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| **ÚnaGanAGúna**  |  |
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| **Occupation**Children's nurse and latersenior manager in local authoritychildren's services | **Interviewee’s Date of Birth**11.07.1938 |
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*Emily: This is Emily Moss interviewing Dorothy Duffy on the 8th of May 2018. Can you tell me a bit about yourself?*

Dorothy: My name in Dorothy— I am 59 years old, is that right? Yeah, I was born in 1959. And I was born in a town called Ballina, County Mayo whose best—known alumni is Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and I grew up there until I was seventeen and a half. And— when I went to Dublin and then on to England in 1977 where I've been ever since. I'm married to an Englishman though I have kept my Irish surname. And I have two children, a daughter who is almost 29 and a son who's just turned 27. I currently work in a local authority in children and family services in senior management having had a career in nursing and management most of my working life. I am one of ten siblings, the youngest of ten siblings. All born in Ireland. seven of whom are still alive. That's me.

[01.36.19]

*Emily: And, I— I think it might be interesting as well to talk about your extra—curricular activities, which is your love of theatre*

Dorothy: Yeah, I am very, very interested and passionate about theatre and I joined the AmDram circuit in— well twenty years ago, having been terrified to do so. I was apparently quite good at drama as a youngster and encouraged to go to drama school, which I didn't find out about until much later, by a nun called Sister John Bosco who was wonderful. And I do, if I can, at least two or three plays a year. I've been lucky to do lots of really fantastic roles.

*Emily: Including some Irish—*

Yes, including—

*Emily: Roles*

Dorothy: A number of Irish ones called 'From These Green Heights,' which was about Ballyfermot, the high rises. 'Little Gem' an interge— intergenerational story of a Grandmother, Mother and daughter. And a few other Irish ones, yes. Yeah.

[02.46.90]

*Emily: So was drama something you were interested in when you were sort of fifteen? Was that a big part of—?*

Dorothy: No. I stopped, we—I— I was never in plays per se. What we had were what were called feises, which were like big local sprawling competitions where you would enter individually for poetry or monologues or whatever. And I won quite a few medals before I was twelve, to my utter shock I remember at the time. I was doing it for fun and then they called my name out and said I'd won, I went 'oh!' And then when I was thirteen and in secondary school I asked my old teacher who was the one who thought I had some talent in acting to coach me for what was called the Kilcullen Cup, which was where I had to deliver a couple of monologues, and she coached me for that and I won the Kilcullen Cup. And when the Mother Superior of my convent school found out I had done this off my own bat but was wearing a Convent of Mercy uniform, she read me the riot act and told me I should never do that again so I never did it again.

*Emily: Blimey. What was your experience with the nuns like then?*

Dorothy: Fifteen, so if I we start when I—fifteen, I was at convent school I was entering into the Inter[mediate] Cert[ificate] or what you'd probably have as the former O—Levels or GCSEs here. By the time I got to secondary school there were more lay teachers than there were nuns, who are obviously way more civilised than the nuns in my primary school had been who were, without the exception of John Bosco and a couple of others, were pretty, pretty cruel, mean and vindictive women. But in secondary school we had Sister Benedict who later became Mother Benedict which I think is a kind of a promotion who was a very bitter woman, she came across as being a very bitter woman. She must have been in her sixties or seventies and twenty odd years previously she had taught my sister Maura. So it was, "oh you're Maura Duffy's sister, are you?" "Yes." Maura was quite the student apparently. So she was she was quite a mean spirited woman who, when we were creating riot in between classes, she'd creep along the corridor, she'd hold her rosary beads which were on a belt at her waist and went to the floor which would rattle and we'd all know that she's coming. She'd lift them up and hold them so she wouldn't hear— we wouldn't hear her coming.

*[Laughs]*

Dorothy: And she'd walk in and oh the whole class would be in in trouble. So she— she was a bit of a— bit of an item. Then when we were about, about fifteen I'd say we had mm— Sister Genevieve who was a much more benign, more modern type of nun. And was strict but not cruel. And so the atmosphere was generally better. And as I say there were more lay teachers at that point, a few of whom could be quite bitchy. Like most schools I guess, but overall the quality of teaching and the quality of the teachers was excellent. All girls school, yeah, I loved it, I was very lucky, don't believe in it, but I was very lucky in my all girls school that I loved it quite a bit. At fifteen of course no boys being around. Even the window cleaner started to look attractive to all of us. But in the summer when I was fifteen, we had for the second year running in our small little rural town in the West Coast of Ireland, with a population of six thousand, all of whom seemed to know each other. We had an influx of French students, about forty in July and forty in august. To come and experience life in a rural Irish town. So when I was fifteen it was the second lot. The first lot I thought were the most sophisticated, well-dressed, most gorgeous looking kids I'd ever seen. All of whom seemed to smoke Gitanes cigarettes at age fourteen and fifteen. And that year I think our main aim, me and my girlfriends were to get off with a French guy [laughs].

[07.29.38]

Dorothy: And I ended up — I'm blushing I don't know why— because it's my daughter— Christian Muller was my gorgeous French teenage crush, well I fell completely in love with him at fifteen as you do. He had— he looked more Germanic than French, he had short cropped blond hair, piercing blue eyes and wore navy head to toe and was very handsome. And we hadn't a clue what we were saying to each other so I think we spent most of our time snogging.

*[Laughs]*,

Dorothy: And yeah that that that was a fun summer of falling in love and it did seem, the sun seemed to shine a lot it didn't the year before it rained every day. So that was fun. And I went into— on the turn of fifteen into sixteen I went into my intermediate year where it was exams. Eight subjects that you had to do among them Irish language, which was compulsory, you had to do that.

*Emily: What was— when you were sort of that age were— were you sort of being encouraged to think about further education? Were you encouraged to think about careers? Like what, what was sort of seen as what your life was going to look like?*

[08.46.08]

Dorothy: Well, it's interesting for me. Bearing in mind that if my parents at age fifteen and a half had found out I was going out with Christian Muller I would have been absolutely battered. I was not allowed to have a boyfriend. So, attitudes towards girls and women were still very repressed and suppressed, particularly in my house because my sister had had a baby outside marriage the year before. So I was prohibited from anything that involved boys. Didn't stop me but I was prohibited, it was always just terrifying. So, tracking that into school life, I remember once when I was about sixteen and a half, Molly Malloy who was the teacher at the time had become a careers advisor while she was at school. We were all about fifteen and a half— sixteen and we were in a shoe shaped, horseshoe shaped position in the classroom. And she went around one by one and asked us all what it is we would like to be when we left school. And there was not one variation between either a teacher or a nurse. That was the scope of our ambition. Not that we weren't ambitious, but that was the scope of what it was that women did then. And Molly Malloy then brought out this sort of psychometric test— Molly Malloy was a great teacher, not a great careers advisor but there you go — which we all did, and I remember [laughs], when I had done mine [laughs], she said I would either be a really good cook— I should work in the catering— you know be a good cook, and I can't remember what the other one was, and I was just horrified I thought well I've got more ambition than that. As it turns out, I happen to be really passionate about cooking but that's neither here nor there. So we were divided in the secondary school into the A class, the B class and the C class. The A class girls got to do Science and Latin, the Bs everything but­— no Science or Latin, and the Cs, God love them, you know, you just knew that the overall opinion of them was that they wouldn't do anything. I was in the B class, I remember when we— when I joined secondary school at twelve, it's twelve in Ireland, we had to do a sort of an entrance exam whereby you sat and then you were streamed into A, B or C. And I remember Sister Benedict as I mentioned earlier, speaking to my mother saying she was horrified and aghast the fact that I was not in the A class, because I was always in the top five of my class in primary school out of a class of about 44. As it turns out, it was the best thing that happened to me because we had Sister— oh God I've blocked her out of my mind now, Sister Stephanie, who taught the A class and taught five out of the nine subjects, including Latin, French and other things. And her niece was in that class. Now she was evil personified, so had I been streamed into the A class I would have had had Sister Stephanie for about twelve classes a week and I think I would have gone quite mad or killed her.

[12.16.69]

Dorothy: So, I went to the B class, where we still had the good teachers, it was the C class God love them who got a bit of the— the underbelly of teachers. We had good teachers and all of the girls were bright, they were, you know, really bright. And they were lovely and we had great craic and we stayed in the same class for five years.

*Emily: Was there any option to sort of move up or was it once you were sorted at age twelve that was— that was where you were?*

Dorothy: You couldn't have paid me to move up to the A class with Sister Stephanie doing all those classes because she tortured her poor niece. I mean her niece should not have been in the A class, she should have been in the B or C class and her life was a misery because of Sister Stephanie and she was cruel and vindictive. Well no, what grated against me was the fact that there was an awful lot of very, very able young women in the B class who should have been learning Latin and biology who could have gone onto university to do medicine, pharmacy whatever and without a biology degree— a biology A-level equivalent, they couldn't go.

*Emily: What— what I meant was sort of once you were sort of assigned a class, was that it then?*

Dorothy: No some people appealed, in fact some people appealed to come out of the A class interestingly, and one person appealed to go into it and got it. So, I remember that because I remember thinking "eejit, what would you want to do that for?"

*[Laughs]*

Dorothy: And the girl who came out of the A class into the B class, I was glad she did because she was quite a vulnerable, shy, sort of always hot and perspiring type of girl, who did much better with us than she would have done in the A class.

[13.58.60]

Dorothy: But I do remember there was a kind of discrimination because certainly in the A class as well, you had the girls who were from the nicer type of families, the more professional families, the teachers, the doctors, whatever. So there was a huge ingrained snobbishness about it as well. And I remember I used to burn with injustice about it and when we were in fifth or sixth class, so sixteen or seventeen, I remember— it was one of my many battles that I took on— I remember that there was a debating team of four girls, so this was interschool debating team. And the nuns, the teachers, just chose four girls out of the A class. I was absolutely outraged about this and I got a petition and I got it signed that this was discrimination. And as a result, I was put into the debating team.

*Emily: So, they sort of called your bluff there?*

Dorothy: Oh yeah.

*Emily: [Laughs]*

Dorothy: Oh yeah, because I had to I think I had to write an essay saying why I thought it was discriminating to just automatically choose from the A class for a debating team because there was lots of bright, able, articulate women— girls, in the B class and C class that could of equally done as well and how dare they do that. So I d— I can't remember if I was voted or if I was chosen but anyway I ended up in the bloody debating team. And I remember the first debate, you had three minutes to say— "The Media are a Menace" was one of the titles of one of them. And of course, choosing the elite from our school, they chose the elite from the other schools as well and there was huge competition especially against the boarding schools. Because all the toffs and the snobs went to boarding school and you really wanted to batter them in anything: basketball, tennis, debating. So, my first one was a frigging disaster, I was all over the place. Eh, oh yes, I was— I was made the Captain as well I think [laughs].

*Emily: [Laughs]*

Dorothy: Yeah, I really stitched myself up. And I— I did a terrible job, I didn't know how to construct it, I didn't know how to do it, I was— I was a shambles. And then as the Captain you have to sum up the arguments for all the side at the end. Second one, the teacher Helen Benville— Jesus I don't know how I remember these names, Helen Benville, she was probably only 24 or 25 looking back on it. Not much older than us. She helped me construct an argument for whatever the debate was and you would get the best speaker of the night as well and I remember the second one I nailed it.

*Emily: [Laughs]*

Dorothy: I— all the— my drama, I really nailed it. And I was told afterwards that if I hadn't been on the winning team that I would have been chosen as best speaker of the night. But they always tended to give the best speaker to the losing team to balance it out. Bloody Catholics.

[17.15.13]

Dorothy: So that was an experience for me insofar— I'd forgotten all about that actually— and that was kind of drama linked as well because you have to be able to deliver and, you know, oratory and all of that and deliver a good argument, but it was I suppose my first real taste of injustice and I was damned if I was going to let it happen. So that was quite ballsy of me really.

*Emily: So, in terms of sort of— I guess because I always think of Ballina as being this kind of small town but— was— in in terms of like ways of getting out, was it through academia mainly?*

Dorothy: One of my driving forces in terms of— of— I knew I wanted to leave Ballina as soon as it was possible because home life was not happy. It was destructive, it was all sorts of things and I knew I needed and wanted to leave as soon as I possibly could. However, I read some book when I was in my young teens, I think it was "How Green is My Valley," I could be completely wrong, and it was about this miner's son from the Welsh valleys who worked his arse off to avoid going into the mines and ended up going to Oxford or somewhere. Now I knew I wasn't headed for those dizzy heights but I knew that before I left I had to make sure I had a good education because two of my sisters had gone to England in the fifties, both to train as nurses and neither of them— neither of them finished. One because she got married and when you got married you had to leave, the other because she just didn't enjoy it. So, I remember one day a friend of mine knocking on the door saying, "oh look I got all these leaflets for nursing and hospitals in England, in London" and I thought I'll have a look at them. I didn't know — what I did know that I really wanted to get an education so I knuckled down in my last year. In my fifth year, the penultimate year I barely opened a book. And I did that deliberately because I thought I won't have the energy to do that over two years and I thought I'll put everything I've got in it in the last year. Which I did, didn't miss an hour of school, studied from five o'clock to eleven o'clock at night every night and I knew I couldn't do that for four years. And I got decent results, not— not high flying by any means but decent results.

[19.54.46]

Dorothy: And, in fact, again I'd forgotten that about the debating team, I think because of my big mouth and the debating team, I was chosen to give the valedictory address at my school— which was interesting because my mother and my father weren't speaking to each other at the time, they'd had a massive bust up about something or other as they often did. And there was a— the Cold War was in the house. And I didn't want my father coming to my graduation with me giving the valedictory address which I'd written totally by myself and then wallowing in reflective glory with all the other fathers and mothers in the town. So I remember on the day of the graduation I got a new dress, my mother got a new suit, my father refused point blank to go. "Why won't you go?" "I'm not going with your one," my mother. And it was that kind of awfulness— awfulness. I said, "will you please go for me?" I knew that if I told him I was giving the valedictory address, he would have had his suit on, hat on, and been up there sitting in the front row quick as a flash but I thought no he has to do it for me and put this aside. So before I left I said, "you’ve got one last chance Daddy?" "No, I'm not going." So, my mother and I went up to the graduation she was with me for my graduation and then the— afterwards I gave the speech and she and I were the only mother and daughter there, everybody else whose father was alive was there. And I gave the valedictory address and it was really well received, it was mentioned in the local newspaper. And the next day Daddy went downtown in this small little Irish town and one of the big noises from the town said to him, "oh Jack, you must've been so proud of your daughter!" He said, "what?" "She gave the valedictory address yesterday and she was, oh it's a chip off the old block." And he came back to the house that day— and he was absolutely flittering and I stood my ground and I said to him, "I asked you to come because of me and you wouldn't and I wasn't going to have you come there because I was giving the speech." And he was devastated, but he got the message. And I still don't regret it, he should have come for me not for—. So yeah, an education was a way out and I have to say the Irish education system I found to be excellent. I think if I'd had a different background, a different parental home, I would have done better academically. I did alright and when I got my— I applied very quietly with no one knowing to two hosp— three hospitals in London, not knowing anything about them except they were within about fifteen— twenty minutes from my sister. One in Kingston, one in Ealing and one I think— I can't remember.

[23.04.90]

Dorothy: I wrote to them when I was sixteen, independently. I told them I was sitting my exams. How much I wanted to be a nurse which was slightly untrue because I didn't really. And then, when I got my leaving cert results when I was seventeen and a half in the August— I was a bit young to be taking it, I wrote them a letter straight away and within a week I had gotten offers from Kingston and Ealing. I chose Ealing. Didn't want to interview me but they wanted me to start the following year when I had turned eighteen. So I had a year to kill. So, I still didn't tell my— I told my mother but I didn't tell my father. And then one— the day that I did tell him, I said, "I'm going to England I'm going to be a nurse" he turned round and said to me, "no, you're not, you're the youngest. You're going to stay home and you're going to look after your mother and your father until we die, and I'll get you a job in the bank." And I looked him in the eye and I thought to myself, no frigging way, I am out of here.

*Emily: So being the youngest of ten, you probably— at that point you were at— you were the last one in the nest—*

Dorothy: Yep.

*Emily: — as it were so you saw sort of all your brothers and sisters kind of fly the coop.*

Dorothy: Mmhm

*Emily: Did any of them stay in Ballina?*

Dorothy: My brother who's next in line to me, who's seventeen months older than me he stayed in Ballina— No, he'd left by that point, he actually went to work in the prison service in Dublin so it was just me at home I think at that point or he may have still been at home but everybody else flew the nest. So, I remember in around about the April of my leaving cert year, we did our exams in June, my mother and father having an almighty nuclear war session. And I ended up packing my mother's bags and saying, you have got to go, you have got to leave. And I remember seeing her walking away from the house and thinking, oh God what have I done, what have I done? But I couldn't handle it anymore. And I stayed so it meant that I was doing my leaving cert— in the run up to my leaving cert on my own in the house with my father. My brother would flit in and out. And I— I just somehow knew I had to keep at it, I had to do it, I had to do it. And luckily enough that summer I fell in love with some— a lovely boy, which was lovely — again hidden. And that was the other bit of my graduation, my father refused to let me have a boy escort me to the graduation and I said to him, "but the nuns said it was alright and all the other girls are taking a boy." "You're not taking a boy to the graduation." So this lovely boy who knew the situation— I said, "I'm gonna be in the front room looking out and I'll see you turn the corner and I'm going to run, just run with me," and he did, bless him. And I went— and my father asked me afterwards, "did you take a boy?" I said, "yes I did." But it was always terrifying because we had a laneway up the— up the road from the house and that's where we'd go and have a snog and I was always absolutely terrified I'd be caught. [Laughs] Oh, it was terrible really.

*Emily: And was— was a lot of that— sort of as a result of your sister getting pregnant?*

Dorothy: It—

*Emily: Or had they always been very strict with the girls?*

Dorothy: No, they hadn't been strict with Deirdre particularly— they'd been strict with the older girls but that was sort of in the fifties. They were— but no, no, Deirdre used to bring her boyfriends home, we'd sit up all night, she was seventeen, I was twelve. My mother would have made us a huge plate of sandwiches, we'd come in from the dance about two or three in the morning, sit up until seven in the morning in the kitchen talking, there was never any problem. But then I just wasn't able to look at a boy, be near a boy, do anything near— you know. So poor old Davie Flynn, bless his heart, never saw the inside of my house, never was able to meet me. We used to have to meet, you know, halfway between the town and my house and then of course when you're out, you're always terrified that somebody will tell.

[27.42.02]

Dorothy: So— and that was the summer I then left home. [Pause]. And I left home— because I was on my own with my Father and it was always a slightly volatile, or on the edge of volatility situation, there was one day— By this time I'd got my results, I'd gotten my place as a nurse and one of the reasons I chose it was because it meant I had a roof over my head and I had a salary. Which doesn't seem to be the right reason to become a nurse but actually as it turned out it was probably the best profession I could do because it suited me and my personality perfectly really. I love caring for people and looking after people. So, I— my father said something to me, I snapped back at him as you do when you're seventeen and a half, and he raised his hand to me and walloped me on the back of the head. And it really bloody hurt and in that second, I thought, I'm going. So I met my boyfriend and my best friend and her boyfriend the next night and I told them, I said "I'm leaving, I'm getting the train out the next morning and I'm going." And they were very supportive and they completely understood. So, clutching my letter of acceptance from the hospital and not knowing quite what I was going to do, I packed a bag, I stayed awake all night and left.

[29.15.09]

[Pause].

Dorothy: I woke up at seven in the morning, the train left at half seven. And it was a very bright, beautiful summer's morning. And the town was dead, not a car in sight, just the local milkman who asked if I wanted a lift, I said "no thanks." The saddest thing was my dog followed me, my dog, my beautiful Alsatian dog. And every— I'd go a hundred yards and he'd go, and I'd say, "go home, go home" and this lasted all the way to the station. He'd skulk and he'd hide in doorways and I'd turn around and his little head was poking out waiting for me to carry on and I had to shout and say, "go home" and I think in the end I had to slap him to try and get him to go home because he couldn't be with me. And I remember that broke my heart because I wanted to explain to him and I couldn't.

So— I arrived in Dublin aged seventeen and three quarters. My sister, her husband and their little child lived in Dublin but my mother was living with them at that time so I didn't want to burden them. But I did ring my mother and she heard it in my voice straight away, "where are you? What happened?" So anyway, I went and I stayed with them in their little flat. The next day, I rang up one of my brothers and I said, "can you send fifty pound? I want to get a bedsit and I need that for a deposit" and he wired me fifty pound. And within 48 hours my mother and I had our own little bedsit in Dublin, I think we paid six pound a week for it. One room, two beds, tiny little sink. Ehm. And then, it was really difficult to get a job and I tried all sorts of jobs, knowing it was only going to be for a year. Jobs weren't aplenty in Dublin at that time unless you were either a degree person or— And I didn't know what to do. I went to factories and a very kind gentlemen I remember one saying to me, "Dorothy you're overqualified, you wouldn't last five minutes down there on the factory floor." In the end I got a job as a domestic, I went around and I walked into hospitals and I said, "can I have a job? Have you got a job? Have you got a job? Have you got a job?" And eventually got one. I don't know where I got the courage to do that from but I did and had a year working as a domestic in Jervis Street Hospital in Dublin where I earned about £21 a week. My mother went back to my father during that year and I bought— I had my own bedsit which was nine pound a week on the south side of Dublin. At the end of the road was a synagogue, which I was absolutely bowled away by because I thought, you know, Ireland is full of Catholics with about one percent of C of I [Church of Ireland - Protestant]. And it was wonderful to have a synagogue at the end of the road. And my landlord was a Jewish gentleman and every Friday when I was at work, I'd leave out my nine pound and when I'd come home that night it was gone. It felt really spooky that he could get in and out of my little bedsit, but I felt the most free I'd ever been in my whole life, and it was— it was great fun.

*Emily: Did you make friends there?*

Dorothy: I did, I made— not many. I was very insecure; I was a bit frightened and I — my, my goal was— you know. But I made a couple of friends from the hospital and I fell in love with a patient at the hospital. It's awful easy to fall in love. Who one night didn't turn up and I never saw him again and that broke my heart. As you know, only your heart can break when you're sort of seventeen, eighteen, nineteen. And I had a couple of other boyfriends but I didn't want to get serious about anybody because I wanted to leave Ireland. I couldn't bear the repression, the moral judgement, the church, the feeling that everybody knew what you were up to. But particularly the way people judged you. And as for having sex, you know, I mean, my God. I knew a friend of mine who told me afterwards [laughs] she had sex on a frequent basis in the sitting room of her house with her boyfriend [laughs] and I was, "what? What?" She got pregnant and had an abortion, bless her, over in Harley Street. Which again, reinforced my deep hatred for the Catholic church— that women, young girls had to do that. Because had she had that baby, she would have been vilified and this was in 1977.

[34.28.61]

*Emily: Were there many instances of young girls getting pregnant? Did you did you ever hear about it, were there just sort of rumours?*

Dorothy: Oh no, it happened. No, there was two friends of my sister who were five years older than me. Both of them got pregnant about the same time and it was a huge hush hush scandal where they'd be sent off to a home somewhere, come back. And both of them got pregnant again. And they were thrown out of the house. One of them managed to keep her baby this time, the other one didn't. And the one who didn't keep either of her babies— very, very sadly when she did eventually get married, was not able to have any more children. So the two children that she gave up for adoption she never met and she died in her early fifties sadly, she had a horrible life. She was the image of Sandy Shaw. And the other woman who had two babies as I say, managed to keep one of them, her parents I think were kinder. And you know, there's a part of me that doesn't blame the parents, it was society that was so judgemental. It was like the worst frigging shame in the world to get pregnant and have a baby. It really was and in fact the girl in— there was a girl in my year— last year at school who got pregnant and she was the most innocent creature as we'd call her. I—she probably didn't even know what was happening to her, and it was often girls like that who got pregnant as well because they didn't know they were having sex. And there was other girls who got pregnant at— quite a few that I knew and they were married by eighteen, that was the other option, you got married straight away, boom, that's it. So, kept my legs crossed [laughs] because I knew if I got pregnant I'd be done.

[36.24.64]

*Emily: So, I guess I find it quite ironic that sex was such a taboo thing when you were part of a family of ten and that was considered average size.*

Dorothy: Well, it's interesting, my mother got married when she was nineteen and had her first child eleven months later and by the time she was 27 she had five kids under five or six. And she was worn out and exhausted. And I remember her telling me that­— we had what was called missions that would come to the town where you would be able to see priests from another town or another order and you could go to confession because of course everybody knew the priest in town— the tow— the priest knew you. So, she went to the priest and she said to the priest, "I really don't want to have sex with my husband anymore because I don't want any more children, I'm so exhausted, I'm so tired, I'm worn out." And he turned around and said to her, "go home and be a wife to your husband." And she said that night she conceived Sean who was I think, number six. And on it went and she had her last pregnancy at 48, she had a miscarriage at six months, she had me at 42. So, the double standards were mind boggling, absolutely mind boggling.

[37.45.76]

Dorothy: The hypocrisy was mind boggling in terms of sex, because there were children being popped out left, right and bloody centre. And I know that my parents had quite a passionate sex life or, you know, well into their seventies. So it did seem wrong but I think it was that fear— I reckon if the pill had come out, you know, many years before, there would have been a lot more people having sex before marriage, but the fear of it and the fear of the repercussions and it bringing shame on your family even in the seventies— late seventies, was enormous. And this is also juxtaposed with the Catholic church still having a huge grip on the people of the town and of Ireland in general. And again, the hypocrisy of many of those priests— a couple of whom I knew were going out with women in the town at the time. It was just awful and we were brought up at school— I remember my first year in school at age thirteen being told by Sister Benedict again, that boys weren't— you weren't allowed to kiss boys, that if you sat on their lap, you could get pregnant. No wonder some of these poor innocents got pregnant. And all sorts of stupid things like that. Luckily we were beginning to come out of that in terms of access to knowledge and whatever, and those of us that had older brothers and sisters found out the truth about sex, if you like, where an awful lot of kids left school and they were completely, completely innocent of the ways of the world. It was very sad really, but it makes me more angry than sad. Particularly as it came at the behest of the church because basically they wanted women to be procreators and pop out as many Catholics as they could in their child bearing years to keep the numbers up.

*Emily: When —when did your relationship with the church change? Because I remember you telling me once that when you were quite young, you thought of the idea of being a nun.*

[40.05.54]

Dorothy: Oh we had this wonderful nun who came to us, again on a mission to the school, who didn't wear nun's habit, who said that, you know, you could smoke and have a drink if you like and I thought "Oh that's not so bad then." And she created such this— such lovely wonder about being a nun that, you know, it was all quite romantic, quite a few of us thought "Oh you know what." It really was— you know, you think about it, sort of grooming or a cult. I quickly grew out of that, I was about twelve or thirteen when I stopped. I was twelve when I stopped going to confession, because I was saying the same bloody tripe each week when I went into the confessional box. And I just made up my mind, I thought well if there is a God, and if I have done anything bad, I can have a direct line to him and I can get forgiven, I don't need to go through a priest in a stuffy old smelly box. So I stopped going to confession, then I stopped going to Mass when I was about the same time as well. We'd go to Cafollas, you know, pretending we'd gone to Mass but we never went to Mass. And I started questioning the church when I was about thirteen. I remember being told off by asking a visiting priest– All the priests in the town had their own big house and the bishop had a palace, I kid you not, the Bishop's palace. And there were people in the town living in hovels. And then you had nuns who were about 150, in a convent. So I just asked the question innocently one day, I said "how—how did the priests get the right to actually have a whole house to themselves over three floors and if one of their vows is poverty, why don't they live in a small place or bring homeless people in?" That didn't go down well. So, it all— it all, you know — it all just began to seem stupid and facile to me. .

[41.50.04]

*Emily: So was there— was there quite a divide in the town in terms of wealth?*

Dorothy: Looking back I suppose there was. I was from quite a working-class background. Council house. But, it's interesting because if I look— Our street had 44 houses in it and the amount of young people in that street who went onto tertiary education or into the professions was enormous. And I believe that was partly due to the fact that such a huge emphasis was placed on the benefits of education and we all had access to a good education. And we all did— so many of us did really, really, really well— really well. But yes, there was a— looking back now there was a kind of a sort of— we used to call them the snobs. Most people with any kind of money, at the age twelve or thirteen would send their kids to boarding school, private school. I was not one of them, thank God. And you had, you know, when you were a teenager, there was certain clubs or hotels that the posh kids of the town would go to and then there was where the rest of us would go to. But I think there were more people like me than there were people who were wealthy and well off, in a way. Though the power and the— probably the wealth was in the hands of the fewer rather than the masses. But they were shopkeepers, you know, they were shopkeepers, they were doctors, teachers, civil servants, whatever, you know, it was— And farmers were often quite well off, though they had a hard life. And the girls from the country would be bussed in every day to the school come rain or shine. Snow they always got a day off. And that was hard for them because they used to have to stay in that smelly old school in the cold in the depths of winter all day because we all used to go home for our dinners. And my house was about— less than five minutes from the school and you'd have dinner at lunch time then, and my doggy used to meet me at the bottom of the hill every day at one o'clock and at half past four and put my hand into his mouth and take me home, which is why it broke my heart leaving him. He knew exactly what time school was out.

[44.30.04]

Dorothy: In my mid-teens as well— politically— I can't remember who was in power but it was around the time Bobby Sands and the hunger strikes started. And my Uncle in the thirties had been a real IRA person and was interned and I think died as a result of the conditions he had to endure when he was interned— died very young in his thirties. And our town, I found out, was quite a political town in terms of supporting the IRA. There was quite a few hardcore IRA supporters in the town. This I found out later. And I remember at least two of the hunger strikers who died because Margaret Thatcher refused to bow to them— were buried in Ballina and the funerals, the whole— the town was absolutely awash with people, you couldn't move. And I remember one night, Daddy coming back after one of the funerals with an entourage of about five people from the north of Ireland, three men and two women. And there was one very, very handsome and charismatic man with them who— I was about sixteen so it would have been '75— '76 around then, was it then? Anyway, he was hugely charismatic and unlike many Irishmen of the time turned to me and asked me lots of things about myself— [rattling noise in background]— asked me how I felt about things, how I felt about religion, who my favourite saints were, and he could've only been about 28— 30, I think. And I was completely entranced by him. You know, at that — and I thought, you know, years later, you can see how people become involved in political movements, if you have charismatic people like that who explain to you what the cause is all about. And I do remember being— he was very softly spoken, very polite, very lovely and I think I was doing my leaving cert, that was it, because he said to me, you know, "if you say X amount of prayers before your exams, you'll get through it fine" et cetera. So brought the religion into it as well, and I think I probably did, you know, I think I probably did what he said because he was so— so convincing and so charismatic and seductive really. So that was my sort of brush with politics of the time, of those sorts of politics of the time.

*Emily: How aware were you of sort of global politics and things that were going on?*

[47.27.86]

Dorothy: Probably not as much as I should have been. Of course, when I was in secondary school, we had collections every month for the poor babies in Africa or wherever, and we were always making collections, you know, to soothe the savage Catholic breast. But I wasn't— I was aware of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, maybe because it had such echoes of the Irish one. I was very aware of the Northern Ireland conflict— well, war— because my mother was from Belfast. And, you know, once 1969 happened and the Civil Rights Movement and et cetera. That was it, she never went back, for many, many years. So, I was aware of local Irish politics. I don't think I was as aware as I would have liked to have been about global politics at that time.

*Emily: But there was a big cultural influence from abroad though, in terms of music and film and—*

Dorothy: Yeah, because going to the cinema was a huge escape and a bit like Dave Allen, the Irish comedian, used to say you could always tell what film had been on at the cinema because you'd see all the kids coming out and either whooping like cowboys and indians or you know sword fighting or shooting each other with guns— pretend guns, et cetera. Going to the cinema was a huge cultural thing because there was nothing else to do. And we didn't get a television until I was nine, and I suppose by the time I was fifteen it was still only on from six o'clock of an evening. Music was coming through. I only had access to Radio One, which was all— where was all the pop picks on an afternoon— and only during the summer because otherwise I would have been at school. When Radio Two joined Radio One, and you— they— they went around England to all the seasides— and I can't remember what it was called, but that's where I got my access to all the top bands if you like at the time. And you know it was Mark Bolan, it was Slade, Gary Glitter, I never liked Gary Glitter. Oh God, there was some blues coming through but we didn't have access we didn't have a record player until I was about sixteen or seventeen. So my access to music was very, very limited. Because literally you couldn't get Radio One except in an afternoon and then it would be Radio Two. It was— it was [laughs] ridiculous when you think about it.

[50.31.53]

*Emily: Did you have sort of discos in the town at all?*

Dorothy: We had discos, yeah. When I was allowed out. Often, we had live bands. I— my claim to fame is seeing Thin Lizzy when I was twelve years old and being right beside the lead singer in his three-inch heels and his afro and I thought, oh my God, I've died and gone to heaven. And there was Rory Gallagher, so you had a lot of live bands that would do the circuits of the towns over the years and we'd go to those as, you know, if I was able to get out at all. And then there was discos, and dance halls, and that was it really. Actually, social life for kids was pretty shocking, pretty poor.

*Emily: But there was Cafollas which was the Italian?*

Dorothy: Yeah, there— there's an Italian café that opened up when I was nine so a little bit of exoticism in rural Ireland where an Italian family opened up a— basically a fish and chip shop but with tables, and it was wonderful and it only closed down a few years ago. When I was about fifteen, they opened up a tennis— no, I was probably about fourteen— they opened up tennis courts and basketball courts literally fifty seconds from where I lived. That became the focus of where we all met throughout the summer months as well. So, romances were forged, friendships were forged and fell out, and it was great. It was the only time boys and girls could ever get together, particularly because most girls went to convent and most boys went to the boys' school so we didn't mix. And so through sport, of course, was a good way of doing it so I became pretty good at tennis and not bad at basketball. But it was pretty shockingly poor really and I always— Books actually for me were more of an escape than anything else because I could lose myself in a book and pretend I was somewhere else. Music I would have loved to have had much, much more access to, and that didn't happen until much later because it just wasn't there. When my brothers and sisters used to come home, they'd bring home their little 45 record players and their little 45 singles and so I got to hear it from there. And there was a few dudes in the town, you know, who managed to get stuff from America and whatever, and that was incredible but I didn't have the means to play or listen to it really.

[52.58.85]

*Emily: Mmm*

Dorothy: Mmm.

*Emily: So in terms of sort of— you mentioned [indec.] to the kind of sports grounds and things like that and Cafollas, was that pretty much it in terms of sort of nightlife?*

Dorothy: Yeah. I mean going on a date usually meant that you'd go to the cinema—

*Emily: Mm*

Dorothy: And it was that thing where you'd sit beside them and you might not know them very well and the arm would crawl around your shoulder and the hand would be on your shoulder halfway through, and then all of a sudden they'd lean in for a kiss and you— you kind of knew what was going to happen but it was still terrifying, that first date, it was really terrifying. And then you might go for coffee in Cafollas afterwards and that was it, that was— that was your social life.

*Emily: In terms of teen rebellion, obviously, you know, sex was off the table but sort of drinking and smoking and.—*

Dorothy: I smoked since I was twelve.

*Emily: Mm*

Dorothy: So, but that was always on the quiet. Drinking, no, never drank, oh— yeah, never drank until I was— seventeen. I remember a gang of us when we got our leaving cert results, we all felt so grown up and so sophisticated that we went down to Leonard's Bar and we all thought we'd order ourselves a drink although the legal age was eighteen. We thought, oh, they'll let us, we've got our leaving cert results today. And there was a bloke in there, "get out of here the lot of ye! You're still far too young to be drinking! Go on, get out!" But we'd find a way, we'd find a way. And so yeah, then that were— the next thing was going to bars but you usually did have to be eighteen, but you always knew a bar or two that would let— give you a drink if you were underage.

*Emily: Yeah, I assume in a small town it's sort of—*

Dorothy: Yeah but it was— you had to be awfully careful, aw— and there was no such thing as off licences.

*Emily: Mm*

Dorothy: You couldn't go into a supermarket and buy a bottle of wine or a can of beer, everything was bought at the bar.

*Emily: Mm*

Dorothy: I think you could, but you'd never be served, never be served. Though you know, I remember when I was thirteen at a dance in Enniscrone, somebody from England, from Manchester, offering me heroin, I said, "no thank you." [Laughs]

*Emily: Heroin?*

Dorothy: [Laughs] Heroin. Mm

*Emily: So did— drugs came to Ireland then?*

[55.04.15]

Dorothy: Oh yeah, I remember— again I was one of those kids who always thought, oh I'll be the one if I take it, I'll die. I was always like that; somebody must have said something to me. But there was a lad— there was a group of boys who were about six years older than me when I was about twelve or thirteen. And they went off to Amsterdam and, you know, they were just so hippy dippy and wonderful, but James bless him didn't come back. And he overdosed on heroin. And he was only about eighteen years old and I remember that was utterly, utterly shocking because he was just experimenting; he wasn't a dope head or anything like that. And in the early '70s, drugs, yes, drugs were around in Ballina but the hard stuff, no wacky baccy but the hard stuff so, you know, it just never occurred to me to even dabble.

*Emily: Mm*

Dorothy: Just didn't occur to me. Cigarettes, yes.

*Emily: So I guess there was kind of a counter culture. Were you aware of anything else? Were you aware of kind of homosexuality? Was there anything like that going on in a small town?*

[56.06.43]

Dorothy: No. We had these very pejorative terms about boys in particular who were a bit effeminate and we'd called them sissies. I hope I didn't but, you know, sissies. One such sissy became a very good friend and he did come out as gay when he was in his thirties. And God it must have been tough for them, but homosexuality was another taboo subject, it didn't exist. There was— it just— it just didn't exist, end of. And I remember when your father came home for the first time to Ireland, or maybe the second time, to meet my parents, I don't know how the subject came up, something about homosexuality, and my father said, "no, no, no, no, we don't have any homosexuals in Ballina. I think there might be one in Castlebar."

*Emily: [Laughs]*

Dorothy: [Laughs] And that was the attitude, it was a rarity, it was an aberration, it was— you know. But we were aware and conscious of child molestation and not being— not going off with strangers and being aware of and— and wary of. Though having said that, you know that phrase, "it takes a village to raise a child," there wasn't a person in Ballina who didn't feel they had the right to tell you off if they saw you doing something wrong, or give you a clip round the ear if they thought you were doing something wrong. Or say, "I'm going to tell your Mammy and your Daddy on ye," you know, so there was that sort of— but there was also an awareness from all of us I think— I was a bit older— of being wary of certain people.

*Emily: So, there were certain people that you kind of knew not to—*

Dorothy: Mhmm. Yeah

*Emily: Mm*

Dorothy: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Because I was molested at a cinema when I was four years old and my father threatened to kill the guy so I never really had a massive legacy about it or a hang up because I suppose I was believed and I was. And you know my father came in like a white charger, for once, on a white charger, threatening to kill above and beyond him, you know. Nothing awful happened to me but it was quite a trauma at the same time. Looking back on it I think knowing what I knew as an as an adult, what this man was doing was grooming me. But my father threatened that he would kill him if he ever saw him in the town ever again, something to that effect, or chop his—

*Emily: So it was a threat of violence rather than sort of a report to the police or anything—*

Dorothy: No, it never went to the police, never went to the police. Which I— you know, interest— I should've asked my Father before he died but yeah never went to the police.

*Emily: Was that sort of something cultural, was it certain things were kind of taken care of?*

Dorothy: Well now, now I know. I mean I think that the threat from my father would have been far more scary than a threat from the police. And I'm not that sure that molestation of that sort of ilk would have been taken terribly seriously, he would have probably just got a warning.

*Emily: Mm*

Dorothy: You know, but the threat from my father was sufficient that, you know, never saw sight nor light of him ever again. Yeah. Yeah.

[Pause]

[59.27.07]

*Emily: So sort of going back to your relationship with — it feels like we've been talking about your Dad quite a lot actually — your relationship with your father—*

Dorothy: Mm

*Emily: —did you want to talk about that anymore?*

Dorothy: —Only— so I lived in Dublin for a year after I left home and I didn't see him for the year and then of course I thought, sod it because I was going to London in October '77. I thought, bugger, I'm coming home to see all my friends and see my mother before I go. And—

*Emily: So you would have been eighteen?*

Dorothy: I would have been eighteen and a half yeah and sod it, I'm going home and to hell with him. And I just ignored him when I walked into the house, I was very wary but I ignored him and that night he had a few drinks and came back and got all slobbery and said, "I'm sorry I'm sorry" and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But he didn't try and stop me from going to London, he knew it's what I was going to do and there was nothing he could to stop me. And he gave me, you know, the requisite amount of money that I needed although I'd saved it up myself through working in Dublin, didn't want anything from him but I thought oh sod it, take it. Yeah and then I left in— I had a year in Dublin, left in October '77 and landed on this soil then.

And I started my training as a nurse. And that was a bit terrifying, I was in a class of 22 people, so we all arrived, all these newies and you'd sit in the foyer as people arrived looking around thinking, "who am I going to make friends with out of this? Will I like them? Will they like me? Will I manage? Will I do this, will I do that" Masses of insecurities and anxieties. And we were in a new block of flats, again I think about how wonderful the NHS was. Nurses in training were given a room and board as it were, well not food, but they were given a room. And we were lucky that there was this— a block of flats eleven storeys high, we were on the eighth floor. Snd in each corner of the block of flats there was a flat and each of the flats had four bedrooms, a bathroom and a kitchen. So, I was put in with two other Irish girls and a Scot, they obviously thought, keep the Celts together, they obviously like each other. Well the two Irish girls, no, I thought I'm never going to get on with them, they were very Catholic, very holy Joe and very, very sweet but uhuh. And so, within a couple of months as we started to make friends we all swapped round, and I ended up with Scot, first generation Polish woman, a Londoner and me, and we've remained in touch, more or less, for forty years. And one particular friend, I am goddaughter — Godmother to her daughter.

[01.02.17]

Dorothy: But that was a strange time, because I wasn't sure how Irish people were perceived. Because at that time, Irish jokes were de rigeur. The thick Irish Paddy. The Irishman, the Englishman, and the Scotsman. And I was trying to suss out how people really felt about Irish people, because there was a part of me that kind of knew deep down that there was still a degree of racism towards Irish people, a degree of feeling that Irish people were thick. And I was— always felt like I was sort of treading eggshells because I was worried that people would think that of me. And it wasn't, you know, you'd switch on the television the Irish jokes were just spewing out, it was horrible, really, really horrible. But I didn't experience any of that, I don't think. I remember being laughed at once because I boiled potatoes in their skins and who does that. Fast forward 35 years and a Michelin starred chef on television said you should always cook potatoes in their skins before you mash them because that— and I thought yes, [Laughs], the Irish were right, they know a potato! But as an eighteen-year-old, very insecure, coming from quite a dysfunctional background, there was always a level of anxiety about being accepted, good enough, whatever, mm.

*Emily: It's interesting that we've spoken so much about your desire to leave Ireland but you've kept your Irish name, you've—*

Dorothy: Mhmm

*Emily: — kept your accent.*

Dorothy: Mhmm.

*Emily: — you still consider yourself Irish—*

Dorothy: Mmhmm

*Emily: — on your passport. What is it do you think is it that kind of thing that like "I love you I just can't live with you"*

[01.04.11]

Dorothy: I think it is. I think that like— the boy I fell in love with at seventeen— I was going to go to university as well, that's the other thing I didn't mention. I wanted to go to university to do— oh that was it, that's what I told my father. I said, "I want to go to university to study psychology." And that's when he said to me, "you'll stay at home and you'll look after your mother and father, you're not going to university." And I remember thinking, you should be so proud that I want to go to university, but no, he wouldn't allow it, he wouldn't hear of it. And I had the grades to go and get a grant and be subsidised but there you go. So with—because I'd fallen in love that year I could— could have quite easily been swept with the romance of it, stayed at home, gone to university, fallen in love, got married and stayed in Ireland forever. I left it more because I needed to get away from my family life and I also— the attitudes towards women used to drive me insane, and the arguments I used to have with my friend's boyfriend about equality and women's equality and what women could do and couldn't do and whatever. And I thought I need a break from all of this, these judgements about women. What women can and cannot do, et cetera. It was awful I hated— I hated the attitudes. But I still— they were my formative years, it's where I grew up, it's where I became me in a way. And it is my cultural heritage, there is an awful lot to be proud of about Ireland, you know, its rich history of writing, the magnificent writers, of politicians, of diplomats that have come out of Ireland. There's huge amounts to be proud of. But in late 1970s Ireland, I knew that if I stayed I would be emotionally  strangled in that place and I couldn't do it. So I wasn't leaving Ireland, I was leaving a way of living that I couldn't bear anymore. And I— as a child I'd lived in London and England for six or eight months and I knew at that very young age that I wanted to come back to this wide, open, cosmopolitan, fast, speedy, noisy place. I knew that. And I did and I was very— as a youngster, I was a very goal-driven youngster. Maybe I needed goals to keep me— to hang onto something, that there was a future and there was something over the horizon. But I— I was very goal-orientated and I knew exactly what I had to do— to do it and I suppose I'm still a bit like that, aren't I? [Laughs]

*Emily: Where do you think that spark comes from? Because obviously there were plenty of your contemporaries who didn't— who probably did stay and where— where do you think that drive to seek more comes from?*

[01.07.16]

Dorothy: Books again. Realising that there were other lives to be lived. My dream was to actually go to London, train as a nurse, go to Canada. I thought everybody goes to America, I'll go to Canada. I think it was books, it was education, because you know you still learnt a lot about the world through education. I thought there's a lot of world out there I want to see. And there was something about me and my personality as a young child. I remember when I had one of my school reunions, my friend Bernie Moran, she did Latin, she was in the A class, but we had been friends from primary school. And she said that— my nickname used to be Ducks as is D—U—C—K—S, Ducks Duffy, we all had that name. But apparently, the Latin Dux, D—U—X, means leader. And she used to think of me and remember Dux as leader, so there was something in my character that I was always at the forefront of stuff somehow. I used to be the one that would organise the collections and if we were going to have a collection for the Congo or the Biafran babies, our class would be the class that would get the most money, yeah. I don't know— I— I— I don't know where I got my drive from. Except I knew that there was something more and better over the horizon and it was up to me and only me to be able to grab that. Having older brothers and sisters as well. I remember thinking, right if I do do nursing I'm not going to quit like my two sisters did, for the love of a man or because I don't like it, I'm going to persevere even if I don't like it. So I knew that from the get go. So I don't know where it comes from. I don't know. Something just within me. Daddy was a leader, Daddy— Daddy was— he was quite a leader but he wasn't particularly ambitious.

*Emily: But he wasn't going to follow anyone*

Dorothy: Oh no. And for all his faults he was a huge advocate for justice and equality. Huge advocate. He was not racist. He— and the casual way he talked about homophobia made me think he probably wasn't homophobic. Misogynistic I sup— yeah women had their place. But justice and equality for all was something that he was passionate about.

[01.10.05]

[Pause]

Dorothy: So yeah, so I qualified as a nurse at the age of 21. Found out I absolutely loved it. I worked in Accident and Emergency. Loved that, loved the pace, the adrenaline, the not knowing what was around the corner, taking charge again and, you know, going for it. And then, by then of course within three months of coming over to England I'd met your father. And as you know, I broke up with him three times that year because I thought, this is not fair. I want to have a good time, I want to have a string of lovers, I want to do everything my mother was never able to do and I can't do that if I meet and fall in love with somebody within three months. And then in the end I thought, oh well, it was— I don't want to say destiny or my fate because we don't believe in that but— I stopped fighting it, and forty years later we're still together, so— Can't have been a totally bad decision. But I did— I did really want to be that person who really sowed their wild oats. I wanted to live a bohemian life and I wanted to have lots of friends and lots of lovers and, you know, have a wild time. And I didn't.

So we went travelling together in— when I was 22, for two and a half years through Southeast Asia and into Australia and that was the first time I experienced racism through being Irish. Because I remember being completely shocked because actually I never experienced racism in London about being Irish at all. And I went to Australia, and I applied for a job while I was waiting for my registration to come through, it was delayed for some reason, for me to work as a nurse. And it was an agency and I remember the woman saying, "you'd like to— to work in a library? You'd like to be a library assistant?" And I said, "yes, I'd— I'd love that job, that would be perfect for me." And she sort of looked at me and she sort of tilted her head and, "very well then." So she picked up the phone, and— It might have been a bookshop, I know it was to do with books, was it a bookshop or a library? And she said ,"I have somebody here who is interested in the job. Of course, she's Irish." And she said it like that— And they talked for a bit longer and she put down the phone and she said, "no, they won't be needing anyone." And it was the way she said it and I just stood there and I was too young and too shocked and too inexperienced to say, "excuse me? Is that something to do with my nationality?" Because you think that the Irish are loved in Australia seeing as we settled the bloody place. But that was the only place I experienced first-hand racism from being Irish. And I remember being devastated and shocked.

[01.13.03]

Dorothy: So we lived there for a year. And then we lived in New Zealand for about nine months, had a whale of a time, still have friends from both those countries all these years later. So, it's— when I went to— I saw the Himalayas and the Taj Mahal and the st— the Mexican Steps and I kept thinking back to my geography teacher, and oh that she— she was the best teacher in the world and I absolutely loved geography and I was brilliant at it and I thought I'm seeing the places that she taught me. So the references will keep going back to your childhood and back to the people who taught you, because teachers are just amazing, they have such a huge influence on you. And I remember thinking, I'm that little girl from Ballina and I am seeing what I used to read about in books and I've done it. I have done it. I am not from that provincial little town anymore, not that there's anything wrong with it, but for so many people that I grew up with, they have never left. They've never left. It's as if they're frightened of the big, bad world.

And so, when I came back in 1984, I was twenty-five. And again, because I was very, very goal orientated and very driven in about what I wanted to do— While I was in New Zealand I applied to Great Ormond Street Hospital and to Guy's Children's Hospital because I always knew that I wanted to specialise in children's nursing. And I applied to them both from New Zealand and got offered a place in both without an interview again. And I chose Great Ormond Street. And when I came back, three months later at age twenty-five— 1985, twenty-six— I started my training to be a children's nurse and that brings me to twenty-five. Are there any other questions about that period? We seemed to spend a lot of time on the fifteen to twenty and less sense of— skedaddled through the twenty to twenty-five. [Pause]. So I suppose my early twenties was spent studying— travelling, and studying. Because my next goal, my next dream, my next hope, my next desire, my next ambition was to have my own children. In fact, when I met your father at aged twenty— at age eighteen, I said, "you do realise that I want five children don't you? I'll tell you that now so you can leave now if that's too much for you but I want five children." Yep.

*Emily: You managed to settle on two.*

Dorothy: Settled on two. As my mother advised me to. Stay with two. So culturally, or politically I remember when I was nine— eighteen or nineteen, you could check this— Margaret Thatcher got into power and I remember being absolutely devastated and crying and upset that this awful woman with these right-wing politics had gotten into power. And I had wanted to be so glad that it was the first woman and I couldn't be. I could not believe this woman became Prime Minister and that's why it was really nice to be abroad, because just as her popularity was waning, she invaded the Falklands and suddenly she was a huge hero and we were aware— We were away for all of that so we weren't here for all the jingoism and the horribleness and the nationalism that happened over here at that time. So yeah, we had to put up with about thirteen years of that, which wasn't good. So.

*Emily: Mm*

Dorothy: That's me.

[01.16.44 END]