

Let's Talk Dusty!

The Ultimate Forum for Dusty Springfield Fans
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Old Dusty interviews

<http://www.dustyspringfield.org.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=7&t=3145>

Old Dusty interviews

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by **Brian**

Posted: **Tue Oct 11, 2011 8:15 pm**

Back in the 60's I had a scrapbook filled with anything about Dusty, and today I came across it again! 📖

As I don't have a scanner/printer I cannot copy anything, but I can write some of the interviews or articles about Dusty...so here goes:-

We'll start off with a piece that appeared in Melody Maker. The interview took place in the dressing room of MR SMITHS CLUB in Manchester and was written by Rod Harrod. I would guess it would be late 64/early 65? *

It is titled - 'THE HONEST TRUTH ABOUT DUSTY'

*Carole G might know the exact date ??

ROD - When were you born?

DUSTY - 16th April 1941 📅 (This proves women ALWAYS lie about their age 😊)

ROD - Where do you live now?

DUSTY - Baker Street London

ROD- Where did you make your first professional appearance?

DUSTY - I was 17, and it was at the Savoy cinema in Lincoln as a member of The Lana Sisters

I fell down a flight of stone steps before we went on! - and I got told off for whistling in the dressing room!

ROD - What are your pet aversions?

DUSTY - Mixers - people who spread rumours

ROD - Where is your favourite place?

DUSTY - New York and I suppose London

ROD - What is your favourite food ?

DUSTY - American chocolate cream pie

ROD - Are you as temperamental as you are often made out?

DUSTY - No - I just like to get things right. When a thing could be better I hate to see it go by

ROD - Do you play any instruments?

DUSTY - The guitar and SPOONS!...oh also the tambourine

ROD - Do you read music?

DUSTY - No I read chord symbols - I wish I could read music

ROD - What do your parents call you?

DUSTY - They both call me Mary, but my brother Tom always calls me Dusty!

Brian

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by **neonouille**

Posted: **Tue Oct 11, 2011 8:19 pm**

Thanks very much Brian!

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by **Brian**

Posted: **Tue Oct 11, 2011 8:36 pm**

This is the list from the 1965 NME (New Musical Express) poll

WORLD FEMALE SINGER

1. DUSTY SPRINGFIELD - 6362
2. BRENDA LEE - 5603
3. SANDIE SHAW - 4007
4. JOAN BAEZ - 2210
5. PETULA CLARK - 1436
6. MARIANNE FAITHFULL - 1398
7. CILLA BLACK - 1265
8. SHIRLEY BASSEY - 1199
9. CHER - 836
10. DIONNE WARWICK - 643

Followed by PEGGY LEE(362), KATHY KIRBY (317o), JUDITH DURHAM (283), BARBRA STREISAND (270), FRANCOISE HARDY (264), CONNIE FRANCIS (247), DORIS DAY (240), ELLA FITZGERALD (223), NANCY WILSON (196) and LULU (190)

This was in the day's when it was all solo singers - group members didn't get a look in.

BRITISH FEMALE SINGER

1. DUSTY SPRINGFIELD - 7234
2. SANDIE SHAW - 6700
3. MARIANNE FAITHFULL - 2427
4. CILLA BLACK - 2209
5. PETULA CLARK - 2003
6. SHIRLEY BASSEY - 1876
7. LULU - 1000
8. KATHY KIRBY - 823
9. JUDITH DURHAM - 764
10. JACKIE TRENT - 479
11. JULIE ROGERS - 464
12. SUSAN MAUGHAN - 401
13. HELEN SHAPIRO - 322
14. JULIE GRANT - 260
15. BERYL MARSDEN - 156

These results were quite interesting. It proved Sandie was Dusty's biggest competition at the time - both gained huge votes compared to the rest. The 'positions' are different to the 'World' section with Lulu appearing to be much more popular in this section, and the vote for Beryl Marsden despite her not having any hit records!

Brian

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by **Brian**

Posted: **Tue Oct 11, 2011 8:48 pm**

Finally - for today...there were other sections in the NME poll that Dusty did well in ;-

BRITISH VOCAL PERSONALITY

Dusty came in at number 4 behind John Lennon, Cliff Richard and Mick Jagger still the top gal!

WORLD MUSICAL PERSONALITY

Dusty was voted into 7th position - behind Elvis, John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Cliff Richard, Mick Jagger and Paul McCartney, but above Gene Pitney - I only have the 8 top positions - but again Dusty came out top gal 😊

BEST DISC OF THE YEAR

The top ten was filled with discs by The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Who, but once again Dusty was the only female act to make it with SOYL placed at number 6



Finally - BEST DRESSED ARTIST

The list features 24 artists, and incredibly Cliff Richard was 'number one' - but who came in at 'number 2' I hear you ask?...none other than our Dusty 😊 😊 😊

Other girl singers made the list - Marianne, Sandie, Cilla and Lulu but if you added up all their votes together - they still wouldn't add up to Dusty's total!...proving she was 'Queen of the mods'

Brian

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by **wally**

Posted: **Wed Oct 12, 2011 6:55 am**

Great stuff Brian! Even Dusty led about er age at one stage!!

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by **Corinna**

Posted: **Wed Oct 12, 2011 8:49 am**

Deducting two years can pass as a white lie... 😊

Brian, I happily volunteer to scan and post if you can part with your scrapbook for a little while? Thanks for sharing anyway!

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by **karen**

Posted: **Wed Oct 12, 2011 9:05 am**

Nice to find these old memories Brian.....thanks for sharing with us... 😊👍

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by **SweMaria**

Posted: **Wed Oct 12, 2011 10:38 am**

Thank you very much for this, Brian! 👍

I would have loved to hear/watch Dusty playing on spoons ! 🎵👄👍

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by **jeffery**

Posted: **Thu Oct 13, 2011 4:54 am**

😊 Well for one thing I was taught that a gentleman never asks a lady her age. And I also noticed that in that 65 NME poll under the World Female Singer category Dusty got nearly ten times the votes that Dionne Warwick got. 🏆
Thanks Brian. 🍏

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by **st louis blues**

Posted: **Fri Oct 14, 2011 3:22 am**

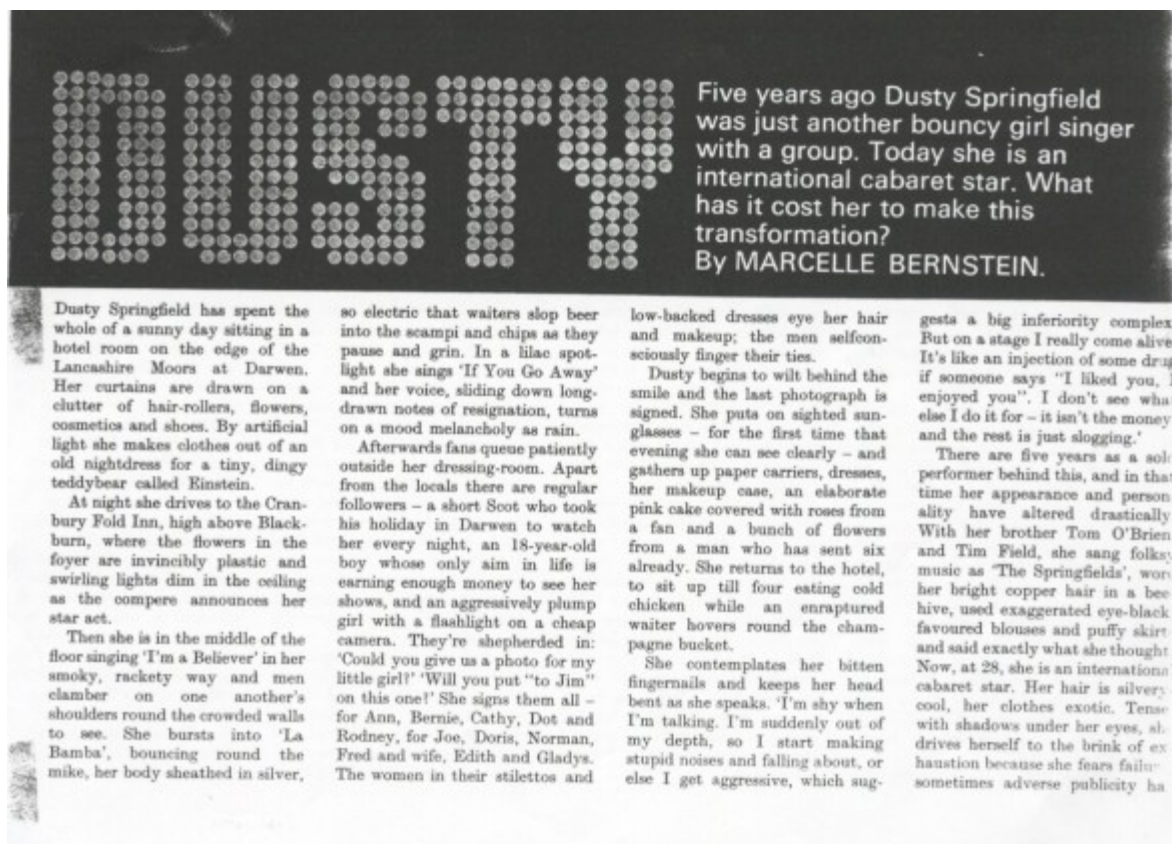
I love reading the old interviews. Does anyone have the interview with, and I'm probably spelling the name wrong, Marcelle Bernstein?

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by **daydreamer**

Posted: **Fri Oct 14, 2011 3:22 pm**

I have it and I've scanned it but I'm not sure how well it will show up on here. First two pages are ok, it's the last one that might prove difficult, though they will come up bigger if you click on them.



Five years ago Dusty Springfield was just another bouncy girl singer with a group. Today she is an international cabaret star. What has it cost her to make this transformation?
By MARCELLE BERNSTEIN.

Dusty Springfield has spent the whole of a sunny day sitting in a hotel room on the edge of the Lancashire Moors at Darwen. Her curtains are drawn on a clutter of hair-rollers, flowers, cosmetics and shoes. By artificial light she makes clothes out of an old nightdress for a tiny, dingy teddybear called Rinstein.

At night she drives to the Cranbury Fold Inn, high above Blackburn, where the flowers in the foyer are invincibly plastic and swirling lights dim in the ceiling as the compere announces her star act.

Then she is in the middle of the floor singing 'I'm a Believer' in her smoky, rackety way and men clamber on one another's shoulders round the crowded walls to see. She bursts into 'La Bamba', bouncing round the mike, her body sheathed in silver,

so electric that waiters slop beer into the scampi and chips as they pause and grin. In a lilac spotlight she sings 'If You Go Away' and her voice, sliding down long-drawn notes of resignation, turns on a mood melancholy as rain.

Afterwards fans queue patiently outside her dressing-room. Apart from the locals there are regular followers - a short Scot who took his holiday in Darwen to watch her every night, an 18-year-old boy whose only aim in life is earning enough money to see her shows, and an aggressively plump girl with a flashlight on a cheap camera. They're shepherded in: 'Could you give us a photo for my little girl?' 'Will you put "to Jim" on this one?' She signs them all - for Ann, Bernie, Cathy, Dot and Rodney, for Joe, Doris, Norman, Fred and wife, Edith and Gladys. The women in their stilettos and

low-backed dresses eye her hair and makeup; the men self-consciously finger their ties.

Dusty begins to wilt behind the smile and the last photograph is signed. She puts on sighted sunglasses - for the first time that evening she can see clearly - and gathers up paper carriers, dresses, her makeup case, an elaborate pink cake covered with roses from a fan and a bunch of flowers from a man who has sent six already. She returns to the hotel, to sit up till four eating cold chicken while an enraptured waiter hovers round the champagne bucket.

She contemplates her bitten fingernails and keeps her head bent as she speaks. 'I'm shy when I'm talking. I'm suddenly out of my depth, so I start making stupid noises and falling about, or else I get aggressive, which sug-

gests a big inferiority complex. But on a stage I really come alive. It's like an injection of some drug if someone says "I liked you, I enjoyed you". I don't see what else I do it for - it isn't the money and the rest is just slogging.'

There are five years as a solo performer behind this, and in that time her appearance and personality have altered drastically. With her brother Tom O'Brien and Tim Field, she sang folksy music as 'The Springfields', wore her bright copper hair in a beehive, used exaggerated eye-black favoured blouses and puffy skirt and said exactly what she thought. Now, at 28, she is an international cabaret star. Her hair is silvery-cool, her clothes exotic. Tense with shadows under her eyes, she drives herself to the brink of exhaustion because she fears failure - sometimes adverse publicity has

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by daydreamer

Posted: Fri Oct 14, 2011 3:23 pm



made her wary and suspicious. Her pursuit of perfection has earned her a reputation as a 'difficult' singer, but she is dazzlingly in control of her audience.

'I'm always forcing my voice to do things it's not educated to do,' she says. 'I don't breathe properly and I've got a weak throat.' An American coach told her 'All I can do is educate your voice for the onslaught that it's going to receive'. So, although she is self-conscious about it, she now spends half an hour before she sings locked in her dressing-room with a tape on which the coach says 'Now, Dusty' and she goes up and down the scale. 'Now Dusty, remember, keep it dark, dark.' Before she goes on she drinks cheap port, and during her act takes lemon juice in hot water to soothe her throat.

Her records are invariably hits

and she can make £1,000 a night in this country, considerably more in the States. But despite all the evidence of success she is desperately conscious of a need to appear beautiful. She can't bear to be photographed from the left because that's her bad profile, and is very concerned about two heavy lines running from her nose to the corners of her mouth. She tries to conceal them, but they're the very lines which, onstage, widen her face into laughter. She covers her shortish hair with elaborate wigs and false pieces and effectively obliterates her features with cosmetics. She refuses to be seen without this full makeup, even at nine in the morning. And she'll go to endless lengths in hotels to avoid being seen by the staff: if she orders a meal in her room she'll lock herself in the bathroom while it's served.

'She's vulnerable,' says Fred Perry, who arranges her shows, 'like an exposed nerve, which is why everyone bends over backwards to keep her happy. Sometimes she doesn't realise the loyalty she inspires.' He will rearrange his schedules for Dusty: she once flew him from the Isle of Man to Brighton and back for one Sunday-night show, and when she appeared at the Prince of Wales in 1964 telephoned him in America to get a lighting plot. From Tokyo she rang him for half an hour to describe the theatre and light settings so he could send a plan out to her.

Perry was largely responsible for the setup of her Shirley Temple act at the Talk of the Town when she came running onto the stage in a little girl's red and white dress with bows in her hair, white socks revealing plump knees

and red tap shoes. In a month she drew an audience of 15,000 at the rate of 600 a night. She brought with her 16 people: a drummer, six violinists, two cellos, four male dancers, two girl singers and a pianist, all paid by herself.

Few singers bother with this kind of lineup, and Dusty does it largely out of nerves, out of a feeling that she alone might be inadequate. When she repeated her Talk of the Town act for a BBC-2 colour programme Stanley Dorfman directed her. 'She's not easy to work with', he observed as she stopped in mid-rehearsal to worry about the microphones. 'Her big fault is lack of faith in all the technicians who work with her. She seems to think they're not going to bother when in fact everyone's knocking themselves out. She doesn't want to leave anything in anyone else's

continued

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by daydreamer

Posted: Fri Oct 14, 2011 3:25 pm

hands. But the end is always as rewarding.'

She brings the same meticulousness to her recording sessions: with Philips Records here, and Atlantic in the United States. She had a singing spot in a Liverpool pantomime while recording with them in Memphis. One Saturday night she drove to London, flew to America to spend six hours in the studio and flew back for the Monday matinee. All because she didn't like part of the piano accompaniment.

At 10 one morning she is singing in the recording box at the Philips studios in Barnes. 'Can you stop?' she breaks in suddenly. 'The bass guitar was playing wrong notes through that passage.' Afterwards she stays on listening to the tapes, suggesting changes: 'Can you lose those flutes a bit?'

That evening she goes to their London studios for reducing: the complex process of getting the sounds onto a twin-track stereo tape ready for the factory, where it will be turned into a first press of at least 75,000 records. She is intensely self-critical: 'That sounds a bit metallic, a bit boxed in. It's lost pathos, it seems to have a hard top edge and no underneath any more.' She walks round the huge recording machine, beating time to the music. 'Bring the strings forward, they're a bit cottonwoolly.'

They start the business of bringing the voice up and down, forward and back. And she wants to turn the music up so it almost drowns her, as though she were afraid her sound wasn't enough.

LIFE IN A £55 A WEEK TENEMENT

Dusty started life in Hampstead as Mary Isabel Catherine Bernadette O'Brien. She attended two convent schools, where she carefully avoided all games but passionately wanted to become a show-jumper: she has a vivid memory of being dragged upside down along the Greenford Road in front of a 97 bus by an unsympathetic mount. The Jane Campbell acting school in Ealing knew her briefly. Her parents are comfortably middle-class: her father is a plump-faced, bespectacled income tax consultant, her mother small and vivaciously Irish. The mother's conversation leaps from concern over her daughter's loss of weight to stories of what a tomboy she was - 'a wonderful sprinter. And always dressing up and singing'.

'Dusty has always had that

strange grown-up voice,' says her brother Tom. He had early left his job in a City bank to sing in small London clubs and at 17 his sister stopped working in a laundry to join him. 'I'd do it for a month and then scream it was too much and go to work in Boots,' she says. After a while she joined the Lana Sisters in 1959 and did spots in variety halls in big-bosomed dresses with long tulle skirts. Then after 24 successful years as the Springfields they decided to split before they were out-dated and in February 1964 played in Blackpool and that was that: Dusty had rather less than £100 and a lot of white shirts.

Her clothes now are made by Darnell of London: she wears anything from orange crepe culottes and sparkling waistcoats to shimmering beaded dresses that can weigh 30 lb. and cost £800. In her Knightsbridge flat ('It's a £55 a week tenement') two rooms are entirely filled with trunks and cases of clothes; more hang on long rails - silk, satin and fur, velvet, chiffon and lamé.

All the rooms are full of odd possessions: a road sign stating *Ausgezeichnet*, a plump red rhinoceros wearing a sailor's cap. On a table a pile of false eyelashes have been gathering dust for a year but she hasn't got around to throwing them away yet. Heaps of records range from Bach through Copland to Tamla Motown. On the wall hangs a half-finished portrait of her by Norma Tanega, the exuberant Californian songwriter who is her flat-mate.

'All the orange things and all the toys in the flat are Dusty's,' Norma remarks. It is she who decorated the £20,000 house. Dusty is moving into near Campden Hill, Kensington. Norma spent over £6,000 on the conversion and every fitting is properly star-like: vast sunken bath is reflected in amber glass, the double bed looks quadruple at least and the fridge wouldn't be out of place at the Savoy. But their housekeeping is somewhat erratic: when they decide to have bacon and eggs at three in the morning they ring the local cab service to bring the bacon. And the phone bill must be impressive - to settle an argument about whether Forest Lawn is the name of a Californian tennis court or a cemetery they ring a friend in Los Angeles to find out.

Dusty is extravagantly disorganised, more often than not arriving onstage seconds before the curtain goes up, changing appointments time after time

before managing to keep them. And she has eccentricities: suddenly flying four friends off to Rio for Carnival, or giving 'destruction parties' at which French loaves and plates of salami and coleslaw are provided for throwing.

WHERE DOES SHE GO FROM HERE?

'The minute Dusty is left alone,' says Pat, 'she's like a lost child. She needs company and affection. She has an extremely small circle of friends - you could count them on one hand.'

'The authority that I have in my job can carry through to my private life,' says Dusty. 'If somebody's personality is weaker than mine I take over. Or else I'm so frightened of this happening that I don't act naturally at all. It's very difficult to be a completely natural woman in the company of a man: few can manage an attitude between "My God, it's you!" and "Who are you, anyway!"' The responsibility of being - for want of a better word - a star, means I feel almost masculine. It's like being a husband - I've got to pay the bills. I find it alienates men. I want to get married, but I dislike failure in anything. To enter into marriage, to want to succeed, and have it fail, is to me the dread failure of all. It's the failure of myself as a human being.

I have been extremely hurt by people saying things about me. I have a certain pride in myself as a woman and it upsets my femininity. And because I don't float round from premiere to premiere I've been criticised. It's no use saying anything: they say you're either a prostitute or a lesbian, so if you're neither where are you? You can't be in the middle, in people's minds. I've done nothing wrong and I refuse to invent a relationship to appease them.' Only in the last few weeks has she been seen with disc jockey Emperor Rosko, her first publicised escort in three years.

Norma Tanega says of her: 'I can't stand to see anybody caught up in a world that inhibits them so much.' And Dusty is in it irrevocably. 'I'm trapped more by commitments than anything else,' she says. 'But I'm very puzzled about where I go. I'm rapidly approaching the stage where I can't do more than about eight appearances here a year because there isn't the work that pays the

kind of money I need. I can work every workmen's club in the North but they wouldn't want me back next year. I have to spread it out, make myself desirable - it just doesn't do to be around too much.'

'I don't think I want to go on doing what I am doing for another five years - I'd be standing still. There are films, bigger things in the world.'

At present she has no manager. Vic Billings joined her soon after she went solo but last year 'we decided we'd done as much for each other as we could'. Now her closest companion when she travels is her hairdresser John Adam, a blond, elfin Australian with huge blue eyes. He wears short kid jackets over periously cut pants, eats chips for breakfast at four in the afternoon and scratches uncontrollably whenever he's out of London. He acts as her road-manager and drives her around on tour. When he gets the chance, that is: Dusty must be one of the few people outside a joke who has actually jumped into a taxi in Leicester Square and said 'Blackpool'.

Dusty cannot afford another manager yet - she has to pay Billings £30,000 in lieu of two years' work and she has recently been organising everything herself, although her schedule leaves little time for this: six normal days can include a late flight from a 10-day recording stint in Memphis, a London recording session starting at 10 o'clock the following morning, an appearance on Top of the Pops, two more recording sessions, television in Belgium and the Frost Show.

'But if someone smiles when I'm singing, if someone looks at me and I'm close to them, then I want to jump up and down. I think it's because I wanted to be liked when I was a kid. I can't do anything else. On stage it's some kind of growth that happens and I know this is what I'm meant to do.'

And she really seems to grow taller, slimmer before the footlights. It's not just long false nails that extend her fingers but the almost-love, the rapport between watchers and watched, audience and star. Her hands become expressive and supple, emphasizing the movements of her body, the timbre of her voice as she stands in a glitter of excitement and diamonds.

Then it's over and she bows low, one hand in the spotlight: she twists her wrist and the fingers flicker, caught on the applause.

Re: Old Dusty interviews

by st louis blues

Posted: Wed Oct 19, 2011 2:54 am

Thanks so much for posting this article. I've been looking for this a long time. I hope some more of these old articles pop up. ☺