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### Author

### daydreamer

Moderator




 United Kingdom  
5404 Posts

Dusty gave this interview in August 1985 and subsequently said she thought it was a really good interview. You'll recognise some of the quotes that were lifted into the books that followed.

The Jean Rook Interview.

### THE TRUTH ABOUT DUSTY

At first startling glance, she looks like a terrorist with a built-in hood. Or an ancient Greek death mask. Her mouth is a blood red gash. Her make-up looks bullet proof.

She has two terrible black eyes. Or else she's wearing dark glasses with no sides or bridge to keep them on her thin, ivory nose.

For a living legend, Dusty Springfield – the Sixties singer who fired 17 hits in a row – has a deathly impact.

I was going to leave it to the end of the interview to ask her if she is gay. Might as well get it over now, along with my life.

"You're going to ask me if I'm gay" , said the woman who was rumoured to be, before Navratilova even learned to play, "I'm not going to tell you".

Then tell me you're not I said (my nerves were as pale and wiry as her shocked looking hair).

"God, you've got me into a corner, haven't you, coming straight out with it like that instead of 'why aren't you married?' "Let's say I have a strong gay following".

Never mind the troops, I said, What about their leader in her high heeled black patent boots?

"God, it's hard to do this," she said. "Look, let's say I've experimented with most things in life. And in sex".

"I suppose you can sum it up that I remain right down the middle. But so many untrue assumptions have been printed about me, and the lesbian legend has snowballed, and I can't stop it, and yes, it hurts".

"You want to know why I'm not married? I suppose because my parents didn't get on," said the Bucks-born woman who, from schoolgirl-hood, reached for the stars, and to be one.

"My father was an income tax consultant who really wanted to be a concert pianist – a very bitter man, with a foul temper. By the time I was at school my mother thought he was repulsive".

"I can't remember a thing about my room at home except the raised voices coming from the next door room – the intense bitterness. I'd feel embarrassed to go out with my parents because the arguments still continued. I never invited friends home because I cringed about the rows".

"I thought, if I married, I'd repeat their performance. I think to this day I

would. My parents were good people. But that's what their very Irish 'staying together for the sake of the children' did to them.

"I wasn't going to marry and get myself into the same miserable situation just to shut up the gossip about me – though I've often thought of marrying, just for the hell of it, to watch people's faces. Does that answer your question?"

I'd known her five minutes, and I liked Dusty Springfield. I could love Dusty Springfield. And still go home, unscathed to my husband and son.

Because under the dramatic – not to say Greek tragic – mask, she has a huge sense of comedy. Especially about her own very personal and terrifying appearance.

"Because I was so unhappy as a kid, I used to go into a corner and cling to the hot water pipes in my bedroom until they were cold, to prove I really existed. I decided I'd have impact on people.

"So I made little Mary Isobel Catherine Bernadette O'Brien into Dusty Springfield. In the Sixties the eyelids were jet black – I never took the stuff off for a week at a time, because it took about six days to get up good build-up by using talcum powder and more eyeblack".

"Actually my eyes are greenish khaki, sort of Army surplus colour, but nobody's ever seen them".

"So these days I use dark purple.

"I did die my hair magenta, but I've spent half the night in the bath with Persil to get it out. My hair doesn't know where it's going yet. Or let's say it hasn't arrived at where it wants to be."

After 10 years in California and four in the wilderness, does she know where she wants to be?

At 45, Springfield looks any thing but dusty. But isn't it late in her brilliant career – which Britain's top female singer for more years than she cares to remember, deliberately switched off – to try to switch on young audiences who don't even remember her?

She was asked to re-blossom in what looked like her dust by Peter Stringfellow, the young Hippodrome impresario to whom Springfield is the "epitome of glamour, the ultimate charismatic superstar."

Everything Stringfellow touches turns to gold – probably even greying hair. Springfield is back here to make him three singles. And a reputed £100,000.

But if the money is good, she is after all the definitive bachelor girl, with only two dependent cats.

"I really came home because I felt a great need to be visible again".

She jeers at her own limbo-like Anglo-American accent. And her very American need to assure you that it's great when London taxi drivers say "Ullo, Dust!"

"The risks in coming back here are tremendous. People keep asking me how I'm going to compete with people like Madonna. I'm not, I couldn't."

"I'm not a disco queen, I'm not Tina Turner – I once did a duet with her but I couldn't hear a word I was singing – though I'll admit Tina's success in Britain influenced me.

Springfield was a whole constellation of flashy hit records like "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me" and "I Only Want to be With You" when Tina Turner was only the better half of her low key act with her husband, Ike.

So why did Springfield self destruct, like a burn-out comet?

"Boredom, or if that's too strong a word, I ran out of challenge," she said. "On stage, in concert, I'd be thinking 'Oh God, I've got to go out and do all this again. And I've got to pretend I'm enjoying it, because I never walked through a performance, when people were paying good money just to listen

to me.

"So I was seduced by the great American Dream. I thought it would re-  
kindle the challenge I'd lost her, and initially, it did. Until I got mixed up with  
their great record company conglomerates – you begin to feel like a tax  
write-off to the accountants you never even see – and in the awful sort of  
greed that settled in in the Seventies".

"They started pushing me into night clubs – I hate the grey world of night  
clubs – stuffed with people eating and drinking, who hadn't come to see  
Dusty Springfield, but who'd just wondered 'say Myron, who's on in the Blue  
Room tonight?'

"I was making money, but it suddenly hit me, 'they're making me do  
something I don't want to do, in a place I don't want to be, so what the  
hell am I doing here, anyway?'"

The rest was silence. For four years.

The legendary Sixties tantrum which made her "glad I never had children –  
I've a very short fuse, and I was terrified that, if I had a child, I might love  
it to death one minute, and throw it at the wall the next," have subsided.

She's grown – "I think you could say grown up", she prompted me, into an  
exceptionally likeable lady. "Since I've given up nearly everything else, I've  
started smoking, and I'm not very good at it – my singed fringe is already  
an inch shorter."

So why make an album "It Begins Again"?

"It's the audiences you miss," said the star who never missed a boat, but  
voluntarily bailed out. "When I wonder why I'm doing this, I remember the  
old days in the northern clubs. I'm near sighted, and what with the false  
eyelashes, I couldn't usually see my way on to the stage. But in those  
clubs you could really see the audiences. I remember one young mum, with  
her scampi and chips, and I could tell she was enjoying my songs so much.  
Overworked as she was, and swollen ankles and all, I was her big night out.  
That's why I used to go out and do it. That's why I want to try again".

Carole x

Edited by - daydreamer on 13/02/2007 20:05:08

**Mark**  
I've got a good thing  
★★★★★

Posted - 11/02/2007 : 21:18:50



Thanks for posting this interview Carole, I recognise some of the quotes,  
"Scampi & chips" for one!  
Though it says 'Bucks born'.....I thought Dusty was born in West  
Hampstead, and the family moved to Bucks (High Wycombe) for the course  
of the War?

Mark



United Kingdom  
5309 Posts

**allherfaces**  
Administrator  
★★★★★

Posted - 11/02/2007 : 21:20:37



I so much appreciate you typing that out for us Carole.

Very interesting to read the whole thing, in context.

Think I'll put it on the website too!

Let's Shop Dusty!  
USA: <http://astore.amazon.com/lestadu-20>  
UK and EU: <http://astore.amazon.co.uk/letadu-21>



USA  
14235 Posts

**Corinna**  
Forum Admin  
★★★★★

Posted - 11/02/2007 : 21:30:44



I'm printing it out to read it. :)



Cor xx

Let's watch Dusty! [www.dustyspringfield.info/videos](http://www.dustyspringfield.info/videos)



Sweden  
6080 Posts

**karenina**  
Little by little  
★

280 Posts

Posted - 11/02/2007 : 21:32:39

Thank you very much for doing that. If the hand burning was purely created from that interview then it shows how truly misquoted Dusty was. Anyone have anything else?



**Sophie**  
Where am I going?  
★★★

2302 Posts

Posted - 11/02/2007 : 21:32:44

thanks for posting that, Carole - it was an interesting read, and it really highlighted Dusty's sense of humour. Ms Rook sounded kinda witty, as well; so i'm not surprised Dusty enjoyed their interview! 🙄



**paula**  
Moderator  
★★★★★



It seems that Dusty had a line of reporters waiting at her door for a turn in 1985...all for 'Sometimes Like Butterflies'?...guess its because she was away for so long.

thanks for typing that out Carole 😊  
paula x



USA  
5012 Posts

**Mary**  
I start counting

30 Posts

Posted - 12/02/2007 : 03:44:43

Thank you Carole for typing that out. Must have taken awhile. You are very patient to have done something like that!

I feel kind of sad when I read about what Dusty's childhood was like. I know from having friends whose parents fought constantly that it can cause serious heartache. Not easy to live in a war zone. I admire them, and her, for surviving.

Fortunately there is so much joy to be had in her music!

Mary



**allherfaces**  
Administrator  
★★★★★



USA  
14235 Posts

Posted - 12/02/2007 : 05:15:06

Really makes me think about Dusty not having any role models for healthy relationships. It has to have been hard on lil Mary.

BTW Carole where was this interview published?

Let's Shop Dusty!  
USA: <http://astore.amazon.com/lestadu-20>  
UK and EU: <http://astore.amazon.co.uk/letadu-21>



**Mads**  
Where am I going?  
★★★



Posted - 12/02/2007 : 05:31:17

Thanks so much Carole!!!

Why did she say she held the hot water pipes until her hands were cold? I dont get why they went cold 🙄



Australia  
3323 Posts

I love Dusty interviews 😊

Love&&more love



**daydreamer**  
Moderator  
★★★★

Posted - 12/02/2007 : 08:24:19



United Kingdom  
5404 Posts

Yes, it did take a while to type but I believe these interviews are worth spreading around 😊 I have more 😊

When I was growing up my parents argued a lot and I took solace in Dusty, I couldn't believe it when I read this article and found that she had felt the same stuff. I didn't have a hot pipe in my room, we didn't have central heating! The pipes would just go cold as the heating or water heater was switched off Mads.

The article is from the Daily Express and dated Aug 9th 1985. Jean Rook was a caustic interviewer and columnist and she could be awful at times, Dusty escaped very lightly, she obviously did impress JR.

Carole x



**DivineDusty**  
I'll try anything  
★★

Posted - 12/02/2007 : 08:36:24



Australia  
1066 Posts

Thanks!

This bit made me giggle slightly

quote:

"Since I've given up nearly everything else, I've started smoking, and I'm not very good at it – my singed fringe is already an inch shorter."

Only because the number of times I've nearly singed off my fringe. ..but then I am pretty unco-ordinated. Too scared of having a 'mrs doubtfire' moment (if you've seen the movie you know what I mean haha)

.Divine.Dusty.

Sunny, yesterday my life was filled with rain  
Sunny, you smiled at me and really eased the pain



**Mads**  
Where am I going?  
★★★

Posted - 12/02/2007 : 08:57:45



Australia  
3323 Posts

Thanks Carole 😊

OMG the number of times I have burnt my fingers and hair and clothes - im a shocker!

Love&&more love



**Tim**  
Where am I going?  
★★★

Posted - 12/02/2007 : 12:03:29



Thank you for taking the time to type that out for us, Carole and it's great to read the whole interview.

I get the feeling maybe Dusty's makeup was just a little heavy for Ms Rook's taste....

ha ha



United Kingdom  
3422 Posts

**dusty\_freak**  
I've got a good thing  
★★★★★

Posted - 12/02/2007 : 13:05:32

Wow, thanks for that Carole. Very interesting 😊



Clare xoxo

"I'm not Mama's little baby no more..."



Australia  
5805 Posts

**daydreamer**  
Moderator  
★★★★★

Posted - 12/02/2007 : 13:26:47

To my eyes, the look Dusty had at the time of Butterflies, was the only one I could never say anything good about. I'm told the make-up didn't look as shocking in real life as it did on screen and in photo's but the first time I saw her on TV I have to admit to wondering "why Dusty"? This was the pic that accompanied the article, sorry it's rather faded.



Carole x



United Kingdom  
5404 Posts

**allherfaces**  
Administrator  
★★★★★

Posted - 12/02/2007 : 13:45:43

That's definitely one of the most unflattering pics I've seen of a look that was not one of her best. Makes me a little sad.



We look forward to more of these "hidden" interviews, Carole.

Let's Shop Dusty!

USA: <http://astore.amazon.com/lestadu-20>

UK and EU: <http://astore.amazon.co.uk/letadu-21>

USA  
14235 Posts



**insomniacafe**  
I'll try anything  
★★★

Posted - 12/02/2007 : 14:21:05

Thanks for sharing the article Carole :) A very interesting read.



Netherlands  
1509 Posts

**karenina**  
Little by little  
★

Posted - 13/02/2007 : 01:37:40

...but then again what was Dusty actually saying. She was already married in 1983? I don't know when she separated. Did Jean know about it? I was in America a couple of times then - was it publicized over there even if it wasn't here. If there were bits of untruths how much else was hidden but wanted to be exposed. Ro said who talks about their childhood but Dusty did quite often without being prompted it seems. She was I think, purely my opinion, constantly crying for help.

280 Posts



**daydreamer**  
Moderator  
★★★★★

Posted - 13/02/2007 : 14:20:10

I'm sure when Dusty was talking about marriage she meant in it's



'conventional' form. To talk of it as being an option to rid her of the gossip, it would have to be.

As for talking about her childhood, I personally think it's quite a natural thing to do when you're talking about your life, your beginnings and what events in life shaped you.

Carole x



United Kingdom  
5404 Posts

**Tom Lovett**  
Little by little  
★

Posted - 15/02/2007 : 17:41:09



I remember the day the article was printed, it was the day Dusty was appearing on the Terry Wogan BBC TV Show at the old Shepherds Bush Empire to promote 'Sometimes Like Butterflies'. I was lucky to get a ticket courtesy of the old fan club, Dusty Springfield International.

Tom.



United Kingdom  
944 Posts

**daydreamer**  
Moderator  
★★★★★

Posted - 15/02/2007 : 22:00:18



Lucky you Tom 🎉 I keep wondering if that show will get a repeat showing on Wogan Now and Then.....unless of course, I've missed it 😬

Carole x



United Kingdom  
5404 Posts

**Mark**  
I've got a good thing  
★★★★★

Posted - 16/02/2007 : 19:36:24



Hi Carole, Thanks again for posting Jean's interview, there's two more interviews with Dusty that maybe could be posted when you have a chance please?

I'm thinking of one (I can't recall the newspaper) where there is a picture of Dusty in a jacuzzi (I think), at a Health farm in England, and the second one I've been thinking of is from circa 96/97 from the Daily Mail's weekend magazine (...and I'm kicking myself for not keeping it!), where Dusty is wearing light coloured denim, and I recall Dusty saying that she was in a Coffee shop in Marlow (Henley's adjoining town) with friends, and the waitress patronised her, telling her she hadn't changed over the years, which Dusty wasn't too happy about, and thought to herself, "what am I supposed to say about that"....

Cheers!

Mark



**Mads**  
Where am I going?  
★★★

Posted - 16/02/2007 : 23:19:17



Im up for those if someone has them 🎁

Love&&more love



Australia  
3323 Posts

**daydreamer**  
Moderator  
★★★★★

Posted - 17/02/2007 : 07:56:03

I'll be back later with a sort of answer to Mark's request!



Carole x



United Kingdom  
5404 Posts

**daydreamer**  
Moderator  
★★★★★

Posted - 17/02/2007 : 09:36:41



Mark, I think the "jacuzzi" article is probably the one from The News of the World, Dusty wasn't pictured in a jacuzzi but was shown on an exercise bike and weights machine. I don't have the original article, not being a N of the W fan 🙄, I missed it at the time and I only have a poor photocopy which is very difficult to read. It isn't flattering to Dusty, the headline is 'Lusty Dusty's Battle of the Bulges' and it's mainly about her weight, drugs and drink battles. She regretted giving it badly and, amongst others things, said later "That was truly dumb".

United Kingdom  
5404 Posts

Could the other article you mention be the Mick Brown one from the Telegraph? There was a full page shot of Dusty in blue denim. I have it and the interview is verrrrrry long! That interview took place in a hotel in London but there was another one around the same time by Rob Hoerbinger that partly took place in Marlow. You can read that one (Dusty Rides Again), on Michael Bayly's site at <http://www.isd.net/mbayly/article1.htm>

If it's something else you're thinking of, I'll try again