

subjects, I did find school quite difficult.

### **Where has your passion for teaching taken you?**

I taught for six years and then I went to St Mary's College, Twickenham that is now St Mary's University, to lecture in dance and be responsible for the dance department. There I was able to teach teachers other aspects of physical education. I was there for eleven years, met Keith there, my husband, had the children whilst there.

I went to Surrey University and worked on something called *Personal Construct Theory* that is named for a man called George Kelly who wrote a reasonably well-known book called *Man the Scientist*. He was a clinical psychologist whose theory was that everybody's baggage was different and so you needed to treat everyone individually. Of course, I latched on to this because I thought this was fantastic.

He discovered a way of trying to understand how language could be shared rather than you going on forever using the same word but not ever knowing if your meaning was the same as mine. He established something called a repertory grid which enabled you to work out on a scale of one to ten what the meaning of that word was, if it was a crucial word for you, what that actually meant. That gave the background and the theoretical approach to my PhD which was about improving the quality of dance teaching, or any teaching in fact.

I worked in the London borough of Richmond with all the PE teachers in secondary schools there. They came to dance classes with me for a year because most of them felt that they didn't have enough material. But the main thing was, using George Kelly's theoretical base I got them to ask three questions of their pupils. What do you think dance is? What do you think about when you're dancing? How do you feel when you're dancing?

Asking those questions opened up for them an understanding of who their pupils were and what they thought about dance. Prior to that they were teaching, not knowing if the pupils thought dance was something they simply saw on television or when they went to the ballet. Everybody had a different view.

### **It sounds to me, how it settled in you was the perfect combination of mind and body ...**

I was uncomfortable writing in an academic style but I explained all of that in the thesis and said I was



SUE, WHILE ENGLAND LACROSSE COACH, BEING INTERVIEWED IN THE U.S.

coming at this from a practitioner point of view and it all sort of fell into place.

### **Ok. So how would you answer those three questions?**

Well I suppose what dance is and has always been for me is the ability to move freely in any way you want. You know to enjoy rhythm if it's important, to enjoy non-rhythm if it's important. I have always enjoyed the opportunities just to move!

### **Is it like a language?**

Yes. Very much so! Yes because I learnt through the Rudolf Laban system of being able to be very clear. He analysed movement and so I grew up understanding the movement analysis even before I went to college.

### **And question two?**

What do I think about when I'm dancing? Well I actually don't think very much when I'm dancing. For me it's more suspending your normal thoughts, yes.

### **And question three?**

Feeling free, liberated, and flexible. I love the way your arms and legs can cut through the space. I love that.

### **So talk about the mind/body connection. How does that work for you?**

When I'm teaching I'm not one of those people who talks about spirituality or about separation of the mind and body at all. I feel and I know that if you work on your body you are working holistically. You know, it's because I believe so strongly that if you work on your body you change

your mind, if you work on your mind, much harder to change your body.

So the whole essence of Hatha Yoga is it's the one form out of all the forms of yoga that chooses to work through the body and so there is no other explanation necessary. Yoga means 'yolk of mind and body' and that's very clear to me. Most of the people I have find it the same. Many I have taught for eight years since I started in Mongarlowe.

I teach in Canberra once a week. Some of the people I originally taught there are now in their seventies and eighties and one of them is in a retirement centre. So I go and teach all these seventy, eighty, ninety year-olds once a week. You know, that's one of the most rewarding things of all teaching those people. To see them walking again you know, to see them being able to stand straight, seeing them be confident to do things physically. Over the years you build up their physical strength.

### **How did meeting Keith change your life?**

I met Keith three years after I'd been at St Mary's and life changed dramatically. You know I had a sports car before I met him and I was sort of all over the place really. He was very much a stabilising influence. I always knew I wanted children and had been thinking about being able to be more sensible and settle down. We have always got on extremely well and we help each other enormously.

### **How has having children changed you or indeed has it changed you?**

Well it must have changed me because they are the most important things in my life and always were. More important that any part of my career. I don't

think I have really changed as a person, but the responsibility obviously is enormous and trying to make sure that you were not just looking after them but giving them the kind of opportunities that you would like them to have. So we constantly responded to their needs and the things that happen to children. You know, when some of those things happened we have either moved or done something to make it right. We are both incredibly dedicated parents and grandparents. We enjoy it!

### **Would you call yourself a feminist?**

There is no way that I am not a feminist. I really was too busy doing things to fight for the right to do things. I wasn't political in that sense and I didn't ever have the time because I was forging out pathways and doing things that would enable women to follow.

### **Were you conscious of that at the time?**

Slightly. I think I helped make women's sport more professional. I think I helped raise women's sport out of: "oh well lets just have anybody we can find because coaches aren't that important" type of attitude. So I would say that I was involved in a lot of change. In everything I did I was involved in change.

### **Speaking of change, getting older, how do you feel about that?**

Most of the time I don't notice it too much because when you are surrounded by young family, young children, I think you just do the same things you've always done. Looking after the grandchildren is not much different from looking after your own children.

I notice it sometimes when I am teaching yoga. I notice I just can't do that position any more but I think because I have taught yoga for forty-seven years it's meant that I have kept supple and strong both physically and mentally. Yoga for me is both physical and mental.

### **Do you fear growing old?**

Not really. Fifteen years ago I was told I had an auto-immune disease that attacks my muscles and collagen and everything else. I was told it was likely I'd be in a wheelchair. So I was fearful, but as a result of being fearful then, I would say I am not fearful now. I think you go through that. It's a glib thing to say but I don't fear death.

Obviously there are elements of death that I would not want to happen too

soon mainly because I would be fearful of how my relationship with my granddaughter would be as we are very close and I'd rather not die before she understands death. That would be my main thing. I don't have any doubts that my children would survive very adequately but the grandchildren — we're all very close. I think it is so much harder for people who are left behind. So my fears would not be for myself.

### **What makes you laugh?**

Lots of things. Ah, grandchildren, of course. People in general make me laugh. You know, I really enjoy life and I feel I'm at a stage now where all I do is yoga or look after the grandchildren. It is a beautiful life. I don't do anything that I don't really enjoy doing. I mean, I have had times where I thought life was caving in on you but not now. That's one thing I like about getting older. That you can cast off the things you don't like and there's nobody to say you can't. I think if you live in the country you have to be prepared to live a simple life if you choose not to work. You have to learn to do without all those material things that once you might have thought were important, but as you get older they become unimportant.

### **Did you meet anyone along the way who was an influence?**

Oh, I'm still meeting people who are. You know, you do meet people all the time and you think, ah yeah, there is something about that person that I'd like to capture or remember.

### **What do you enjoy about Braidwood?**

Having the family here of course. I like living in Braidwood because I like being able to have that give and take in a community. I like to walk out and know I can meet somebody and you can go for a cup of coffee if you want to.

I suppose having enough people who share similar views to you. There seem to be quite a lot people with that and I suppose because I teach yoga, those people and I gravitate together. I don't always end up being close to all the people I teach yoga to because sometimes being a teacher separates you. But having said that, my closest friends come from that pool. And I meet new friends all the time.

In a way that was one of the hard things about moving to Australia: having people who know me now, but not that fifty five years of my life. So in

a way you have to let go of many of those things.

I have always enjoyed living close to the centre of things. I like the location and being able to walk to everywhere. I like the idea that there are things on that you can choose to go to or not and you don't have to go to everything.

We love community. Keith works with the hospital community and he is very excited about community and optimistic. You have to be optimistic. You have to think that what you do can lead to something better, otherwise why bother. We don't think that things will make great changes because of what we do but little by little, in our tiny way we can contribute to something.

### **Any last piece of advice for younger women?**

Well life has changed so much, I think it is so much harder now. I think what I did was I tried to push down all the doors and I would say the opposite now. I'd say, find a different door to go through. I think that most of the things that were barriers to me were easier to push down. You could become more professional in women's sport; that was possible. You could work longer hours if you had a husband or partner who was supportive. I think it was about having the courage to do that. Whereas now, I think it is finding a door that's right for you and finding the key. Not pushing it down but finding the key and carefully unlocking it. I think the life of my youth was so much less restrictive and demanding than the life they're going into now. You know, it was important for me to have a PhD because it validated me in the physical area and it gave me credibility and it gave the subject credibility. Nowadays, everybody has the opportunity, if they're willing to work hard enough to get that, but it doesn't give validity to anything any more. It seems the only way people can get anywhere today is to work unsociable hours. Everybody is forced into working too long hours, completely destroying family time. They just don't seem to have the opportunity to have a career and to have time to be with your family, which is what I had. I suppose my advice is to look at developing your own personal skills and going down your own route, take the risk of going your own way. Not necessarily trying to outdo everybody else to get to qualifications, get skills. Obviously the two go together but the skills for me are the important thing. It is skills that enable you to exist in a world.