

ACROSS THE IRISH SEA

BY PAM SCHWEITZER FOR AGE EXCHANGE THEATRE

ORIGINAL CAST: DONAL COX, DENISE HIRST, MANDY McILWAINE, ORMONDE WATERS. 1987-8

2nd RUN CAST: JANET BAMFORD, EAMON MAGUIRE, NELL PHOENIX, FRASER HOYLE. 1994

CEILIDH TO OPEN

SONG: THE COTTAGE BY THE LEE

Tis well I know that often folk keep wondering
 When in my eyes a far off look they see
 What can it be the cause of all my dreaming
 What is this dream so very dear to me?
 And truth to tell, 'tis often I go roaming
 In dreams along the road of memory
 To where my heart will find its consolation
 Within that lovely cottage by the Lee.
 Yes that's my dream my lovely dream of homeland
 And tho' I thought a rover I could be
 It's soon I found I left my heart behind me
 Within that lovely cottage by the Lee.

Kitty: I was born outside a little town called Kildorrery in County Cork, Southern Ireland. Beautiful it was. We had one room and a large kitchen. It was in a little gate lodge.

Tom: Our father worked as a sadler on the estate. It was owned by a wealthy English family. Well, all the big houses were occupied by English people.

Josie: The cottage had very thick walls and it was warm. There was an enormous open fire where the turf was laid down on the floor. The turf used to glow a beautiful red colour and it'd give out a terrific heat.

Kitty: I was the youngest of eight children, six boys and two girls. There were two beds in the room and we slept with children in the foot and the head and someone had to sleep in the bed with my parents.

Tom: We had what was called a settle bed, which was sort of like a closed in settee which was a seat in the day, and at night you opened it up and the mattress and the clothes were folded in there.

Kitty: When we were very little, we'd be put in the room, we were supposed to be in bed, but of course we were sitting up listening. There were a lot of the old Irish songs.

Josie: My father had some lovely old songs. He sang beautifully.

SONG: SKIBBEREEN

Kitty: Our mother could sing but she never sang in front of other people. She was very shy, like me (c) I was very shy. My youngest brother Peter used to recite:

Peter: I'm my mother's little man
 I'm the chief of all the clan
 I know there's Ned and Ted and Fred
 But if you please , 'tis I'm the head
 I tend the walks, I sweep the floor
 I go on errands to the store
 And any day I'd walk a mile
 To see my pretty mother smile
 You needn't laugh because I'm small
 Just being big sir isn't all
 I'm as good a man as any man
 If I do everything I can.

Kitty: Mother was a very industrious woman and she reared chicken and turkey and all that sort of thing. She was always hard working and used to stay up half the night sewing for us. At one o'clock in the morning, you'd hear the sewing machine going for us.

Josie: You remember the flour came in large sacks, Irish Purity it was called, and there was a picture on the sack of an Irish colleen with a green dress and a white apron and a red shawl. Over her arm she carried a whicker basket with a sheaf of wheat laying across it. When you unpicked these sacks and boiled them they made sheets for the bed, and mother would make our underwear from them. It took many boilings to remove the picture from the sacks, so I often went to school with "Irish Purity" across my back or chest.

Kitty: My sister Josie was five years older than me, so she helped my mother a lot.

Josie: We had the little hand irons (c) you had to heat them on the fire (c) well of course they got dirty while they were heating, so you'd clean them on a sod of turf and a piece of cloth, yes (c) and by the time you got it clean, you see half the heat was gone out of it.

(SKILLET POT TUNE BEHIND FOLLOWING:)

Kitty: From when I was little, I used to watch me mother making the whomemal bread. I remember I was so small, I couldn't reach up to the table, so I used to stand on a stool and er..

Mother: Put the flour in a basin and mix it up with salt and mix it all up and then put the milk in.

Kitty: Sour milk we used to have to use, you know, not fresh milk.....

Mother: Sour milk and then mix it all up and put flour on it then put flour on the table, and put the towel on it and just flatten it out.

Kitty: We had a very heavy steel pan and we used to have to put that on the fire and you'd have to have a certain heat under it not to burn the cake, so you'd leave it on for a while, then you'd have to turn it. It was very nice bread. I used to love watching me mam do it so I was able to do it then you see.

SONG: Oh did you ever eat caulcannon that's made of milky cream
With greens and thickened scallions blended like a picturein
your dreams
Or did you ever make a hole on top to hold the melting flake
Of the flowery flavoured buttermilk your mother used to make
Oh you did yes you did, so did she and so did I
And the more I think about it, the nearer I am to cry,
Oh weren't those the happy days when troubles we knew not
When your mother made caulcannon in that little skillet pot.

(WHISTLE CONTINUES WITH: LAMBS ON THE GREEN HILLS)

Tom: At home I helped on the estate where my father worked with the horses. He'd take the horses from one fair to another, and when he'd delivered the horses, he'd walk back. My father often walked anything up to 40 miles, having delivered the horses. I used to love the spring time of the year. Because this is the time when the sheep are having lambs, the baby lambs are born, and I used to love to go up in the morning amd see a couple of lambs born. And I used to come in and say;

"Are there any lambs this morning ?"

And they'd say;

"There's two, there's three, there's four."

And then when I come in from school, I used to go up in the evening, and I used to love to see maybe twenty or thirty lambs

jumping around the fields, as if they've got a fair spring. So that was it; that was my first interest in life and I still have the same interest.

Josie: The best part was when I was a little one, before my mother goill. We used to go around the fields and pick flowers. We used to play, and I've never heard anyone saying it, but we used to call it Cabby. We used to go out in the fields, and a lot of people would throw out broken things like cups and saucers or jugs, and we used to put it all around in the grass, and we'd make it look very nice, all the different colours. Just that...we used to call it cabby, and I used to love doing that.

Kitty: We used to always love to go in the fields. They used to have a lot of rivers in the fields. We used to take our shoes off, walk in the river, you know, when it's a real hot day, walk in the river. We used to love to do that.

Josie: Or if we had a storm, we used to go along the roads and watch the steam come up.

Tom: There were about five houses around us, and they were mostly herdsmen and farming people and one or two railwaypeople. There was a railway cottage that an old signalman was in and his wife Mary Anne.

Josie: We used to pester the life out of them. I remember one time when they'd gone to mass on a Sunday, we went into their cottage. We had a couple of hen turkeys but we didn't have a cock turkey.

Kitty: We brought our turkeys over to Mary Anne's house in the kitchen and we thought her cock turkey would tread the hens and we'd be all right, we'd have young turkeys.

Josie: Sure the old cock turkey he started to fly around the bloomin' house and knocked everything over. Knocked off all the Delft and all the china stuff that was on the shelves, so of course we nearly died.

Kitty: We had to clear up and come out, and bring our turkeys with us.

Josie: Then when Mary Ann came home from Mass, she comes over to our house and she says:

Mary Anne: My God I don't know who was over in my place, the whole place is upset. The turkey must have flown up on the shelves.

Kitty: And we were busting laughing.

Tom: Pancake night, we'd go around to the people that was rich...well they were rich in comparision to us...and we'd sing outside their door,

SONG "Old Jack Larkins, Silk and satin,
Give the poor man something,
A bit of bread, a roasted egg,
A pancake or a dumpling."

Kitty: So we came to a doctor's house, and my brother said:

Tom: Go behind the corner and I'll share with you what I'll get.

Josie: So we did as we were asked.

SONG REPEAT SOLO, STOPPING ABRUPTLY

Josie: He came behind the corner and he was saturated from his head to his toes.

Tom: The doctor's after throwing a basin of water all over me.

Josie: I liked Hallowe'en. That was a wonderful occasion. You had barm brack and then you'd bob for apples. You'd hang your stocking out the window and the boy that picked up your stocking you'd marry.

Kitty: St Patricks Day was a great day in Ireland. There'd be all parades and all the school children used to walk in the parade, and everybody had to wear green. I remember my mother knitted a green frock for me you know top and bottom. And we all used to wear ribbons cause I had long hair. And we'd go up in the fields and pick the shamrock. It'd be a good day you know.

Josie: Oh Christmas was marvellous. Me cousin Pat used to come home from England every Christmas and that's where all our presents used to come from. He always used to bring us something lovely. He'd have two cases packed.

Kitty: My sister Josie used to take the cases and put them down in the bedroom so that no one would be at them. My youngest brother Peter, he was a little devil and he'd know there'd always be something good in Pat's case you see, so he went down and he opened the cases and rooted every blooming thing out and he'd know what was in them before anyone. And then one night Josie went down and she caught him at it and he got a damn good trouncing. (SHE DOES SO)

Josie: Get out of it, ye little devil you!

SCHOOL BELL

- Kitty: We went to a village school.
- Josie: As I went off to school it would be "When you get back in the evening I want you to do the churning." If I went to school three days a week I was lucky. I didn't get much education.
- Tom: If I stayed home from school it wasn't because I had a pain in my head or toe, it was I'd got to take a horse or two to the forge, or I'd be picking up stones in the fields. We had to go out to the meadows...with a bucket and pick stones up, there was turnips....we had to thin them...go down all those long fields thinning out the turnips...
- Kitty: There was a race from the time we left home to the time we went to the school door we never stopped running. I don't know what would happen if we were late. (SCHOOL BELL)
- Tom: They'd come from there and there and there. From small farms all round. There was a crowd that came from right across the bog, the Barretts, three or four of them. Then there was the O'Briens. They'd all come riding down on asses or donkeys.
- Josie: They were always spotlessly clean these children, although they were very poorly clad.
- Kitty: And of course at lunchtime we used to be all out on top of the donkeys. They used to tie them up at the back of the school and we used to be all having a ride up and down the road with the donkeys.
- Josie: They were very strict at the school. You were expected to be there unless you were very ill.
- Tom: Yes, my God it was strict. I got plenty of walloping there. Walloped with those pointers for not knowing your catechism, or not knowing your sums or not being able to spell or something like that, silly things. I was hopeless at Irish.
- Kitty: Our teacher was Miss Tool and she had a great spot in her heart for our family because she had her eye on my uncle Dan.
- Josie: Miss Tool was a man and a woman bashed into one. Well she had to cope with big farming boys. They were hefty great lads and they took some managing.
- Kitty: I remember one day getting into some tricks at my desk and she called for order and it didn't come. So she had an ash plant.

She had cane, an ordinary cane and she had an ashplant as well. You know, swishy swishy.

Miss Tool: (WEILDING CANE) I said order.

Kitty: She went down to my desk and she said,

Miss Tool: "I'll move the legs from under you." (SHE DOES SO)

Kitty: And the desk fell over and I was all covered in ink.

Tom: They expected a high standard. Miss Tool'd give us a lot of poetry and reading in Irish.

Gaelic POEM version plus English:

POEM: Have you seen my little boy + Gaelic version
He was going down the road to school

Tom: You'd be taught on Monday and expected to know it by Friday. We were sat in a horseshoe with the boys in one half and the girls in the other. There were thirty or forty to a class. There were questions on memory, mental arithmetic, spelling and recitation.

POEM: (cont): He had no shoes on his feet + Gaelic version
No hat nor stockings " "
My life, my heart's delight my little boy. " "
(SCHOOL BELL)

Tom: We brought our lunch with us, a couple of slices of bread with jam, a slice of home(c)made cake. A bottle of milk.

SONG: Oh did you ever take potato cake or Boxy to the school
Tucked underneath your oxtar with your book your slate and rule
And when the teacher wasn't looking what a great big bite you'd take
Of the flowery sweet potato cake your mother used to make.
Oh you did yes you did , so did he and so did I
And the more I think about it, the nearer I am to cry
Oh weren't those the happy days when troubles we knew not
When your mother made caulcannon in that little skillet pot.

GLORIA ON PIPES

Kitty: You made your First Communion when you were seven. Me mam's sister was livin in America and she sent me a lovely beautiful frock. 'Twas a lovely frock, I was so proud, you know. It was all lace. There was a lace cape, no sleeves but lace cape and it was all beautiful, a wreath and veil, shoes an' all. I got the whole set, and I felt so lovely, it was the first time I ever

had anything really nice.

Tom: But when you were making your First Communion they were very strict. You had to get one of your friends, or an older sister, and she'd have to go over the catechism with you. (ACT OUT)

Kitty: And you had to go to her every evening to make sure you knew your catechism, and you had to learn all that off by heart.

Josie: Who made you?

Kitty: God made me.

Josie: Why did God make you?

Kitty: God made me to know him, love him and serve him in this world and to be happy with him forever in the next. (JOSIE PROMPTS HER WHILE SHE DRESSES FOR COMMUNION)

Josie: And then the morning you make your first communion the priest shall ask you whatever question he wants to ask you and you have to know it all off.

Kitty: It would have been a crime if you were to make a mistake. But it was nice you know.

Josie: When they see you dressed up as a young communicant you know they'll give you a couple of bob in your purse. So here's a little bag with a string on it.

Kitty: And they'd come over and say:

Man: There's a shilling.

Kitty: Or if you were lucky:

Man: There's a half a crown.

Josie: If they saw you and they knew you they'd give you a couple of bob and you might have two or three pound at the end of the day and you thought you were a rich woman.

Kitty: I'd give it to me mother and say buy me a new pair of shoes or something, or keep it for yourself.

Josie: At that time children weren't so fond of money, they liked to share it out.

Tom: I can remember my Confirmation twice as well. That was a

great big day. Oh my God we were up all night. We must be washed about twenty times. We had our hair done and we had new suits, the first one I ever had. I thought I was going to heaven the next day.

Kitty: Oh I had a nice white frock, I can see the frock, with three flounces on it, and with flowers going around the crown of it.

Josie: My mother was a very good sewer and she made the dresses for me and me sister. The two frocks were the very same. And we had our photograph taken. (POSE)

Kitty: Everyone was shivering in our frocks in the cold weather. I mean you were used to wearing a coat and a cardigan, but of course we were so fanciful we didn't want to wear a cardigan, we wanted everyone to see us in the white frocks.

(PROCESSIONAL MUSIC BEHIND)

Kitty: For the Confirmation, you see the Bishop would only come down once every three or four years, and I was kind of young to be confirmed. My sister was confirmed at the same time.

HYMN: To Jesus heart all burning
With fervent love for men
My heart with fondest yearning
Shall raise its joyous strain

Josie: We were so full of giggles, and we were in the chapel and I'd be looking round at her and I'd make faces or something and the two of us, we were shaking with the laughing, you know that kind of thing when you get into a fit of laughter and you can't stop. We had the whole place laughing.

Kitty: We were examined by the bishop.

Bishop: What is an occasion of sin?

All: An occasion of sin is any person, place or thing which entices us to sin.

Bishop: You girl, what's the meaning of the redemption?

Kitty: I was shaking when he started asking the questions.

Josie: He pointed out who he wanted. (NUDGES Kitty)

Bishop: What is the meaning of exorcism?

Josie: Or some question like that, you know.

- Bishop: When did our lord rise from the dead?
- Kitty: You wouldn't know who was going to be asked the questions.
- (REPRISE HYMN MUSIC BEHIND FOLLOWING SPEECH)
- Josie: Some of them was never asked at all. I was asked, I forget what it was, some silly thing I suppose. I think I knew it anyway.
- Kitty: Then we had a confirmation party.
- Josie: Nicely made sandwiches.
- Kitty: And us sitting down at a nice posh table in the Church hall.
- Josie: Cups all along the table and all sorts of fruit and sweet cakes and jelly and custard.
- SONG: My aunt Jane she took me in,
She gave me tea out of her wee tin.
She gave me cakes with sugar on top,
And three black buns out of her wee shop.
- Kitty: It was a cold winter that year, and we used to go up the hill, you know in the real frost on the hill road, and we used to go up to the top and slide down, and the moon'd be shining and we'd stay there for hours playing. Come on out Josie..
- Josie: The others were all out playing, but I couldn't. Being the oldest girl, I had to help me mam. She wasn't a trained midwife, but she brought a lot of the local children into the world and I'd go with her. She'd lay out the dead people as well. (WHISTLE, CLARE'S DRAGOONS) I remember the wakes very well indeed, seeing them laid out in their beds, in white, and there'd be white linen. And the candles. You'd get a piece of cake and bread and jam. There was always plenty of drink for the grownups at the wakes. And there was always stories of how good the dead person was, and also about the part they played in the Irish freedom struggle. It was really quite exciting. I think I learned the whole history of my homeland at wakes. (END WHISTLE)
- Kitty: I had a very happy childhood in spite of, you know, half the time no milk in your tea, or maybe butter on your bread. We had a very happy childhood. How we came to leave that house is a story on its own.
- Tom: The family my father worked for sold off their great house in the country and they went into Cork City, and new people took over,

Hodgins. They were what we called black protestants; they were bitter. And this Hodgins used to go around on his big horse, and I'm not exaggerating when I say that if you were on the road, and you didn't more or less climb up on the fence to let him and his horses pass by, he whipped you. Yes! I remember getting a crack of the whip.

The IRA had burnt down some of their property, because they were involved in recruiting for the British army round there. Well my father wouldn't have anything to do with this burning whatsoever, but all the families on the estate were identified more or less with the republican cause. (KIDS SING: Tramp tramp tramp, the boys are marching....behind this.) Well in that area, I think you'd travel a long way before you'd find an Irish born person that didn't have nationalist opinions. Shortly after Hodgins took over, all the families that lived in tied houses were served with eviction notices.

Josie: Well, he came to our cottage on a Sunday morning, and said:

Hodgins: I'll be coming up this evening and I shall lock the house up. I want everything out. Everything.

Josie: We had a bit of furniture and we placed it up against the flank wall of the house we were living in, until he gave us orders:

Hodgins: Get that stuff away from the house.

Kitty: So it lay along the side of the hedgerow, waiting for somebody to come and take it.

(SKIBBEREEN BEHIND THIS ON PIPES)

Josie: It was absolutely pouring out with rain, but eventually my father managed to round up a horse and cart and he ferried the bits of furniture and everything into a house in the main town, which was Fermoy.

Kitty: I remember it just the same as if it was yesterday. I was just getting on for ten years of age. My family talked and wept about it for years and years after.

Josie: Through a cousin, my father got a piece of land and a little house on the side of the Galty Mountains, near Kilbehenny, and we moved there. Oh God, it was a huge difference, completely different.

Tom: We'd come from quite a rich place which was well tilled with plenty of fat cattle, good land and big houses.

Josie: This place now was a mountainy place with bits of farms, thinly populated and there wasn't much doing there.

Kitty: Josie'd been going with a fella named Joe Flanagan back in Kildorrery. Joe'd come over on the bicycle every night and sit round the fire with us.

Josie: In the winter evenings, I'd be sitting at the side of the fire knitting. Kitty would be here, and me father would be here the other side reading the paper and talking all sorts of politics with Joe.

Kitty: So Josie couldn't settle in at all in the new place, because she missed Joe. She used to look after us and do theknitting and the cleaning and helping me mother.

Josie: Me mam had fallen ill. With her in bed most of the time, I'd everything to do, and three brothers still at home to look after.

My mother knew by the sounds in the kitchen just what I was doing. I was shocking for sugar, I could blend up a half cup of sugar with water and eat it. If she heard that going on.....

Mother: Josie, would you get in here.... (SMACK)

Josie: Well I usually used to get a clump on the ear.

When Mam was ill, she could be a wicked woman. I wanted to get away from home because all it was at home was hard work and no money. I wanted to work in a city. We used to have the Irish National paper, the Irish Independent, and there was advertisements for Sanitoriums and hospitals, and I used to hidethe paper hoping that I would be able to apply to one of those.

One day a distant cousin of ours, Bridie Wilson came to visit us, and she was matron of the Richmond Asylum in Dublin. So she said:

Bridie: How are you getting on Josie?'

Josie: I said I'm just peppering to get away from home, I must get away. She said:

Bridie: What are you thinking of doing?'

Josie: I'll do anything, I'll just do anything. Bridie, could you make room for me in your establishment?

- Bridie: Oh Josie, you wouldn't like it, oh no you would not like it. I guarantee you wouldn't like it.
- Josie: Well I said I'll chance it if you'll take me.
- Bridie: I'll send a form to your mother to fill in, and you'll have to get the priest to sign it.
- Josie: So the form came and the parish priest signed it.
- Priest: I'll give you a good reference but I don't think you'll like it.
- Josie: So I said I'm going anyway. If I can get in I'm going.
- Priest: Well, Bridie Wilson'll do the best she can for you, I know that.
- Josie: I filled in the form, saying I'd been educated at a convent. I hadn't, but there was a bit of status about convent education. That part wasn't filled in when the priest signed it. I was accepted, and I went off to Dublin. (PAUSE) I cried day and night for three weeks. (MUSIC LINK CONCERTINA)
- Josie: Bridie put me in the ladies ward at first for to try and get me settled in and that was in the evening. The next morning was breakfast and there was one big dining room, huge dining room for all these people, all as mad as hatters and fighting amongst themselves. Bridie told me on no account to talk about politics or religion. It was a mad house. There were no drugs of any description. No treatment at all, except the straight jacket and the padded cell. They hadn't got cups and saucers, they had bowls and those bowls were flying here there and everywhere. I ran like hell. I got to my bedroom and cried and cried. (MUSIC LINK. JOSIE PULLS HERSELF TOGETHER AND THEN WRITES HOME TO MUM) Dear Mam, The uniform is blue and white. Very attractive. Our stockings and shoes are made on the premises by the patients. I shall get 30 shillings a month and I will be fed and clothed so I will send money home. Hope you are well. Love, Josie.
- Kitty: (READING LETTER) Hope you are well. Love Josie. So Josie was well settled in Dublin. That's good. And we soon got to know everybody around and everybody knew us. After a couple of years there, one of my older brothers, Gerry, got married and brought his wife home to live in the house, so they took over looking after me mam when she was ill.
- Tom: Me dad was a great gardener, so after a lot of hard work, we had a lovely garden, and we had everything in it.

(WHISTLE BEHIND THIS: GARDEN WHERE THE PRATIES GROW)

Kitty: We'd the most beautiful kind of a hilly place there, and it was all full of roses and lillies and all sorts of sweet pea and every kind of beautiful flowers you could mention. And then we had lovely strawberries, we had raspberries, we had blackcurrants, we had gooseberries.

Tom: And then we had the vegetables. We'd have, well everything you could think of in the line of vegetables. Carrots, celery, parsnips, cabbage, peas and beans, everything you could think of, and then at the very end of the garden we had the potatoes, rows and rows of potatoes.

Kitty: We were never short of food. We only had to buy meat and bread and butter. We had a cow down there as well, and a pig and plenty of hens.

Tom: I went to a new school then run by the Christian Brothers. They were a religious order and they were very hard men. Their psychology was to give you a pasting if you didn't know your lesson. You learned your lesson or you were crucified. They were very, very hard men indeed.

I remember in one of our classes we were standing around the blackboard doing algebraic cuts. The brother'd put up a sum, and would call out to one of us to finish it off and to find a solution to it. The lad next to me and I were tricking and jostling each other, and he turned round and caught me. He pulled me in and he hit me and banged my head against the board. I have the mark around my head as a souvenir of that incident. And he looked round for my companion in crime, and he couldn't identify him. We all had to go sit down and there was a pool of water round this chap, just the sheer terror he worked himself into. Sheer terror. That's what it was like.

If you went home and told your father;

"I got clattered today by the Christian Brothers."

he gave you a clatter, on the grounds that if you deserved to get it from the Christian Brothers, then he was going to give you another one, just to show you that, don't do it again, whatever you did, don't do it again.

There were a small element in the class who he never touched at all, and they were the people from the right side of the track sort of thing, the shop keepers' sons and doctor's sons and rich people's sons, they were never touched. It's only afterwards that you realise that you know. But through that brother I took a

terrific dislike to school, I hated the thought of going to school.

Kitty: I went to the convent school there. We were all taught by nuns. We had very good teachers there. They were very dedicated. Considering the poverty there at that time, they gave us a really good solid foundation. But of course sex education was unknown in those days.

One of the nuns called me one day and said to me:

Nun: Come along Katherine, There's a book we've got to read.
(MARCHES HER OFF)

Kitty: So I was taken into a room and was sat down on one side of the table and she sat on the other with her rosary in her hands and said to me:

Nun: (PAINED) Read that book cover to cover.

Kitty: And I read it from cover to cover. She never explained a thing to me. I sat there in front of her reading this book and it didn't mean a thing to me, well it was the facts of life. I can't remember anything about it, I just remember reading it. You went to these retreats and you heard these sermons:

Priest: You must never sit alone in a room with a boy.

Kitty: And I didn't understand a word of what they were saying. I remember one particular retreat, somebody obviously who knew better than I did:

Priest: You must never sit alone with a boy. (FRIEND COLLAPSES WITH GIGGLES) Who tittered??? (MORE FROZEN GIGGLES)

Kitty: Every one of us got six slaps because nobody would own up to who laughed. The one thing you were taught was that:

ALL: (RECITE) You should never be alone with a boy.

Kitty: And I thought that's how you got pregnant!

(CONCERTINA LINK: COURTING IN THE KITCHEN)

Tom: When I left school, there wasn't much to do, so I went to work for a relative who managed the local garage. I wore these big brown overalls and I did three years as an apprentice in the garage. Well, it's what they call an apprenticeship. They don't pay you. You serve three years for nothing.

Kitty: Mind you, he had a girlfriend around this time, a friend

of mine, Mary.

Tom: There was a ritual, a very clearly defined ritual. The boys didn't chase the girls. It was the other way round. If some girl fancied you, she didn't come up to you and say:

Mary: I fancy you.

Tom: No, her friend came up and said:

Kitty: Mary was asking for you.

(TUNE ON WHISTLE BEHIND THIS: SALLY GARDENS)

Tom: This was the really important phrase, the gateway to paradise. So it was up to you to bump into the girl accidentally, maybe carry her bag or something. There's plenty of little lanes and byways where you brought your girl, and snatched the occasional kiss.

Kitty: My brothers were going to dances and things at this time, and their collars would have to be ironed until they shone. Tom was quite good, he used to take a turn at ironing his own trousers.

Tom: We would all be going to the dances on Sunday night (c) Sunday night was the big night for dances in Ireland. Living in a country place, the custom there was to have open air dances at the crossroads on fine summer evenings. People used to come from at least three miles this way and that, different roads, and there'd be hundreds of people there. We built a concrete platform at the crossroads, and there would be a couple of accordions, and maybe a fiddle, and there would be a lot of dancing.

(REEL HERE)

Kitty: You had your Sunday dress on, and fixed your hair up, and that was great entertainment. You saw the boys and things, you know. I wasn't very successful in the dance because I was very heavy on my feet. It was like wheeling a carthorse around the floor. A couple of fellows'd ask me to dance, (well, I had sort of golden hair in waves) but they soon put me down again. I suppose I tripped them up. The men would be on one side and the women would be on the other side. Well they wouldn't ask you to dance when they were sober. Only when they were a bit merry.

There might be some particular lad that you put you eye on, and he'd never ask you to dance. He'd go off with somebody else.

Tom: There was a lot of dancing then, and there was pictures too,

but you had a bit of a way to go for that. Every year, for a bit of excitement, I went with a friend to Croke Park in Dublin for the All Ireland Hurling final. And that used to be good. They'd have the bands playing you know, yeah. Well, we had a few drinks and all the place was happy and singing songs. If Dublin won, it would be Molly Malone, and when Cork won, it was The Boys of Fairhill. (SONG FAIRHILL) I took Josie with me to one of the matches. When she got time off from work at the asylum.

Josie: Dublin was a lovely place. (TO TOM) But I'm still not very happy with the work in the Richmond Asylum.

Tom: So what are you going to do about it?

Josie: I've written off to a mental hospital in Epsom in England.

Tom: Oh you have, have you? Well good luck Josie.

Josie: They wrote back to say they'd accept me. They sent the letter to Bridie Wilson, and I hadn't even told her I was applying. She was wild with me.

Bridie: After putting up with all your wingeing and crying and sniffing, and you're just manageable now, and you're going to leave us. Well you can go to England and you can go to hell.

Josie: That is what she said to me, and I always meant to write back to her and tell her that I've come to hell, and it's not a bad place at all. (MUSIC LINK)

Dear Mam and Dad. Hope you are all well. The people in Epsom are the kindest people I've ever met. It is a hospital, not a madhouse, as different as chalk from cheese to Richmond. The patients are properly looked after and receive treatment. I am studying for my nursing exams. The nurses are a very jolly lot. Last week I went with a little nurse from Waterford to see the Epsom Derby on our afternoon off. We ordered a taxi to take us there, but the man at the gate said:

Gateman: You're wasting your time. Taximen won't be bothered with you girls on the day of the Derby. You see the race season is the taxi man's harvest, taking the people up to the course.

Josie: So we legged it towards the race course. On the way, a big van delivering to the course stopped and the man said:

Man: Like a lift ladies?

Josie: And the little nurse from Waterford said:

- Nurse: What would matron say if she saw us going in that van?
- Josie: She'd be glad to get a lift, she'd take it too. So the van took us right to the grandstand. I'd got to get this money on for the different girls in the hospital, so I was bustling through to get to a bookmaker.
- Bookie: Pass me up that young lady before she kills herself or somebody else.
- Josie: So I got this grandstand view from the top of the bookmaker's car. (GALWAY RACES OR FOXHUNTERS TUNE AS THEY WATCH HORSES)
- Josie: So you see Mam and Dad, I am happy here. I am earning five pounds a month at the hospital, so I am sending you a postal order for two pounds, now I have my first month's wages. I think I would like to stay quite a while. Love from Josie.
- (MUSIC LINK: GREEN FIELDS OF CANADA)
- Tom: Back home in the country, I was getting to know some of the girls, but then they were all going away to America and England.
- Girl: We Irish are scattered all over the world. It's part of the Irish to travel. We can't all live in the nest. Somebody's got to get out.
- Tom: Well there was big families in every house and a lot of them had to go. So you said: "We'll follow them. We'll go somewhere too. We certainly won't find anything here." We were young and we'd been told about the great things overseas. I thought it would be a better life and great prospects.
- First opportunity I got, I packed a few things in a case and got ready to go to England. A few did say to me: You're going to find a big difference now going to England. But I said, "I won't because I've been away from home and in Dublin at the matches. At 17, I came over to Holyhead on the boat, well, more of a cattle boat really, a small narrow little boat, the Princess Maud, she went down in the end I think.
- TUNE OF MOUNTAINS OF MOURNE UNDER FOLLOWING:
- Tom: Well, this was before the war and I'd a job to get a job. There wasn't much going. I was taken on as a tea boy by some Irish workers digging drains. I'd to make their tea and fry rashers for ten or twelve men. I stuck that a couple of weeks living on whatever they'd give me. No cards, no nothing, no money only what they give you. (SUSPEND MUSIC) A couple of nights I walked round London all night when I hadn't a room. I

went up the West End round Shaftesbury Avenue, Coventry Street, and I got frightened by the ladies of the street when they approached me. I was afraid to talk to them, and I was afraid to run away in case people thought I'd done something, so I walked rather fast, and I didn't go that way again.

SONG: MOUNTAINS OF MOURNE..

Tom: Then I heard of a job in London at a massive engineering place down near Blackwall Tunnel, Delta Metal Works. It was the end of the world to me, red hot metal, the furnaces, the noise. There was a bunch of fellows there who hated me just because I was Irish. A week after I started, I was dipping copper into an acid tank to descale it, and this bloke shoved me from behind and my hand went into the acid bowl. It took every bit of skin off. Then I used to find half my stuff missing that I'd worked on the day before. (TO OTHERS) Somebody's been at my stuff. That's only half what I've done.

Man: Get out of it you Irish bastard. Why don't you go back home.

Tom: So I went for him. I've never been a violent man, but I gave him the biggest hammering he'd ever had.

Tom: Well the weather was picking up and so was the building trade, and I got taken on as an apprentice joiner with a building firm and I began to settle down. I found some good digs where there'd always be a good warm meal for me and a good bed. Eight years I stayed there.

There was another Irish fellow there. Sugar, we called him and he was always drinking. He had a dog, a French poodle, big black one, very tall. I used to stand at my window to hear Sugar sing. He had a wonderful voice. One night he was singing away to himself and the dog. And the dog was crying and Sugar was singing away. (DOGGY VERSION OF MOUNTAINS OF MOURNE) Next day I went in to see someone in the pub, and they said:

Man in pub: Did you hear what happened to Sugar the other night?
Well in the evening news it was:

Woman reading paper: Dog found a half crown for being drunk and disorderly.

Tom: The magistrate fined the dog. He said to the clerk of the court, Do you mean to say the dog was drunk? The clerk said Ah well, he was barking. The other was singing and the dog was barking. So the Judge said: Fine them a half a crown each. And that's a fact.

I 'd always try to get home to Ireland for Christmas to see the family. (RETURNING HOME AND HUGGING KITTY) Kitty! Have you finished school now?

Kitty: Yes, and I've got the school certificate in ten subjects.

Tom: You'll be wanting to find your freedom, a job and some money of your own.

Kitty: I was hoping to be a librarian, but I didn't get the only job that came up in that line.

Tom: I think it's probably who you know and not what you know.

Kitty: Someone else who had more clout got the job, and that irritated me no end.

Well an aunt of mine who I used to sit with in the afternoons saw a job advertised in the paper, and she wrote away for it and got me the job in England. I was to be (READS FROM PAPER) "a parlour maid in a private house in Virginia Water." It sounded a pretty place. Oh I couldn't get away quick enough.

My aunt gave me all sorts of good advice when I was coming away.

Aunt: Don't go in any dark places. Keep out in the lights and don't go anywhere away from the lights or you'll get into trouble.

Kitty: I took some underwear and a rainmac, a tweed coat, a pair of flat shoes and black stockings. Just one small suitcase. They would provide the uniform. My mother had to find the fare, so she sold a big fat pig and that bought the suitcase as well. My father said:

Father: If you go to that pagan country, you'll never darken my door again!!

Kitty: Well, I suppose a lot of Irish girls went wrong in England. They did get into trouble with the boys. Like Molly from down the crossroads. She was a bit funny after boys. She had to be transported home, and there was no welcome for her in Ireland.... Me mother was more easy going.

Mother: You don't have to stop there if you don't like it. Don't be unhappy over there. Just send word over and we'll bring you back. (HUG AND KISS) Pray God and his blessed Virgin Mother to carry you all the way through.

Kitty: I'd not travelled before. It was a great adventure for me.

I cycled to the bus with me case, and I left the cycle to be collected by Peter later on. I went by train to Dublin. I'd only once been on a train in my life before and I thought it was marvellous. I had to find me way to Dun Laoghaire. My aunt had just said,

Aunt: Follow the crowd. You'll be all right. Just follow the crowd.

Kitty: Well, I got to Dun Laoghaire all right, and I bought a postcard, a picture of the ship, and I can remember to this day what I wrote: Ready for off now, Cheerio. Kitty.

Kitty: I didn't know for a long time, but I heard later that me mother cried for a week when I left. She said:

Mother: I've lost her forever.

MOTHER'S SONG: (ACCOMPANIED ON PIPES)

On Carrigdhoun the heath is brown,
The clouds are dark o'er Ardnalee,
And many a stream comes rushing down
To swell the angry Ownabwee.
The moaning blast is sweeping fast
Thro' many a leafless tree,
And I'm alone, for she is gone,
My colleen is flown, ochone machree!

Man: Did you hear the tale about the girl who was coming over on the boat, and it was very stormy. She was opening her handbag and all her papers and the whole lot fell out in the sea. So she came up here and she didn't know what to do; her reference and all was gone. So she went to the priest, and the priest, he wrote out another reference for her;

"Mary Murphy," he says, "had a good character when she left Ireland; but she lost it coming over on the boat."

Kitty: I arrived at Euston Station completely alone, not like a lot of the other girls who came over in groups. There was just me, and all these people speaking in a foreign language at Euston. I went up to someone to ask the way to Virginia Water. I had the address and they said,

Stranger: "You've got to go to Waterloo."

Kitty: I walked from Euston to Waterloo with my case asking every step of the way. Most of them didn't understand what I was

saying anyway. When I arrived at the station at Virginia Water, I had two and six. That's all the money I had until I got my first pay packet. My first pay packet was one pound ten shillings.

The lady I went to work for, Mrs. Salmon, she was very old, very quiet and very, very strict.

I was given a funny little attic bedroom to sleep in. A little tiny chest of drawers at the side of the room. Single bed and a little mirror standing on the drawers. Nothing else. That night I was so lonely. I was lost really. I cried and cried and cried.

I didn't want to wake up. (CONCERTINA LINK WHILE SHE DRESSES AS PARLOURMAID)

I was up at seven in the morning, got straight into parlourmaid's uniform. It was a blue frock with short sleeves, a white apron like a nurse's apron with a bib and straps. For the afternoon uniform there was a black dress and a little frilly apron and cap. I got the early morning tea trays ready. Then down to lay the breakfast table while cook was seeing to the breakfast.

Cook: You wait at the table, and then bring the dishes back. You'll then wash them up and the early morning tea things and the silver. Then you make the beds, see that the bathroom is clean, clean the silver, lay for lunch and wait at lunch.

Kitty: They didn't take any notice of you. It was like being a fly on the wall. They spoke quite freely in front of you and you were expected to keep it all confidential. You served the meal and when they'd finished the dining room was cleared. It was brought back into the kitchen. You only had what there was left after they'd finished. And if it was something they liked, and had gone pretty heavy on, well hard luck!

Cook: You eat in the kitchen, you don't eat with them.

Kitty: Where you worked in the kitchen, that's where you sat down and had your food all on your own. And unless the cook was good and heated it up, you ate it cold. Christmas come, anytime it was the same.

(SONG REPRISE CARRIGDHOUN)

Kitty: Come St Patrick's day there'd be the shamrock and the card from me mother. She missed me. That was heart breaking. It used to be such a day at home you know. It was awful sad to be on your own, you know in a strange country.

Sometimes I'd go out and talk to the Irish workers on the road. They'd be out doing a lot of work there on the side there. And

somebody on the other side you know, they saw me and told Mrs. Salmon.

Mrs. S: You are not to go outside that door while we are out.

Kitty: You were on call all the time. So, there wasn't any privacy. She was a woman who never gave you praise. I used to sing at me work.

Mrs. Salmon: Stop that noise please. I have a headache.

Kitty: She wouldn't appreciate little things I did for her at all. I was very choked. I thought I'm not doing that any more but I still done it all the same.

Once I went to open the front door, and Mrs. Salmon got there before me. The gentleman coming in said:

Gentleman: Who was that?

Kitty: And I heard her say:

Mrs. Salmon: Oh it was only the maid.

Kitty: I felt demeaned somehow. To think there were people coming into the house but it wasn't necessary for them to say hello to me. I think you get cowed down when you're in service, I mustn't do that and you can't do that.

I think I missed my freedom most of all. When you're working in a place for a living, you've got to abide by their times. And you can't just down tools and go off. I'm going off for a couple of hours. I didn't make friends at all outside the job.

I wasn't very happy there but I had to put up with it for a while. I wasn't going back to Ireland. I wanted to make a new life for myself.

(ORGAN MUSIC ON PIPES)

Well it was a help when I found the church. I used to get up there once a week. Sunday morning 7.30 Mass. If you gave up going to mass, you had nothing to grip on to at all.

One day, it was my afternoon off work, I was down in St. Saviours praying. I was crying up at the altar rail, and the Cannon came over to me and said:

Canon: Are you in trouble?

- Kitty: No father. But I'm lonely after me mother.
- Canon: How long are you here?
- Kitty: About a month. And I'm very lonely and frightened.
- Canon: I'll see you every afternoon you have time off. You come to the Church, and tell me about your family back home.
- Kitty: So I did. I still think that's what held me together, it was the church. What kept me safe and sound was prayers.
- Kitty: I was determined to get out, but I didn't want to leave until I got something else. And I wanted to be in London so I could be near my brother Tom. I applied for a job as a housemaid at the Langham Hotel.
- I remember walking on this carpet and me feet sinking into it. I'd never walked on anything so soft before...indoors anyway. The head housekeeper said to me:
- Housekeeper: In this hotel we are very particular about our girls. You are the housemaids, and you help the chambermaids. You dress like nurses.
- Kitty: I think she gave me an amount of money to buy the uniform I had to go to Evanses in Oxford Street to buy it. You wore a white apron like the nurses wear, and a cap and so on, and a blue under-dress.
- Housekeeper: When you're in this hotel, you're like a member of my own family. I'll look after you.
- Kitty: And so she did. We were very well looked after. They mothered us housemaids because we were so young. There were other Irish girls there, two girls from Kerry, and Welsh girls and Scotch. We had a lovely time, just like a family.
- You were never on your own because there was always one of the girls off duty. We used to go into each others' rooms and sit up chatting and what have you. My special friend there was Mary O'Reilly. She'd been in sevice like me.
- Mary: I was working for a Russian Countess and she played the harp in concerts. I used to have to keep a check on her harp to see how many strings were missing. She said I was expert at that.
- She had her own car and she used to make me sit in the boot and hold the harp up. I had to hold the harp a certain way

otherwise it would be banging, so the harp used to get there in one piece.

She'd often ask if we were on the right road, and I'd say yes, even though I couldn't see in the dark as she was driving too fast.

Kitty: When we got our month's pay we'd go shopping.

Mary: We obviously bought 'styles' as we called them, after you duly sent half to your parents.

Kitty: I remember buying the first new coat I ever had. It was a lovely coat in a mulberry colour. With my yellow hair it wasn't really the right colour, but I thought it was the most beautiful coat in all the world. And an orange lipstick. When I think of how an orange lipstick and a plum coloured coat and yellow hair went... Obviously I thought I was quite beautiful. Luckily people from Ireland are blessed with good skin anyway so I didn't need rouge.

Mary: And we bought stuff called Fulnana for a penny in Woolworths and the perfume was Ashes of Roses. I had a picture taken which I've still got with earrings in it. I thought I looked lovely, really lovely.

SONG: SHE IS HANDSOME, SHE IS PRETTY (WITH CONCERTINA)

Kitty: There was one very big night out at the Royal Albert Hall, and we arrived home by taxi. We had to use the staff entrance at the Langham Hotel. You never used the front doors, where they had these special commissionaires. Well, the taxi man pulled up by the front entrance. Before we could all get out, the commissionaire in his white gloves and everything came dashing forward to open the taxi door. Of course when he saw us he nearly dropped dead, and everybody being in a hilarious mood, we all rushed through the front door and up the stairs.

Commissionaire: I'll report you to the head housekeeper. You wait!

REPRISE: SHE IS HANDSOME...

Kitty: We used to go to a lot of Irish Dances and meet a lot of Irish people in the dance halls, the Gary Owen..... I saw a lot of my brother Tom, and he'd escort us to the dance halls.

(SEIGE OF ENNIS ON CONCERTINA)

Tom: I danced the Seige of Ennis with Mary O'Reilly at the Irish dance hall, and that was it for me. (BLACKTHORN STICK JIG ON

CONCERTINA) I asked her out for the next dance, and asked her if she had any boyfriends. I think she said she had, but she soon preferred me anyway.

Kitty: You'd have step dancing and people singing. Danny Boy would be the song everyone'd ask for, and of course, at the end, Faith of Our Fathers.

SONG: Faith of our fathers living still
In spite of dungeon fire and sword.
Oh how my heart leaps high with joy
When e'er I hear that glorious word.
Faith of our fathers holy faith
We will be true to thee till death.

Tom: Of course all that stopped for a while when the war started. Everything changed in September 1939. Oh my God there was an awful commotion then. When you went to the Labour Exchange they said: "We have jobs now. Plenty of jobs going now."

You either joined up or you did essential work. Don't forget there were a quarter of a million volunteers in the British forces during the war who came over then from Southern Ireland. I had seven friends of mine killed in the war, chaps I went to school with and none of them had to join, they all volunteered. A terrific number of Irish lads fought in all the services.

I was sent off to work on all dangerous jobs. I was put on to making parts for spitfires in Walthamstow, and I had to find digs up there. Of course there was rationing and all that.

Landlady: One egg a week.

Tom: The landlady used to keep mine.

Landlady: It hasn't arrived.

Tom: I found her son having it one morning. I remember one morning I nearly risked my life for an egg. I had to be in work at six o'clock, which meant me getting up about five. So I always told the landlady not to bother getting up, and I'd get my own breakfast. Well I was frying this egg, it had been about a month since I'd had an egg, I said, 'Well, I'm definitely going to have this one.' When you couldn't get them you thought they were marvellous, you know. I was frying this egg, and the next thing this crash alert came on in the factories round about, which meant that there was a doodlebug approaching your area. Well I waited until this doodlebug was directly overhead, and I said, 'Well that's very near I'd better get out of here.' So I grabbed

this frying pan with the egg in it, and started to run down the garden and as I was running down the garden I tripped. It was dark, and my egg went into the grass. That doodle bug was coming down at the time and I stayed there to pick up this fried egg. It shows you how you lose all sense of proportion.

(WHISTLE: MARIE'S WEDDING)

Tom: You always had a crack at the weekend, going to dances and so on. There was a lot of Yanks there, and I thought Mary would go off with a Yank, as all the women were after the uniforms. They had more money. They had everything. But she didn't.

Kitty: Tom married Mary in 1943. (TOM AND MARY POSE FOR WEDDING PHOTO)
We'd a job to get photos to send home to the family, because they were very restricted.

All the housemaids had to leave the Langham Hotel when war broke out. It wasn't essential work. They tried to recruit us into the services, but I didn't want to be connected with anything on the military side. I did work at Kidbrooke at the RAF station there, but that was making oxygen needles. You had to be accurate to 1000th part of an inch. That meant using a micrometer, so we got training sessions at the Technical College. I liked the work. It was something new.

MUSIC LINK

Kitty: There was an Irish club in Woolwich, where we used to go to a dance, and I had an Irish boyfriend. Actually we'd got engaged and I'd sent the photos home to my parents.

Anyway one night I went to an engagement party of one of the girls, to an Englishman. There was another English man there who said he would walk me home. He was 36 years old, and he seemed an old man to me. He told me he was a widower, and he had a daughter of nine years old. He told me he never wanted to get married again, because he had lost his wife during the war, and she had been a perfect wife. So this was just friendship. And then he said would I see him again.

Well, I used to go out and meet him, and then tell him I had to be on duty at nine o'clock, and go and meet my fiancée. It was a great joke with the girls:

Girl: Kitty and Charlie, the old widower.

SONG: An old man came courting me,
Hey ding dorum down

An old man came courting me, Me being young
 An old man came courting me, Fain would he marry me,
 Maids when you're young never wed an old man.
 For he's got no falorum, faliddle, falorum,
 He's got no falorum faliddle all day
 He's got no falorum, he's lost his ding dorum,
 So maids when you're young never wed an old man.

Kitty: I thought he was the last person in the whole world I would ever marry. And then one day, I said to the girls: "I'm going to marry this Englishman."

Girl: Does he know?

Kitty: Not yet.

Girl: You must be mad, and anyway you're engaged to Joe.

Kitty: And do you know why I'm going to marry him? Because he is a very old fashioned Englishman, like he helps me off the trams; he takes my coat; he carries my shopping; all the things the Irishmen don't do.

Girl: Poor Joe. I think you're crazy. Still it's your funeral.

Kitty: Well, I began to click on. He also was a very intelligent man. And don't forget, he had this fully furnished pre(c)fab up in Shooters Hill, so I would have a proper home. Not like many of the other girls who got married and had to live in furnished rooms.
 So I decided that I would marry him. Much to the anger of my parents. My father actually came over and tried to put a stop to it. But I went ahead anyway. I married him on the 5th October 1944.

REPRISE MAIDS WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG

Josie: During the war years, I was still still working down at Epsom at the mental hospital. We had a lot more Irish staff recruited during the war years. I'd been going out with this airman from Cambridgeshire, and I went out with him for over a year. He had a large motorbike, and we used to go everywhere. He was very handsome; fair hair, blue eyes.

Anyway, one night, I suddenly decided; well, if this chap is not a catholic and he's not Irish, then I couldn't take him home. And I thought, well if I.. I would be sort of cut off from home. So I decided that was it. So I packed this chappy up and I was given eave then, and I went home to Ireland. I was very upset and I

lost about a stone in weight. Anyway, when I came back, a nurse said to me,

Nurse: Josie, there's a new fellow over the male side. He's called Pat. Male, footloose and fancy free. An Irish man from Kerry.

Josie: So I said, "Will you make a date for me ?" And she said;

Nurse: You don't really want to make a date with him. Big lump of a farmer's son.

Josie: So I said, "Oh make a date anyway." And she made a date for the three o'clock on the Sunday. I suppose it was rather a liberty, yes. Well anyway, I went out with this Pat and I wasn't very taken with him. Well this big Irish man, he was so different to the other chap that I had you see?

Well we went to the cafe and we had a cup of tea and went back to the hospital. And this went on for a couple of weeks. I didn't fancy him at all, until I was with one of the nurses at this cafe and she said to me:

Nurse: Who is that chap I saw you with the other day ?

Josie: So I said: "Who?" And she said:

Nurse: You were down here with a chap.

Josie: I said: "Oh that was my brother." Cos I wasn't very proud of him. And she said:

Nurse: Oh would you make a date for me?

Josie: And I thought: "Oh there must be something going on !" We were married on March 18th 1945, as close to St Patrick's Day as possible. Then we came back to the wards at the hospital. You just went back to your old room, back to work.

It was strict segregation. The main corridor was right down the hospital; the females that side, the males that side. No way could you go over there.

MUSIC LINK

(WHISTLE LINK: MACALPINE'S FUSILIERS)

Tom: When the war was over, I went to work in the building industry. I was repairing bomb damage. We used to repair houses, putting in windows and doors so that the people could occupy them. We used to travel all around London. I became a chargehand,

and not long after that they made me a supervisor.

Well, I was always shouting and bawling my head off about safety on the sites, because when you're working on incentive schemes on a building site the accident rates are shocking. (HE IS HANDED A LETTER)

SICK NOTE SONG TO TUNE OF GARDEN WHERE THE PRATIES GROW

Kitty: During the early years of my marriage, I did find life with Charlie's friends and relatives, very difficult. I didn't understand their way of life; it was so alien to me. I remember going to see his sister, and she said;

Sister-in-law: We're having our dinner.

Kitty: So we sat in the front room with a cup of tea. Well, at home we would have joined in with the dinner.

I had neighbours, but they were all English. You couldn't go in and have a cup of tea. Well you could at home, just walk in if you were lonely. My husband was at work all day. I'd go out and do a bit of shopping, but I was terribly self-conscious. I felt everyone was looking at me because of my Irish accent. I could hardly ask for anything in the shops. If I didn't see what I wanted on the counter or the shelf, I walked out. So I found it quite a lonely life after I was married; very lonely.

SONG: ON THE BANKS OF MY OWN LOVELY LEE

How oft do my thoughts in their fancy take flight
To the home of my childhood away
To the days when each patriot's vision seemed bright
Ere I dreamed that those joys should decay
When my heart was as light as the wild winds that blow
Down the Mardyke through each elm tree
Where I sported and played neath each green leafy shade
On the banks of my own lovely Lee.

Josie: When my first daughter was born, we had to move out and find our own rooms. My husband used to say, If you had a dog you'd get a room quicker than if you had a child. We looked on all the local boards, but of course they often said, "No Irish Need Apply".

I've always carried on working. I'd work nights and Pat'd work days, and that's the way we managed to look after the children. We've three children and we've taken them over to Ireland once a year. They all feel a connection with Ireland. I've one daughter

who was a champion Irish step dancer. She's got stacks of medals for it.

Tom: Mary and I were going back to Ireland to settle, but somehow it just didn't work out. It's very hard to feel at home when the first question you're asked is when are you going back? It's brought home to you that you're on holiday, you're not really going back there for keeps. I think every Irish person has that dream, a man anyway, of going back to Ireland. It was a dream with me for 10 or 12 years and that's why I took early retirement really. I was going to go back there and find a little rose covered cottage somewhere and settle down with a fishing rod and a dog and a pint of guinness, a nice local pub somewhere but that soon fades.

Josie: That's my experience too. We've always gone home on holiday, and we thought of going home to settle. There were family there who'd give us a little place, just a little bit of land where we could build a house for ourselves, but then I couldn't pull myself away from the children and grandchildren. My daughter said: "You go Mum if you want to, and we'll visit you and Dad with the kids every year."

And I thought: Yes, and how often? Your Uncle Peter would have all his children and grandchildren about him, but your Dad and I would be left high and dry. We'd never see you or the children. I love going home, but I can't bear the pain when I come back. I don't go so much now, because it takes me a month or more to settle again. I get so depressed and homesick for Ireland.

SONG: THE OLD COTTAGE
Lonely I wander through scenes of my childhood
They call back to memory the happy days of yore
Gone are the old folk, the house stands deserted
No light in the window, no welcome at the door.

Tom: When you go back now, you don't somehow feel as much part of things as when your parents were alive. When they were there you said, 'We're going home'. But when someone marries into your home, although they make you very welcome, it's not the same, it doesn't have the same flavour.

SONG: Lone is the house now and lonely the moorland
The children are scattered the old folk are gone
Why stand I here like a ghost or a shadow?
Tis time I was moving, tis time I passed on.

Kitty: My husband died twelve years ago. He'd been ill for a while before that. He was a good husband. It's surprising when you sit down and relive your life. I'm fifty years here now but I

still don't feel like an Englishwoman. I've given strict instructions that I'm to be buried in Ireland, and I've enough money put by to take my body over there. They may have to pay their own fares to my funeral. (WHISTLE HERE) If I sit in my living room at home, in my rocking chair, my thoughts go to Ireland, to the ground, the soil, the air, the hills, they don't change.

MUSIC: END

REEL: KITTY LIE OVER