

Romany Theatre Company

Atching Tan Project

Reminiscence Interview – Transcription of Edited Interview

Date of Interview	Interviewer	Interviewee	Age Range of Interviewee	Duration of Edited Recording
23/07/10	Sinead	Bonnie	54	0:05:44

Key timing	Initial of person speaking	Transcription of Interview
00:00		Me name is Bonnie Loveridge. I'd like to tell you a bit about myself. It was a hard life. Travelling up and down the side of the roads. Getting moved on. I can remember that a lot. I can remember us moving once when me and me sister had t hold a torch in the back of the window of the caravan. You'd say caravan; we'd say trailers. Just to pull onto the side of the road <u>again</u> and to be moved on again.
0:00:22		I'm 54 now and I've had about 12 months education which I remember now was like 2 winters 6 month each winter and that was only because dad and mum didn't have enough money to feed us, so that's the reason why they sent us to school. My mum had 6 daughters and 2 sons. None of us got any education whatsoever. I didn't want to go. Dirty Gypo and you'd get spit at. If you had a bag that would get took away from you. The teachers never spent no time with you at all. I can remember that. They used to give you a book or a bit of paper and a pencil and tell you to draw a house. How did we know what a house looked like? They never told us to draw a trailer, what we lived in. Or give us a book to look at while the other kids was getting on with their work. Really the education, we never got none. But like I said we only done 2 winters at the school - that was it. We never done no more than that. Terrible, absolutely terrible, our hair pulled, cuts, bruises. Mostly boys, the boys and girls I suppose, but the boys would kick you, pull your hair and knock you down on the ground and that. When I went back the next winter to a different school I had the same thing again and I was 10 and I just kept fighting with everyone and I can remember a girl there, she was me mate, Bunny her name was and she was black and she was me friend and they kept calling her names and calling me names, but they used to leave her alone and she was getting her education, but I wasn't, I wasn't getting my education, but they were which I think was terrible, absolutely terrible. Thoughts about school, I hated it. Would I go back now? No. I had enough of it.
0:01:56		When we was stopping on the sides of the road we used to get our trailers pelted with stones and things like that at nights. That's the reason why we had dogs. Used to be tied outside. That's why we used to have a dog to let us know if there was someone about and there used to always be someone about and they'd get close to the trailers and they'd pelt things. Dirty Gypo, Scum of the earth, the colour of our skin, the way we'd have our hairs done. It was your total life, it was just chucking it in your face and spitting at you. Although you was proud of who you was, you tried to hide that you was a Traveller or that you was a Gypsy. You didn't want nobody to know, because you knew as soon as they knew what you was that was it. Even in jobs that I've worked in since I was grown up. Me and my sister used to work in Bury in a chicken factory and there was a women in there she knew me mum and she went and told the boss of the factory that we was Gypsies and where we lived and they didn't want us at work no more. They said they had to cut the hours down and that and gradually, gradually they got rid of us. Three of us, me and me other 2 sisters worked there for nearly 3 years, but it was every winter, because in the summer we went away, we was doing fruit picking and that. But I mean I worked at Little Chef which is a well known place. They had a new manager come in and he found out what I was and he tried to accuse me of stealing and I've never took nothing in my life and I took him to court for it; for unfair

0:05:07	<p>dismissal and I got a payout for it. Cos the girl remembered what I done cos I didn't have no change, so I said I'd pay for this later which I did, but he tried to say I stole it. They made me get out of Little Chef and I tell you I took him to court. It was because of who I was. I wasn't going to be shit on no more. I had enough of it. I've had enough of it all my life. I was only in the charity shop yesterday ad there was a woman come in, a travelling woman. She wanted to have a look at this little tea set that was sat in the window and she said to the woman in the charity shop you're asking too much money for it and she just put it down and walked out. The woman never ever done no more than that and I stood with me back to them. I heard her say 'Oh well that was a Gypsy' and I thought 'its happen now, its even happening now!' They've been educated, they know what we are, they know who we are and they won't leave us alone. They still won't leave us alone! Even with me grandchildren in the schools. When they first started school my daughter-in-law had a little bit of trouble with my eldest grandson being called gypo and all that and she got it stopped because it was racist. She went and got it stopped, which I am pleased she did because I didn't want him to have the experience I had, but it is still going on unfortunately.</p> <p>As a Gypsy, I think Gypsies stand up more for their selves now. I think they are more outspoken. You hear more about their lives and I always say education, education, education. Like we learned about the blacks and how they went through their lives and how they stood up and now its time for travellers to do it, because there is more travellers growing up. I've got grandchildren, Loads of other travelling people have got grandchildren. We need to make it safe for them, so I think what you're doing is a good thing because its education. The same as they understand what we are doing; we are doing no more than them. I pay my poll tax, me water, me electric, I pay me tax on me motor, insurance and that, I'm not doing no different to them and yet they still look down on you 'cos your skin's a different colour or you talk different.</p> <p>I think they're better for me, I think that people, people my age now even me mum and dad 'cos their lives was terrible and bringing their children up was terrible. But I think that the more people are getting educated, the better they are towards us and if they are better towards me, then they are going to get better towards my children and their children and all it is, is an acceptance 'Oh you're a gypsy, so what, you're no different than me' and I think that's the way it is, we just live different, we can't help it. I mean my mum and dad was born in wagons and when you've got that Romany in you it never ever leaves you. You always want to go somewhere; you always want to move somewhere. So even though I'm settled I still want to go somewhere. We're a free spirit, that's what we are. I've always said If you cage a wild bird it'll die and that is how a Traveller is if you cage 'em they'll die.</p>
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