

Interviewee(s): Sandy Bowick (SB); Margaret Elgin (ME)	Interviewer(s): Campie Primary School Pupils (CPSP): Isabel, Robbie, Danny, Alasdair and Lauren; Teacher, Alison Elgin (T)
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REGION	East Lothian
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TITLE	<i>Campie Primary School pupils interview Margaret Elgin and Sandy Bowick.</i>
REGION	<i>Lothian</i>
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COUNTY	<i>East Lothian</i>
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DATE OF INTERVIEW	<i>27/05/2019</i>
INTERVIEWER	<i>Campie Primary School pupils and teacher.</i>
YEAR RANGE	<i>2019</i>
SUMMARY	<i>Pupils from Campie Primary School interview Mr Sandy Bowick and Mrs Margaret Elgin about their time as pupils of Campie Primary school. They discuss moving from Fisherrow school to Campie during primary seven, and how changing schools affected them. They also discuss what their best experiences at Campie were, such as singing in class, and how good primary school was, looking back in hindsight. They also discuss how teaching took more of a fact-based approach, with a lack of colour induced by post-war austerity. They also discuss the lack of extracurriculars and organised sports in school, with sports limited to P.E. lessons. Finally, Sandy Bowick talks about what it meant to be awarded a dux medal in primary school.</i>

**Margaret Elgin – ME; Sandy Bowick – SB; Campie Primary School Pupils – P; Teacher – T.**

**Keywords: Introductions; Changing Schools; Best Experiences at Campie; Learning; Seating; Teaching Methods; Handwriting; Sports; Dux.**

**Introductions – 0h 00m 00s**

CPSP: Hi, I'm Alistair.

CPSP: Hi, I'm Lauren and...

T: Yep, you go for it.

CPSP: And we're here with Mrs Elgin and Mr Bowick.

T: And today is Monday the...? 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2019. And we also have... Isabelle. Now, Isabelle's given me permission to say what she has said after Isabelle, cause Isabelle's got a lovely quiet voice but it might not get picked up on this. Isabelle's given me permission to say that Isabelle's here as well. Robbie, go for it.

CPSP: So, did you enjoy school? If so, why or why not?

SB: Yes, I enjoyed school very much. I... I thought the teaching was very good, in my experience, and we were in a very happy class. And I think that these two things- I felt we learned a lot, and the class was very sort of tightly knit and everybody cooperated and got on and these two things made it, I think.

ME: I loved primary school.

SB: Yes.

ME: Absolutely loved it.

SB: Yes.

ME: Em, both Mr Bowick and I had similar situations where we went to Fisherrow school, which is down the road as you know where Fisherrow school is. And we went to there until we went- until we were in primary six, and we did our primary seven at Campie.

SB: Yeah.

ME: So, it was a completely different school.

SB: Yeah.

ME: Obviously, it was quite... I don't even remember it ever being scary.

SB: No.

ME: We just did it.

SB: Yes.

ME: We just came along and we did it. Whether we were moved into it gradually, I don't know. Whether we came along for a visit, you know, and came along first of all to see it, I don't- I have no recollection of that at all.

T: So, do you understand what is being said here that...? So, Mrs Elgin and Mr Bowick were at a different school until they were the same age as you. And the year before they went to the grammar school, they went- they didn't go to- they went to the grammar school in S1, but for their year in primary seven it's like- it was like Campie was closed down and you would've moved to maybe Stoneyhill School, or to the Burgh School, yeah. So, do you understand that that's what happened?

#### **Changing Schools – 0h 02m 15s**

CPSP: Mm.

ME: That's what it was but I don't remember it being any... Any problem there. It was great. Campie was great. I loved Campie School. I loved it. I loved this teacher- loved ma teacher, thought she was wonderful.

SB: Yes. Um, I agree with that and I do remember being a bit nervous about coming because it was a wee bit like you- if you remember, when you start school.

CPSP: Yeah.

SB: We had to start it again, as it... You know, not knowing the teachers, not knowing the pupils. I knew very few, if any of the children here who were my age despite the fact that Fisherrow School and Campie School are only a few hundred yards apart. But it was amazing that when we played out of school hours, I tended to play with other children from Fisherrow. I dunno if that was accidental or not. It's partly cause there's a geographic spread, that this school tended to serve the sort of riverside area and Monktonhall and so on, and Fisherrow was more-

ME: And Newhailes. And Newhailes.

SB: -Newhailes -the Fisherrow area of town. So, you tended to play with and know children who lived closer.

ME: It's like you playing with your schoolmates-

SB: Yes.

ME: -and not playing with children from Stoneyhill-

SB: Yes.

ME: -or the Burgh or... You know, you only knew your own...

T: And there maybe wouldn't have been so much opportunity to mix. Like, I know a lot of our children go to football and rugby clubs-

SB: Yes, yeah.

T: -and things like that, together, and you meet other...

SB: Less of that.

T: So, there'd be less opportunity.

SB: Yes.

ME: And can we just say, in our day there really was nothing like that.

SB: No, there wasn't, not like that.

ME: There was no football.

SB: No, no.

ME: Nothing like that at school.

SB: No, no.

ME: There was no extracurricular... You didn't go to anywhere after school that had anything to do with school. Once you came out of school-

SB: Yes, that was it.

ME: -at half past three, quarter to four-

SB: Yes.

ME: -school was finished.

SB: Yes.

T: Ok, so Isabelle, you're going to ask this question. [*whispering*] What was your best experience?

**Best Experiences at Campie – 0h 04m 02s**

CPSP: [*quietly*] What was your...?

T: [*whispering*] Best experience.

P [*quietly*] What was your best experience?

T: So, Isabelle's asking you what your best experience of school was. Thank you.

SB: I was gonna say the holidays, but that's not quite [*laughter*]... Em, [*whispering*] best experience, gosh.

ME: Can I just say-

SB: Go on.

ME: -my best experience was a Friday morning because the door opened and my teacher went out and she wheeled in the piano. The piano came in on a Friday morning, every Friday morning.

SB: Yeah, yeah.

ME: Perhaps on a Tuesday, if things were ok, but every Friday. And she played the piano for us and we sang – songs that I still remember to this day, words of... Jerusalem, to this day, first and second verse because we sang it every Friday morning. She gave us an opportunity-

SB: Yeah.

ME: -to sing together as a class... And it doesn't matter whether you could sing, or not. We sang and that was the highlight of my week. I thought that was the best bit about the whole thing, was... She had recently been married and some people called her Miss Bethune and some people called her Mrs McNair-

SB: Mrs McNair.

ME: -cause she had been married in the summer holidays of the- of us going there. And she was lovely, she was a great lady. And she was super, and the singing was really the best bit. For me.

T: Ok.

SB: I'm gonna give a slightly different answer. Not because I disagree with Margaret here, I don't, but the best experience for me is a funny one. It's now looking back and realising how happy I was. You're not quite aware of it at the time, I'm happy. But looking back, it was- we loved primary school, and Margaret said it before I did and...

**Learning – 0h 06m 05s**

ME: We loved it.

SB: I look back and think that was really a nice time.

ME: Oh yes. Superb time, mmhm. Absolutely wonderful, primary school.

T: Ok, thank you. Right, Danny.

CPSP: What was work like back then?

T: The work that you did in school.

ME: Schoolwork was... Um, very book-based, I would think.

SB: Yeah. Mmhm.

ME: We had books for everything.

SB: Mmhm.

ME: Whereas, you'll have screens and different things. It was all very... Dates, numbers.

SB: Facts.

ME: Pure facts.

SB: Yeah.

ME: We learned a lot of facts. Um, what was it from a boy's perspective? Sandy, did you...?

SB: I think what I remember most and it's a contrast, perhaps, with the way you are taught, we didn't work in groups. We all tended to do it individually. We're all doing the same thing in the class but there was no- there was very little communication. Ye didn't sit in a- round a table like this. We were all in rows... With, and stepped as well, you know, like you see in a theatre. We were stepped. And we worked very much on our own, and I think our desks might've been single, or were some of them double?

ME: They were single.

SB: They were single. So, we all sat one at a- behind our own desk, got on with our own work, and I suspect that's really quite different from what you do.

T: It's interesting cause our- one of our people who came this morning was saying that, he described it as being working in groups, like you do. But this experience is different, that the children sat in rows and then, you can imagine in [your?] classroom, they would sit up higher than each other, going up and up and up.

#### Seating – 0h 08m 02s

ME: Actually, on reflection, I'm thinking there mebbe were two to a...

SB: Aye, some, there were some.

ME: I think they were two to a seat- ah, two to a desk.

SB: I think there were some singles and some doubles.

ME: Were there? Uhuh.

SB: Yeah.

ME: And it was really- the sort of brighter people...

SB: *[laughter]*

T: Yeah?

ME: Were at the back.

T: Ooh.

ME: And the people who perhaps needed more help and more... Input, we'll say – you know, more- with the teacher, they were in the front – and that's...

CPSP: Is that so they don't have to climb up the stairs to the back?

ME: I think it's...

T: This is about their learning though.

ME: I think it's about learning. I think it's about the teacher being able to, mebbe, help them that wee bit more. Mebbe. And also, to leave the more able pupils to...

CPSP: Get on with their work.

ME: Get on with their own work.

SB: Yeah, yeah.

ME: In their own way.

SB: Yeah.

ME: That's just a different way of... Teaching, I think. That's what we did have.

T: Ok, Alistair.

CPSP: What were the things that you saw then- were different back then? What were the things that you saw now...?

ME: In the school?

CPSP: Yeah.

ME: In Campie School?

CPSP: Yeah.

ME: Well, I don't remember this area at all, obviously.

SB: No.

ME: Cause this is all completely new.

SB: Yeah.

ME: And the bit on the side has all been built on, obviously, and that's not all that long ago, is it?

T: That's 2000... The rebuild is 2001.

ME: The... Is it really as long as that?

T: Mmhm.

ME: The building itself just looks exactly the same. I don't know- where was the boys' door, Sandy, do you remember?

SB: Och, I really can't.

ME: I remember the girls' door being round this side. Did you go to this school as well?

T: No, my sister did.

ME: Oh, right. We went round the side and that's where we went in there. And then there was a special school built out the back for... For other children, and that was another school. And that was behind a sort of wicker barricade, I remember, which I thought was quite frightening. It was at the back.

SB: The school- sorry.

ME: It's alright, Sandy. No, I think I'm finished.

SB: The schools inside now are much softer. They're- I remember bare floorboards, wooden desks – a harder environment, a feel to it. Carpets here, not in our day. And the colours, not in our day.

### Teaching Methods – 0h 10m 18s

ME: Absolutely not.

SB: So, there's this- it's a very different- it appears very different, visually, and it's a sorta softer- softer chairs for a start [*laughter*]... It's a different feel to the place. It was a wee bit- it was a sparser, slightly more regimented feel.

ME: It's like Dickens.

SB: Yeah [*laughter*].

ME: Have you heard about Charles Dickens? The author that wrote about things that really were bleak and dark? It was... Just, we have to remember though, that we were at Campie School just after the war finished.

SB: Yeah.

ME: After the second world war finished, only... It only had been finished about ten years or so, twelve years.

SB: Yes.

ME: And things were all pretty dark.

SB: Yes.

ME: And grey. Everything was dark and grey.

SB: Yes.

ME: No one- there was no colour about the place.

SB: Yes.

ME: Everything was very dull and dark.

SB: Yes.

ME: Because the country had actually no money and it had to use the money to its best... You know, the best thing we could do with the money. But I think- I do remember inkwells.

SB: *[laughter]*

ME: We had to make up our own ink. It was powdered-

SB: Yes-

ME: -and we mixed it with water. And there was- I don't think we ever called them an 'ink monitor'-

SB: No.

ME: -I don't know what but we got a turn each-

SB: To come-

ME: -of making up this ink.

SB: Ink.

ME: And it was powdered and we added water to it. And in yer desk, there was a hole and a sort of Bake- it wasn't really plastic, cause plastic wasnae really oot then – it was Bakelite it was called, Bakelite. And it was a little cannister and you poured it into that and it sat flush the top of your desk and you used pens...

SB: With steel nibs.

ME: With steel nibs. Wooden pens with steel nibs.

SB: And so, we dipped the ink- the pen into the ink and wrote. And you won't be able to see it, but I've got a wee bump in my finger still, that I got sixty years ago, from holding a very hard pen.

#### **Handwriting – 0h 12m 08s**

So, there was the... Uh, try not to make mistakes because the ink wouldn't rub out and things like that.

ME: And writing up lightly and down hard.

SB: Oh yes.

ME: Your pen- your nib split there was a hole- it split the nib.

SB: Yes

ME: And if you- you went up on the side of the nib and you came down on the flat bit o the nib. When you went up to do your writing, you had to go up thin and down thick.

SB: Yes.

ME: Up thin and down thick.

SB: Yes.

ME: And this was all a part of the education.

SB: Yes.

ME: We spent hours doing this.

SB: Yes, we did.



ME: *Hours*. Learning how to write with a pen.

T: There'll hopefully be one of those old school desks here on Friday.

ME: Oh right. Did you get the wee hole...?

T: Well, I hope so. We're hopefully gonna take delivery of one of them this week, over the next couple of days, to be in our exhibition. So, you'll see what- so you'll be able to show and tell the other children in the class about what you've just heard and what that little hole in the desk would be for.

ME: And you got splinters in your legs.

SB: [*laughter*] I-

ME: Do you know what a splinter is? Of wood? Well, uhuh.

SB: I think there was a sense then that there was only, in a way, one right way to do something. And that's the way you were taught, as opposed to there might be several ways that are all good ways of doing something. And so, writing there was really only one way to- and we had to do the inkwells, you know, hard down and light up and so on. And... And we followed instructions on the board: this is how you make a capital C and so on. So, there was this idea that you really should do it that one way.

T: Do you know how your teacher will say to you, when you're doing numeracy or something, 'how did *you* solve that?', 'how did *you* solve that?', 'how did *you* solve that?'

SB: Yeah.

T: And you get to discuss all the ways that you've done that – that wouldn't've been the case then. You would've been told how to do it, ye know, and that would've just been all. No conversation or no negotiation about it.

ME: No.

SB: No, no.

T: This is what you were told to do.

ME: We never spoke in class.

SB: Yeah.

ME: Never, ever spoke in-

SB: Yes.

ME: Unless you were spoken to.

SB: Yes.

**Sports – 0h 14m 00s**

T: Ok. So, there's something else. I'll have to write that down. Ok, so Lauren, you've got one more to ask.

CPSP: What was your favourite sport and why?

ME: At primary school? Well, there was really no sport-

SB: No. Yeah.

ME: Can I say that at all?

SB: Yep.

ME: But it was skipping. I loved skipping. You wouldnae be skipping, Sandy.

SB: *[laughter]* No, I wouldn't have been any good at it either. Em, we didn't have organised... We had P.E. but that... We just threw bean bags at each other. There was no- there was no organised football or any other team games, were there? I don't...

ME: No, no, no. Netball, mebbe? I don't know. I really don't think so. I honestly don't think so.

SB: Yeah. Yeah.

ME: No, we didn't have- we did country dancing on a Friday.

SB: I don't remember that.

ME: Oh, did ye not? We definitely did.

SB: I've probably blacked that out.

ME: Definitely. Of course, I was always that tall. There was never enough boys, so I always had to be the man. So, I... To make sure they knew I was a man, I always had a green band on. Oh, it was dreadful.

SB: So, although we didn't play sports as such, I think we enjoyed – just as much, I think, as you do – that thing of running around the playground.

ME: Oh yes.

SB: We used to play tig and stuff, tag. So, there was that. There was a lot of running, running around, but it wasn't organised. We just- I think we played- I can't remember what games we played in the playground but we did play.

ME: Well, we always had balls, ye know, and stotted them against the wall and...

SB: Yes, yes.

ME: And then it was always, well, skipping and...

SB: Yes, girls skipped a lot, I remember that.

ME: Aye, we did.

SB: Do girls still skip? With skipping ropes?

CPSP: Mm, sometimes. Like, after... Like at lunchtime. I see some, like, my friends skipping.

ME: Do they have long skipping ropes?

CPSP: Mmhm.

ME: Big-?

SB: Yeah.

ME: That was good. I love skipping ropes. But there was nothing in school, really.

SB: No, there wasn't. There wasn't.

ME: No one in school ever instigated a game.

SB: No, there wasn't.

ME: Never ever.

**Dux – 0h 16m 00s**

T: Ok, so is there anything else you would want to say to us?

ME: [?] like that.

T: [?] Anything else that you would want to tell us about your time at Campie, or anything else before we finish?

ME: Em...

T: I do believe that you maybe won a dux medal, is that right Mr Bowick?

SB: [*laughter*] Yes, I did.

T: So, we don't have that now.

SB: Aw.

T: But maybe you could explain a little bit to the children about that.

SB: The, um... We had a lot more... I suspect we had a lot more exams than you have and all the primary schools had a boy and a girl who had done well in the exams. They were called a 'dux' (D-U-X). It's a- it's from- it's a Roman word, the ancient Romans. It just means 'leader', which I think was a misnomer in my case [*laughter*]. And I- the Honest Toun's Association presented the medals to the duxes in the local schools, and so, I was lucky enough to get one in 1959. I obviously had a better memory than some of the other children and could remember what I had been mugging up.

T: Does he understand what that would be? If you passed all your tests and got the best scores, Danny?

CPSP: Mhm.

T: You would get the medal that said that you were probably- what, at that time, people thought you were the brainiest one.

SB: Yeah.

ME: Cleverest boy in the whole school.

SB: I peaked too early [*laughter*].

T: So, you got the medal and then a boy and girl in each school would get that medal.

SB: Yeah.

T: So, Mr Bowick was able to say that he won that when he was at Campie in primary seven.

SB: And we got to- we got to ride in a carriage in the HTA procession.

T: Oh my goodness.

SB: All the duxes – there were eight of us or something.

T: Uhuh.

SB: And we got a hurl through the town in a horse-drawn carriage and that was... To me, that was the best bit of being dux, actually [*laughter*].

T: Ok, thank you. Thank you very much.

SB: Pleasure.

T: Em, do you want to...?