netball history. This includes both oral, as well as written and pictorial, and therefore we are very interested in your involvement in netball and sport in general and how they may have helped you in your career.

Perhaps we could start with you briefly outlining your career

SC: Ooh, my goodness. Erm… not very good at school, however, in my day, you could get into teacher-training with five O-Levels, so I went to Bedford College of Physical Education; probably the best professional training start in my life I could’ve had. Taught in Moss Side, Manchester, which was another experience that taught me a great deal.

I went from there to be the deputy director of Recreation at Leicester University, working with a wonderful man called Bob White. Then the first woman on the staff, here at Loughborough, for five years with twenty-five men in African Violet tracksuits and me, which was, again, fun and a massive learning experience.

Four years working in the inner city for Sport England, doing sport development, with disadvantaged groups in the community.

Deputy Director of the National Coaching Foundation, from ’83, then CEO of the National Coaching Foundation from 1985 to 1995. 1995 I came to be the CEO of the Youth Sport Trust and then in 2003, the then-Secretary of State, Tessa Jowell, asked me to become the reform chair of UK Sport, and then I was appointed as full-time Chair in 2005 and oversaw that incredible period through Beijing and London. I left in 2013, and then have just very recently taken on the role as head of Women’s Football.

BW: Excellent. You’ve actually gone beyond one of my questions later on, so we can forget all about that one. But you’ve left one thing out, and that is being a crossbench –

SC: -yeah-

BW: -in the House of Lords-

SC: yep, yep

BW: -what’s that like? The excitement, the energy? The Frustrations?

SC: Frustrations, probably comes above the excitement and energy

BW: Oh, really? Does it? Okay.

SC: I accepted the opportunity to go into the House of Lords in 2008, no, I was inducted into the House of Lords in 2009, and my two introducing peers were Sebastian Lord Coe and Estelle Baroness Morris, so that was sport and education and it was Conservative and Labour and I went in as a crossbench peer. I haven’t found -

BW: \*coughs\* Excuse me

SC: - it an easy place for me. Some would say I haven’t worked hard enough at it; I would say I’ve had an awful lot of other things to work hard at, but it is an immense privilege to be in the House, I mean, I still, when I see the house, and look at it when I’m walking towards it, I kind of have to check in with myself; I just wonder what my mum and dad would have said to see me walk in there, but um, there’s some wonderful individuals in there, fantastic place to network. That wonderful mix of experience, age, if you want to think of it that way, but also people who’ve really borne the weight of massive decisions they’ve made in their lives as MPs, or doctors, or members of, of different parts of society, so, yeah, they’re fantastic people. I find the actual processes are not easy; they’re, they’re… they’re obviously traditional, which, you know, I value, but they’re at times very frustrating and, and can be quite… they can be quite isolating, in a funny sort of way if you’re not used to that kind of behavioural, tradition that is expected. So, a mixture of feelings about it, but absolutely massive privilege and gosh, you know, my mother and father would’ve just… they - one, they wouldn’t have believed it, and second, they would’ve been very proud. \*laughs\*

BW: I am absolutely certain they would’ve been proud, dead right.

Did you have to make a maiden speech in the House of Lords?

SC: I did. I made my maiden speech.

BW: And how did that go?

SC: erm… Interesting, ‘cause I got a lot of public speaking, but I don’t think I’ve ever been as nervous in my life as I was standing up in the House. Partly, again because the protocol of the way you have to introduce what you say and the way you have to respond to people. Needless to say, I made it on youth sport and the legacy of the Olympics. But yes, no, I mean, again, very nerve-wracking, and that’s not because individuals were intimidating- they’re not. It’s the environment that is intimidating, it, it’s that sense of where you’re standing and what you’re doing that’s intimidating.

BW: I can understand that.

Both: Yeah, yeah.

BW: But nonetheless exciting

SC: oh, yeah, I mean, incredible, yeah

BW: Now, if I remember right, you once told me, all those years ago, that you were also an international athlete. What was it about netball that made you choose that as a sport?

SC: Well, to be honest, and this is kind of interesting based on where I am now, from the age of five, to the age of eleven, I played football. I played football with my friends in the street, who were mostly young lads, and I spent hours and hours and hours kicking a ball against a door. And when I went to secondary school they said ‘oh, girls don’t do football’ and I went ‘what do you mean they don’t do football?’ I thought I was gonna play for England, and ‘no, no you don’t’ they didn’t play football. And at the time there weren’t clubs around and things to do, so I moved to hockey and netball, so I played hockey and netball. I loved them both… probably equally, to be honest. I wasn’t as good at hockey as I was at netball, but I loved it as a game.

Went to Bedford, again, tried out for both teams, again, got in I think the fifth team for netball and the fifth team for hockey. I was most insulted, \*laughs\* but I was. And then I moved up towards the first teams and then I had to choose, because of the commitments to the games… and at the time I’d gone for a trial for… what must have been British Universities’ netball team or a Universities team that was going on a tour. Joyce Wheeler was the coach, we went to… Canada, I think, and I went for netball and never went back to hockey until I was… fifty-six I started playing hockey again.

BW: What, last year, you mean?

SC: Yeah, no, I wish it was, no that was quite a few years ago now.

BW: That’s lovely. Okay, and, and of course, looking at netball back in those days, it was a very low-profile, low-public-awareness sport… What was that like compared with athletics at that time? Or even hockey? Because you I didn’t realise you did hockey, Sue.

SC: yeah, yeah, I wasn’t a great hockey player. I loved it, ‘cause I think it had semblances of football for me; it had that same formation and that same feel, you know-

BW: yeah

SC: - that I’d got so used to.

I… I think in those days, sport, whatever sport you were in, was an- they were amateur sports. It was a massive commitment, you know, from my parents for one thing- always remember my dad used to take me to Sunday morning athletics at Derby ladies AC, which was at Spondon. And he used to drop me off and go and do his gardening, his, go to the garden centre, and then he’d come and collect me. But, you know, you-you forget just how much parents- parts parents play in these things- still do today, but in my day, you know, it was, when we went on tours or went on trips, we often had to pay. The kit, we had to contribute to, it was just a different world, but the people who made it through were kind of, I don’t want to say ‘Corinthian spirit’, but you know what I mean, they did it because they love sport and they got there because sport was what mattered; it didn’t, you didn’t get there for money or for prestige or indeed, you didn’t care whether anybody knew whether you played or not. You played because you wanted to play.

BW: yeah

SC: And that was what was special about it and so much of that has now, y’know, it’s so different, we live in a different era, but in those days I don’t think there was a huge difference between the two; you were just, y’know, you were just an amateur athlete doing the best you could.

BW: And what years did you play for, for England? Can you remember? Your international career?

SC: Oh, blimey, well I started in the under-21s when I was at college, so, and then when I went to teaching Moss Side… you know, those were the days when, to be honest, to be in the England team, you were playing in sort of Surrey, Kent, or Middlesex. You know, I remember those teams, y’know. The Judy Day’s and the Sally Dewhurst’s and the those guys, and when I went to Manchester, although netball was played locally, there was really very little chance of getting in, back in the England team. So I was out for a while, and then I got back in again and did that long tour to South Africa, where we ate milk puddings, or milk tarts, every night, or whatever it was. So, and I did a trip to Jamaica, I did a trip, you know, I’ve, I got some amazing, amazing experiences in netball, but the moment - the thing I remember most, were the other players. I don’t remember matches particularly, I don’t remember huge moments of sporting, sort of, excitement, although I’m, I know there were those, but I, to this day, remember with enormous fondness, the people I toured with and the daft things we did and the fun we had. And, and you know, one of the strange things was when you came home and wanted to share those stories with other people- really hard to do that. ‘cause they hadn’t lived it with you. ‘Was only the people who lived it with you and, you know, remembered the ostrich farm and the fact that the ostrich ended up riding me, rather than me riding the ostrich, I mean, that might sound funny, but it, it was hysterically funny to the people who saw it happen, so. There are things you can only share with the people who, who did the, had the experience with you, but, yeah, wonderful time.

BW: That’s interesting actually, and we’ll come on to the daft idea, or the daft things just in a few moments, but I think you might’ve actually got rid of another question, so that’s… you’re very good

Both: \*laugh\*

BW: So in a way you don’t actually remember, well, let me ask it slightly differently: You obviously had to play your first international for England. What was that like, going out on the court for the first time? The environment? The buzz? Et cetera, what, I mean, how did you feel about that?

SC: Well I think, you know, when you, when you’re, when you’re, as I was, a sporty kid and, you know, whether you were watching the Olympics, or you were watching anything, you know, that sense that you wanted to be there, you, you know, you wanted to be wearing that shirt, you wanted to be walking out representing your country - I mean, I’m still, to this day passionate about being British. You know, I don’t, I-I- I just feel still, despite all the things we all get wrong, in society and in life generally, I am very proud and very grateful I was born in this country and I grew up in this country and I’ve had the opportunities I’ve had in this country.

So, I remember the feeling of putting the shirt on, rather than walking out. Remember being given the gear, this was before the game, not- not just literally before the game, it was a couple of days. I had the gear and I remember putting it on and walking around in it and not wanting to get it dirty, but I just wanted to feel it on me, and I remember that feeling of pride and that sense of, kind of ‘my… I’ve made it’. You know, ‘I’ve-I’ve dreamed of this and here’s the shirt with this England rose-‘. I’m going ‘oh- oh my god. This is- this is it, I’m here’. So I remember that more than walking out, actually. ‘Cause the kit sort of represented that moment you’d made it.

BW: Okay, and in-in the England squads at that time, I remember you mentioned Sally Dewhurst, and Joyce Wheeler and Judy Day, I mean all-

SC: I remember being thrown in the cricket nets by Judy Day at Crystal Palace. She’ll tell the story the other way ‘round, that I threw her in the cricket nets, but she definitely threw me in the cricket nets. It was the under-21s playing, I think the first morning of the senior trials and they’d put the under-21s on against a sort of first seven of some kind and Judy was playing at goal-attack and I was playing goal-defence and it was that time when we did that blocking-with-the-arms thing and three times, Judy dislocated my shoulder, so on the fourth attempt, I didn’t move my arm, I didn’t let it go with her, I just whacked her back and she grabbed my arm and the two of us flew into the cricket nets- I shall never forget it. So I remember Judy vividly!

I remember Sally vividly, because Sally was very good to me and then, and then, you know, almost a sort of hero figure for me. She was terrific. And then I remember the Cathy Hickey’s and the Anne Miles and, y’know, they were- they were extraordinary people, as well as being extraordinarily talented people.

And then when I, y’know, I was at Loughborough, I had the privilege of coaching Liz Nicholl and, y’know, I coached great players, so. If I’m honest, I think coaching was my greatest love. More than playing, actually.

BW: Interesting. When I interviewed Liz, she said that you were the inspirational coach that actually got her in to wanting to do netball, even though she was already doing netball. You were the person that actually led the way for her. And she used the words ‘inspirational coach’, so I think that’s brilliant, Sue, but can you remember those days with- with Liz and- and that encouragement?

SC: Oh yeah. No, it’s funny, because when you talk to me about playing, there are moments like the shirt I can remember, but there’s not a lot else I can- but you asked me about coaching and I can pretty recall every day I coached, isn’t that interesting? It’s like it’s catalogued. And-and yeah, I first met Liz when she- my last year at Leicester University, Liz was there at Leicester and then, she came here to do a postgraduate thing, and I had, I had come here and yeah, yeah, she was, I mean, she talks about me inspiring her, but I mean, gosh, what an, what a talent she was, I mean crikey, she was- she was exceptional and brilliant to coach because she was like a, you know, she was like a sponge; she just absorbed and-and was able- as she still can- with anything you do with her, she absorbs it, and immediately turns it into operationalise it; that’s what she’s brilliant at: absorbing information and turning it into something, so she was great to coach. And that was- that- that first few years here at Loughborough I had some absolutely fantastically talented people, who were a lot of fun to coach and we won pretty well everything you could win, university-wise. And actually, I think we were the first university team to be accepted into the club competition and we ended up getting to the semi-final, where we got beaten by… Kent team- I want to say ‘Alpha’, but it- what was the Kent team?

BW: Academy?

SC: It wasn’t Academy- what was the team that Sally Dewhurst used to play for years ago? Forgotten. Anyway, we got beaten by them in the semi-final. So, yeah, no, they were, she was terrific and, you know, the way she played netball is how she’s lived her life, really and how she went on to be the CEO of netball and has gone on to make the most immense contribution to British sport as the performance director, and now the CEO of-of-of UK Sport. And she-she works like she played, you know, with great energy, unbelievable work-ethic, massive ability to keep hold of and manage masses of detail. She’s a wonderful example of when you watch someone play sport, you-you know they are…

BW: I don’t think though that it’s any coincidence that two of the- The Two most powerful women in sport today actually had netball as their-

SC: common

BW: -as their common sport. That’s yourself and Liz, of course.

SC: And my now, my CEO here, Alison Oliver, also netball.

BW: Really?

SC: mmm, interesting.

BW: What would you describe- I mean what- what is it about netball that-that enabled that to happen?

SC: I don’t know… Well, you know what’s fascinating about it is, of course you can be a star in any team and- and every team does have stars, but in netball, you’re utterly interdependent. There is no one player that can get the ball at one end, run down the other end and score. So, you can be the best player in the world, but if the other six aren’t working with you, or you’re not learning to cooperate, you’re not learning to collaborate, and you’re not respecting other people’s talents, you’re not gonna make it. And I think the game has a way of channelling your competitiveness and your energy into a collaborative way of operating, and-and when I, you know, when I look at the organisations I’ve been fortunate enough to-to be involved in- National Coaching Foundation, Youth Sport Trust, UK Sport- all of which have grown from one person in a room, well, not UK Sport, but the other two I grew from me sitting in a room- the only reason they’ve grown and been successful is that I’ve gathered like-minded people and then just empowered them to get on with it and that’s kind of a bit like netball. You’ve got to get the team right, you’ve got to get the balance of the team right, you’ve got to empower the team, ‘cause you can’t do it on your own. And that style of managing, I’m sure, was laid down quite firmly in my head playing the game.

BW: I actually agree with you; I think one of the reasons I like netball is because it is a collaborative team effort- one person can’t make that much difference to the whole game

SC: \*noises of agreement\* no

BW: You need the whole team ethic to work, yeah. You mentioned, just before, about kit and stuff…

SC: yeah

BW: … I mean, again, if we can just go back into the history a bit, what was the kit the camaraderie, the equipment, like?

SC: \*laughing\* Well, one- one of the funny stories, I don’t know if this is a true story, but, but I do remember... it was maybe a bit of, like, you know, stuff that just gets passed ‘round, but… we had those pleated skirts that have Velcro, a little clip and Velcro, and then sort of air tech shorts/shirts/tops. And, uh, the myth was, or maybe it was true, that Sally Dewhurst was playing somewhere in the West Indies, and the opponent was hanging on to her skirt every time centre pass, so typical Dewhurst, she unclipped the clip but left the Velcro and then ran out the skirt as the whistle went.  
I don’t know if that was just one of those legends, but… so, equipment was, it was, it was okay, but compared today’s modern clothing, the way now technology has taken over the design of the way it, what we wear, how it absorbs sweat, how it moves when you move, all that stuff, god, that’s, you know, that’s not- we were just lucky to have a shirt and a skirt and a pair of pumps on! You know, if you think about the sophistication of footwear now compared to when we played, you know, we didn’t, we didn’t think about the sophistication of footwear, we just wore shoes \*laughs\*. Now, crikey, you know, there’s people over there designing shoes that are different from the left foot than the right foot, because you run ‘round a bend in an athletics stadium. You know, there’s stuff going- the technological advances on footwear and clothing and oh, crikey, there’s no comparison.  
And I think… whilst on the one hand you know, you kind of go… we’ve lost something through that, on the other hand, you can say we’ve modernised the game so it appeals to today’s young women. You know, if we were still wearing the kit that we’d been wearing when we were there, a lot of girls would look at that today and think ‘I don’t want to look like that’, so I-

BW: Particularly the plimmies

SC: Particularly the plimmies, yeah, the little white plimmies, oh blimey, yeah…

BW: Okay-

SC: -Sprained their ankles all the time

BW: So I know you said that playing international matches was more about you remembering the- the people in the team, but if you- if I had to ask you, what, out of those memories of those games, what a- what do you think was your highlight game- what was your most memorable? What’s the one that would come out on top if I said what- what was the best international game you actually played?

SC: Well, I think the one that stands out for me was in South Africa, and we were playing a test series and Mary French, bless her, was the coach. And, I was on the bench a lot, let’s put it that way, and she actually did put me on, I think instead of Cathy, actually, I think it was something- either Cathy was injured or got injured- Anyway, I went on and we had, um not Judy Day, what was the other Judy, the goal shooter Judy, that came from Birmingham?

BW: I don’t know, Sue

SC: Gosh, can’t remember her name, but she was fabulous fun, great character, Brummie, I think she was. And I remember intercepting, we were really tight, I can’t remember the exact score, the score was really tight, and I was so determined to demonstrate that I, y’know, I should’ve been on that pitch all along, although I have to say, Cathy was much better than me, all along, but still doesn’t, you know, your pride wants you to show it. So I got on there and I remember intercepting a ball with very short time to go, and hurling a ball, and I mean, you know, un-Mary-French-like, hurling a ball over virtually, nearly two-thirds, not quite, you know, breaking the rules, and old Judy catching it and popping it in, and me going ‘yeeeah’. I remember that feeling! I can feel it now! So I do remember that. \*laughs\*

BW: Excellent, thank you for that, Sue, yeah-

SC: yeah \*laughs\*

BW: yeah, yeah, ‘cause, you know, yeah, I can’t imagine you playing all these international matches and not having one that actually stands out for you, personally, so, so thank you for that. What I- Did you actually do any other roles in netball, apart from being an international player?

SC: Yes. I coached and umpired the British Universities team going to… Canada, I think it was. I coached here and coached the East Midlands team and Loughborough team for… Trained Lizzie Broomhead; Lizzie Broomhead was- came to me as a-a young coach, and I- she worked alongside me for many years, so Lizzie was with me. … What else did I do? I was- I was pretty well- I think I was- I don’t know whether I had the top qualification in umpiring and coaching, I can’t remember, but I, I know I pursued it. That, that was, those were good memories. I-I loved, I still do love coaching, I mean, what I do here every day is coach, and I’m either coaching individuals or I’m coaching a system, but I really am coaching all the time, trying to get the best for people, and get the best out of people. So, I’m doing the same thing all the time, but netball, then, I lost- I lost my connection with netball. I remember working with Heather Crouch and…

BW: She was an inspirational coach, before her time, I think Heather was.

SC: Yeah, she was, she was great. And Jerry, Jerry-

BW: Cornwell?

SC: Jerry Cornwell and Heather were very kind and invited me into their England sessions, where I work particularly with Goal Keepers, Goal Defences. Teaching them the Campbell Shuffle, as it became known - Kendra called it the candle - Campbell Shuffle- where we were-we were working predominantly on feet- footwork and balance and, you know, et cetera et cetera. So I was very privileged to do that, and went up to the Commonwealth Games with the team to the World Championships?, or Commonwealth Games? Which was it? In Glasgow, in whatever the year was-

BW: That was-that was the World Championships

SC: World Championships in Glasgow

BW: yeah, yeah

SC: yeah, yeah, so I, but, I wasn’t allowed to be in the team, because Heather and Jerry brought me in themselves, but I watched all the games and helped there and supported there. That was a great privilege. I really enjoyed that and I’m-I was really thankful to Heather and Jerry for the generosity of involving me in everything they did, which they did.

BW: But they were those sorts of people, weren’t they?

SC: They were, yeah

BW: Irene Beagles was another one

SC: Yeah, yeah

BW: I mean, just… but Heather I thought was really before her time

SC: Yeah, no, she was, she was very good. She was-she was-she was very good.

BOTH: yeah…

BW: Okay, well, obviously, you find coaching rewarding, so we won’t, we won’t necessarily dwell on-on that, but briefly on to the Olympics, because, again, that’s been sort of a passion of yours- or certainly an interest, if not a passion, but I think it’s a passion. A few years back, netball was a demonstration sport for the OIC and everybody got terribly excited- ‘ooh, we’ve done a demonstration game-excellent!’, but the impetus has died. Part-partly, I guess, because we don’t have demonstration sports any more for the IOC. But, from your perspective, what needs to be done to get netball as an Olympic participation sport? We have men’s basketball, for example, why not women’s netball?

SC: Yeah… well, I think that the challenge is who plays it. Whilst it’s played by many countries across the world, in Europe, it’s not played extensively, and in North America, there are teams and leagues, but it’s not played extensively. And you have to understand that the IOC’s decisions are not always on sport; they’re on broadcast value, they’re on TV, viewing figures, they’re on all sorts of things. So their decisions, which I’ve never understood, I’ve never been party to what they do, are sometimes a bit of a mystery to the rest of us \*laughs\*. And, you know, it, from a very personal point of view, I wouldn’t have golf, tennis, those sports in the Olympics, personally. I don’t think they need it; they have massive events of their own, where, quite clearly, they have their own kind of- whether it’s the Open events in golf, or whether it’s the, you know, the four big events in tennis, they have their own crescendo, whereas for sports like, you know, rowing, or sailing, or cycling, or you know, those are very, very special moments, and-and for me, those are the sports that really should be in the Olympics. And whether netball can grow international support is really about how the International Federation manages itself going forward, I think. You know, it’s- it’s a game that’s played extensively in Australia, New Zealand, and Britain, and if the three of us, together, can’t leverage some effort on the IOC, I’ll be amazed. But, somebody’s got to orchestrate that. Don’t look at me! \*laughs\*

BW: Oh, I dunno

BOTH: \*laughing\*

BW: I think- I think it wouldn’t need to be a- a sort of a joint orchestration, really, but there you go… Have to get Liz on your side as well.

SC: Oh, Lizzie’s always on my side \*laughs\*

BW: Right, I mean, you’ve had an interesting wide-ranging career in sport; covering just about every aspect from school sport, right through to club and international sport. Plucking out of the air, what would you describe as your greatest achievement in doing that? Not necessarily just netball, but Sport. Your greatest achievement in sport?

SC: Two things, I think. They’re parallel, because they’re in two very different parts of my world. I have two Me’s. I have the Me that really enjoys excellence in sport, and watching people fulfil their dreams and ambitions, and for me, having the opportunity to be the Chair of UK Sport from 2003 to 2012, and sitting in that stadium on Super Saturday, or watching the gold medals just keep coming over the line in the rowing or the cycling, or… I can’t describe what that was like; to have been part of that journey and-and to feel so proud, I mean, I don’t think I’ve ever sung the-sung the Anthem louder, or more fiercely than I did at those events, and I just- you know, I do remember sitting at the closing ceremony, when we’d hit the medal target that we’d promised the then-Prime Minister, Tony Blair and his Chancellor, Gordon Brown, if they doubled the investment in elite sport, we would come fourth in the medal table in London- we actually came third- and we’d get sixty-four medals- and we told them that in 2006 and we delivered it. And I remember the feeling of sitting there, going ‘that has to be one of the most special pieces of management, coaching, whatever you want to call it that we’ve ever, ever achieved’. So, that was very special.  
The other was a strange one, really, because it kind of came out of disaster. From 2002 to 2010, we again, thanks to the then-Prime Ministers, Blair and Brown, were allowed to build probably one of the most exciting school sports systems, called ‘School Sport Partnerships’, across the entire country. And we had 450 partnerships every school involved, were they all perfect? No. But was it beginning of-just like the Olympic movement- was it the beginning of something very special? Yes, it was. And in 2010, Michael Gove got rid of the lot. And I remember for a couple of months, feeling sick to the bottom of my stomach- I didn’t want to come to work, I could hardly breathe, I felt like there was an elephant sitting on my chest. And a young lady, who’s actually just been in to see me today, called Debbie Foote, who at the time was sixteen, was at school in Lincolnshire, rang me up and said ‘this isn’t right, I’m going to do something about it’ and I thought ‘yeah, fine, write a letter or something’, and a month later, she rang me up to say ‘I’ve got 750 000 signatures. I’ve organised 2012 young people to go down to London. I’ve got local chip shop to give me t-shirts for everybody, and it says “Save School Sport”. We’d like you to come down and watch’. And I remember standing at Downing Street, watching this troop of kids and all the taxi drivers hooting, and this troop of kids walk up Downing Street- they didn’t want me to go with them, but I wanted to watch them- walk in to Downing Street, and I’m there petitioning \*smacks table\*, say what they had to say, come back out, walk back down, and meet me on the green outside the House of Commons. And I think that’s probably one of the proudest moments of my life; when I thought- you know, when young people themselves are prepared to stand up for something like that, then you’ve made a difference, haven’t you? And she’s been in today; she’s subsequently been here, got a first class honours degree, is now working, and popped in for a chat this morning. And you kind of think- those are pretty good young people, and one day, you know, she’s the pm - I’ve said to her, ‘If you are the Prime Minister, for god’s sake, do get this right’ \*laughs\*. So, I think that was probably, at one of my most desperately sad times and difficult professional times, that was one of the most uplifting things.   
So, those are two completely different emotions and feelings, and yet both immensely strong in me. So they’d be the two I remember most.

BW: Lovely. I think that’s brilliant. You’ve obviously got a very inspirational young lady there, as well, doing that.

SC: Yeah, she’s gonna be- she’s gonna be something very special.

BW: I think my signature was one of those that she collected

SC: Oh, really? \*laughs\* Very good.

BW: But, obviously I had no idea who or what she was, but I think, yes.

SC: Excellent. She actually did it all herself. Great-great effort.

BW: We’re almost at the end, Sue. What would you say- what would you, as Sue Campbell today, say to the young Sue Campbell, who is just starting out on a sporting career?

SC: Oh, crikey. … Well, I had no- I had no idea of where I was gonna go when I was young, and I-I think there’s some strength in that, so I-I weaved my way, if, you know, if you hear it, I taught and then I lectured and then I worked in the inner city and then I went back to coaching and then I went back to youth sport, then I went to elite sport. It’s a very odd zigzag, really. I-I think the one thing I’ve learnt, all the way through, is to just be who you are. Be true to your values. Be authentic. Don’t ever think that you’re more important than anybody else. And just keep working for what you believe in. You know, I-I genuinely believe most people enjoy working for something bigger and more important than themselves, and if you can create that sense of mission, that sense of direction, like we did in the UK Sport, or like we did with School Sport structure, it-it’s like you galvanise an army of people and I feel I’ve had the most privileged life possible, but I don’t think if you’d met me when I was seventeen, like my college mates still knew me, I don’t think I’ve changed one iota. I hope I haven’t. I’ve perhaps matured a bit, maybe a little less insane than I was when I was that age, but… I… I’d say ‘be genuine, be authentic, follow your dreams, and don’t take “no” for an answer’.

BW: And lastly, you’ve given us a few anecdotes and stories. Got any more you’d like to add?

SC: \*muttering\* … there’s so many stories- you know one of the great things on this journey is… I’ve learnt so much from such an enormous variety of people in the most extraordinary places, so you know, I-I actually, y’know, teaching in Moss Side was the most harrowing experience and yet it was one of the most profoundly, deeply effective - you know, it affected me in a very profound way, because for the first time, I-I was really working with kids who had nothing. I mean, nothing. Whose lives were massively challenging, who- and I was trying to teach them netball, and there was a piece of me going ‘what am I doing this for?’. So there was bits of me learning all the way by just feeling my way through things. So, I could tell a million stories, but… no, I think I’ve probably, I’ve probably exhausted my storytelling for today.

BW: That’s fine. Is there anything else you would like to add or-or I’ve missed anything out you feel I important? Or…?

SC: No, I don’t think so.

BW: No?

SC: No- I-I think you’ve covered a huge range of stuff, there. I hope it’s of interest to somebody \*laughing\* But… yeah…

BW: Certainly of interest to me, Sue.

SC: yeah, yeah

BW: So I’m sure it’s gonna be.   
Okay. That’s fine. We won’t labour that. Many thanks for your time today. I found it- \*laughs\* - I found it more interesting than I thought I was going to, and yet I knew it was going to be interesting anyway, so thank you for that.

END