

M03: ROSE MORRIS INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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| Interviewee: Rose Morris |
| Interviewer: Dr Barry Hazley |
| Interview summarisers: Dr Jack Crangle and Prof Liam Harte |
| The interview was recorded as a single audio file with no section breaks |

| M03: Rose Morris | Start time: 00:00:00 | Finish time: 02:44:22 | Duration: 02:44:22 | Brief description of content: |
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| 00:00–09:59 | Born in 1947 near Dungannon, Co. Tyrone to parents who were subsistence farmers. Rose was the second of eight children born within 10 years of each other. Describes working on the farm with her siblings and starting school aged five in 1952. Went on to Donaghmore Convent Grammar School with her older sister in 1959, for which the family had to sell cattle to pay the registration fees. | | | |
| 10:00–19:59 | Mentions her parents' belief in the importance of education for the children's future prospects. Reveals that Catholicism was a 'big part of our life', with weekly mass, monthly confession and occasional attendance at missions led by 'fire and brimstone' priests. Recalls social activities in the local GAA hall and 'ceilidhing' with neighbours in each other's houses. Mentions her father's moral opposition to his children visiting the cinema and dancehalls. | | | |
| 20:00–29:59 | Recalls going shopping in Dungannon and to fairs in other local towns. Describes her area as a mix of Catholics and Protestants. Remembers being respectful of Protestant 'sensitivities', stating that there was 'no discrimination or no sectarianism', though inter-religious mixing reduced around the Twelfth. Learned no Irish history in school and had little historical awareness until 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising. | | | |
| 30:00–39:59 | After O-levels, Rose received offers from the Belfast College of Art and St Mary's Training College, eventually choosing the former. Remembers lodging with an elderly landlady in Falls Road area of west Belfast. Describes acclimatising to the noise and faster pace of the city: 'I was soon, after a month or so, walking as fast as they were'. Recalls upheaval upon her father's death in 1966 during her first year at college and family's subsequent financial hardship due to her mother's lack of a widow's pension. | | | |
| 40:00–49:59 | Remembers joining the Legion of Mary in Belfast and doing voluntary work with them in London during the summer of 1966. Recalls the journey to London, via Dublin and Liverpool, and finding work in Sainsbury's on Kilburn High Road. Remembers the World Cup of that summer and the tournament crowds on the tube. Notes a certain tension between the 'bohemian' culture of the art college and her Catholic values. Recalls Bernadette Devlin calling for student civil rights protests at Queen's and Ian Paisley's opposition to Vatican II reforms. | | | |
| 50:00–59:59 | States that she had an awareness of, but no involvement with, the burgeoning civil rights movement. Detected 'no political leanings' among art college friends. Recalls concealing her Catholic identity when sketching on the Shankill Road. Describes budding relationship with John, her future husband, whom she had known since childhood. Recounts her keenness to complete her education before contemplating marriage and how John's being in Manchester led to her gaining an English teaching qualification in Birmingham. Explains: 'I wasn't an economic migrant, you know, it was just how things fell. I could've gone anywhere'. | | | |
| 01:00:00–01:09:59 | Recalls moving to Manchester to join John and her first post in a Catholic school in Cheetham Hill. Notes that, as the only one to leave NI, she is 'the black sheep' | | | |

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| | among her siblings. Remembers her mother constantly encouraging her to move back and states that she would have done so had her two sons not been at school. Describes the couple's early life in Manchester, including John's various jobs. Notes that emigration was common in her part of Tyrone. |
| 01:10:00–01:19:59 | Recalls first impressions of Manchester, which she found to be 'very industrial and very smoky'. She and John bought a house together in Prestwich, where they continue to live 49 years later. Describes English people as 'polite' but reserved and states that most of her friends in Manchester were also from Ireland. Recalls that job options were fairly limited, but reveals that she enjoyed teaching in Catholic schools, feeling more at home there due to their 'Irish streak'. |
| 01:20:00–01:29:59 | Discusses Irish emigrant culture in Manchester and speaks of the freedom she feels in expressing her Irishness there: 'I know that I never could've expressed my Irishness as well in Tyrone as I can here'. Discusses her sons' relationship with their Irish heritage and their childhood visits to NI. Recalls her reaction to some events during the Troubles, including seeing the army's arrival in Belfast shortly before she left NI in 1969: 'they were coming up in army lorries and Saracen cars, whatever, up, up Royal Avenue, and driving towards City Hall'. |
| 01:30:00–01:39:59 | Remembers closely following the news from NI during her early years in England, as well as regular phone calls with family. Discusses paramilitary assassinations in her area of Tyrone. Reflects on the causes of violence during the early Troubles: 'both sides got so entrenched'. Recalls receiving threatening phone calls at the Manchester Irish Centre in the aftermath of IRA bombings in the 1970s. Believes that her accent made her an object of suspicion and recounts taunts from her pupils in the aftermath of the Loughgall ambush of 1987. |
| 01:40:00–01:49:59 | Discusses her stance on NI politics during the Troubles, stating her view that communication between all sides was essential to achieve peace. Briefly mentions the potential impact of Brexit on NI peace process. Claims that Irish people in GB have frequently been scapegoated as political agitators or troublemakers: 'it's very easy blaming somebody'. Considers the strange predicament of Protestant migrants from NI, who would have been regarded as Irish despite considering themselves British. |
| 01:50:00–01:59:59 | Asserts that Southern Irish emigrants generally did not want to discuss the Troubles: 'they just thought that's them up there fighting with themselves or whatever'. Criticises Southern Catholics for their indifference and lack of solidarity with Catholics in NI: 'I said you have your government, you have a certain independence and whatever. We wanted that too'. Remembers writing letters to her mother during her early years in England and bringing home comforts, such as soda bread, back to Manchester. Begins recalling an incident during one NI visit when she came under paramilitary gunfire in her car. |
| 02:00:00–02:09:59 | Remembers her sons being dubbed 'Brits' during visits to Tyrone. Reflects that NI could be a dangerous place for English-born youngsters who might have been mistaken for British soldiers. Discusses the continued importance of religion in her life and her work with the Legion of Mary, which continued until 1987. Stresses the importance of the Catholic community in helping her feel at home in Manchester: 'It wasn't so much about faith, it was friendship'. Reflects on her pleasure at the emergence of the peace process, but also her continued sadness for the families of Troubles victims. |
| 02:10:00–02:19:59 | Outlines her community work with Irish emigrants in Manchester through organisations such as Irish Community Care and Irish in Britain. Discusses the Irish government's growing engagement with the Irish diaspora in GB and its increased financial support for cultural activities during the Celtic Tiger era. |

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| | Reflects on her original decision to emigrate, stating that she has 'no regrets' and that moving 'really widened my horizons'. Explains that she and John now spend almost half of their time in Tyrone, having bought and renovated a house there. |
| 02:20:00–02:29:59 | Reflects on how moving to England has changed her, explaining that she now has a broader, more international view of the world, as well as a keen ongoing interest in developments in NI. States that her family in NI are desperate to avoid any kind of return to conflict. Recalls an incident when her brother went missing and her mother's terror that he may be found 'dead in a ditch somewhere'. Mentions the family tensions provoked by the killing of her brother-in-law's nephew for allegedly being an informer by the infamous Stakeknife, the codename of an alleged British agent within the IRA. Remembers continually worrying about her family in NI, dreading a phone call containing bad news. |
| 02:30:00–02:39:59 | Expresses the belief that living in England has kept her healthily distanced from the NI conflict. Recalls a return visit to NI during which she confronted a soldier from Manchester who was on duty outside her mother's house. Speaks of questioning other young soldiers back in Manchester about their activities in NI. Reflects that Tyrone remains her ultimate home, it being 'where the heart is' and where she wishes to be buried, while Manchester is her 'practical home'. |
| 02:40:00–02:44:22 | Expresses her desire to relocate to Tyrone, but explains that she and John's respective illnesses make this unlikely due to longer NHS waiting lists in NI. Emphasises that, despite living in England for five decades, she has 'never lost touch' with her roots. Ends by recalling gifting a bag of turf from Tyrone to a Manchester friend of Irish descent, for whom turf has nostalgic connotations. |