

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
March 2009	Jane	Gloria		48 minutes

Key timing	Initial of person speaking	Transcription of Interview
00:00	Jane	Hello Gloria
	Gloria	Hello there
	Jane	Can you tell me a bit about your life as a child when you were growing up and the way you see lives of children at the moment? How do they differ?
	Gloria	<p>I'll start with my life. My first school was at Dagenham, my father was seconded to do war work because he wasn't eligible for the army and it was one of the reasons that he moved away from Hampshire where all his people were, he was on the borders of Surrey and Hampshire and he had been in the village all of his life, they were actually soldier hawkers and they used to go away following the army on manoeuvres during the summer and in the winter they came back and they wintered at a place called Hale or Upper Hale and my father sort of grew up there and most of his childhood was spent on Salisbury plains. Then his cousin who was like a brother to him, they slept together, they had the same clothes, the same everything was taken into the army and my father couldn't go cause he had rheumatic fever so he was rejected from the army and he was taken to do war work and he happened to get from this village an envelope that had a white feather in it, and he took it so badly because his cousin had been through the army, come out of there with some kind of shock, and his wife had left him, and he had a child that he was found in the river and my father took that so badly that he moved, he said 'I don't belong here' but he was wrong he did belong there, that was just one person and white feather that sent him going, so that was how we became to be on the road after they had years of being gypsies but partially settled. So they had winter stops, they had education and the pattern followed us, so we had summer travel and winter stops so I was lucky enough to get an education. So while my father was doing war work, somebody came to see my mother, probably some welfare person and she said 'now look, would you like your little girl to go to school?' because it would have been a hassle for my mother to look after, because at that time you had struggle, no matter who you were you were on the road, up the road and you got struggle. A lot of these gypsies they have struggled but a lot of them struggle in their stride, they do really, they handle it really well and my mother did struggle with elegance.</p> <p>I was taken into Ford school at Dagenham, it was funded by Henry Ford and all the other things and I was taken before a board of governors, and within a while, because my mother was a scholar, my mother and father proud to be scholars, because there weren't many people on the road that were scholars at that time. So I was reading before a board of governors when I was quite young, I cant tell you how young I was but I know I was very young, it was quite unusual for somebody that young to be able to read and catch on so quickly, but it was what I seemed to want to do and I did love it. I</p>

used to run to school, nobody had to drag me in and so that was a good start for me, and everywhere I went from that time on I seemed to be good at school and it was an advantage, not then but looking back on it I felt that was my big break, my advantage. Childhood for my was mostly work, we had animals to see to, we were travelling; that was work, mother needed help; that was more work, but the broad spectrum of knowledge and education that I had during that time it was much more than anyone that just goes to school and comes home and plays. I remember a child once saying to me from a school, she was visiting me from a school and they said about my childhood and I told her about this work and my father said 'well you can do that, you can play with that' and I got it, our play was our work. When you look back on the old language, the real old language, work comes from the word worship whereby if you enjoy your work you really have cracked it haven't you? That is a wonderful thing. So when this child said to me 'well how did you play?' I did explain that, my father said you can play with that, so looking after the animals was play, going out and earning a pound was play, we played at it and we did it very well and father used to say 'when you can get a living ill take my hat off to you, but when you can get a straight living you can call yourself a master' that is powerful talk isn't it? And I remember a tale where this man was telling my father how good his daughter (she was a bit old than me, she was very good) how she went out and got a living, how she done this and done that, and he talked about her and said about 'yeah that's really good, my girl can chant' and chant means talk from the heart, work from, talk and work from the heart and as soon as you stop doing that and you're in a job you don't really love you become disenchanted and a lot of people don't realise what's the matter with them, they're going through life and they really are disenchanted, that was his explanation of the old language, to chant, and I think I'm still chanting, I'm chanting now!

06:32

So my childhood it was such a broad spectrum of education, when you travelled it was a kind of system that you work by and it was everything in its place, a place for everything, economy of materials, and when we went to ask for water they used to send me, mother would change my pinup, put a clean pinner on me, put a bow in my hair, send me off with this barrow to get this water, she would have her jobs to do, she would do the food and my brother would do the fire, my father would do the horses and look after the wagon, he may even take the wheel off a wagon if it was squeaking and chuck it in a pond with a rope so it swelled with water during the night. One day she said to me 'take your little brother with you' and I thought 'oh goodness, I've got to get the water and ive got to drag him along, cart him along' anyway I carted him along cause mother really wanted him to go because you need to keep an eye on these children when you're travelling constantly need an eye on them and mother wanted privacy, she wanted a wash so she sent him. When we came back mother said 'how did you get on?' and she went to take him up the stride and he said 'they're wotten they are, they're wotten' cause he couldn't talk properly. Mother said 'come here, what do you mean rotten?' I said 'well mother no it was just the people that said no to us', 'really?' she said, 'was you glad about the yes's?' I said yes mother 'and you weren't resentful about the no's?' I said no, she said 'you'll get on in life you will, because the people in life that say no to you have got their reasons, walk on' and it was all of those things my mother and my father never ever tried to build up a case about the settled people or anybody that we ever came across ever. So my childhood you played at your work, you enjoyed what you did, you learn, and it was such a learning because we weren't allowed to take a stick out of a hedge if it left a hole because that hedge was there for shelter, and to keep something out or to keep something in, and every living thing according to my father

		<p>you had to have respect for. So when we went to get the wood for the fire we only took the dead wood, you had to go in there with the least disturbance and come out again and take what it was you needed and he constantly said 'hark' it used to get on your nerves the amount of times that he said hark, he used to keep saying 'hark', we were too noisy for my father it was silence that was needed at that time and we didn't totally understand, its only when you get bigger that you realise what he's on about. The travelling, the getting a living, the love of animals, the non sentimental love of animals was such a learning thing because we wasn't allowed to keep a dog if that dog couldn't keep us, the horse had to keep us and that had to be cared for and that had to be looked after. I would say my childhood was good, it was happy, it wasn't always, not everyone comes from a settled background, a settled emotional secure background, but when you talk about security it wasn't something that we had to have because when you went along the road and you stepped out into the unknown and the uncertain and you wouldn't know what to expect around the next corner it is a kind of uncertainty that is quite empowering in a way and when you settle you forget about that, it was such an empowering thing that everything is new and fresh and it opens up a whole new world of what is possible, its not the same old worn out boring old yesterdays that other people sometimes have to contend with. So I think it was, it was learning, it was helpful in my life it was stable in a way, there was plenty of food on the table, they believed in abundance, father always used to find a good butcher, we would always be able to get one for the pot and he'd say 'never take more than you need cause it goes into greed' and that dog was precious to us, that dog that caught them things was precious to us, and there were other things too there was always, wasn't so much they never mentioned manners, they'd say all manners are kind, all manners are things, but they never ever mentioned 'you've got to have manners' I never heard that mentioned, all manners shapes and kinds but not manners as you would know it to day, they never mentioned that but there was such a kind of a code if you like whereby you don't treat people how you don't want to be treated yourself and about what you give out you get back, what goes around comes around, what you sow you reap. That was a kind of a general language, and it was about sharing what you had, sharing your food, and mother said 'when you give it comes back to you threefold' although they didn't really mention religion or anything like that but that was the general way of speaking.</p>
12:09	Jane	<p>And about reflecting on that and looking at today's families and children when you see children on the site here today, how do you see that their lives are different to your childhood?</p>
	Gloria	<p>Well its so much different, they don't travel so much they don't have concerns about survival, they don't have so many concerns, they don't have the struggle that the men and the women had then, but how its different I believe without putting too fine a point on it, I believe we have moved away, us and the settled people, we have moved away from what we had then and I can only describe it as moving away from something that is valuable to treasure something that is valueless. So its more possessions and things that are more important than, and I'm sorry if we've all moved away from what was valuable to something that is valueless, I think that probably is the difference, there isn't so much in the way of respect for every living thing as there was and I feel the country people had it, they did, the gypsy people had it, because it was more of a pulling together for survival and everything like that. Maybe that has changed, maybe we've moved away from the honour and your word is your bond, we had something that we could rely on, there definitely was something we could rely on, you have to have something that we</p>

	Jane	<p>can rely upon and we could rely on that.</p> <p>Moving on, your father obviously talking to you the last couple of times, your father has told you lots and lots about your heritage so you grew up with stories being told to you about his history and your families history, do you think that in today's younger families that the parents are still passing on their stories to their children in the same way?</p>
	Gloria	<p>Maybe not. You've got the age difference there, cause you would say I'm elderly wouldn't you? So my father was older than their fathers and mothers and my father was older than their grannies and my mother so I don't think it's handed down so much, I think a lot of it is lost and I'm very sorry that we've just lost Caroline McDonald who was on this camp with her sister and brother because they had stories to tell that go way back like mine do, so I do think some of it is lost yes I do think it is lost yes I do think it is lost.</p>
	Jane	<p>Do you think that's down to people's willingness or ability to pass on stories or just down to busy life, changing lifestyle?</p>
	Gloria	<p>I'm not sure that they think its so important as my people thought it was important to tell me because it was still ripe, still raw, when my father was telling me about enclosure. My grandfather wouldn't have shrugged his shoulders about enclosure because they were reliant on the land and when enclosure came it took away things from them like their source of material, they used to do the coppicing in the woods for their living and their livelihood, their source of material, their food, their grazing, and they were gradually pushed on the road and up the road away from the bridleways, the saddleways and other places they used to stop, and the heather was something that the girls could pick and the heather is a plant by nature of its name where it says 'heath-er' it anchors the heath down and it is such a plant that the more you pick it the better it becomes and it has a certain luckiness about it and that was fenced off and the other things that they could pick and sell was fenced off and taken away from them and they had to do other jobs, labouring jobs, young gentile gypsy women who gathered they were organic conservationists, foragers, they were getters, they really, really knew what they could do, they were good at what they did they were skilful, knowledgeable foragers and getters, they could earn a pound they really could and do it from the land. My aunt Lille, my fathers sister (he was the only boy and he had 9 sisters) my aunt Lille who was born in 1900 she told the story about how her mothers sister called another called another cousin a stone picker and it was taken as such an insult that they never ever spoke again so they were forced to do jobs that they wouldn't normally have done just to make ends meet so it made a huge, a terrific, a gigantic change, change was forced upon them on charge. They took a rabbit from a field, the field was taken, they took a fish from a stream and the stream was taken and so on, and you've heard that little rhyme haven't you?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 'They thrown in jail the man or woman,  who steal the goose from off the common,  and let greater naïve go loose,  who steal the common from the goose.'</p> <p>And that sums it all up doesn't it? I don't think it was thought through as to how it would serve the poorer people of the land and the gypsy people.</p>

18:27	Jane	So do you think that because these things happened and they were raw and still fresh in peoples memories then they were passed down to you and that these things are a bit too distant now for people to pass on?
	Gloria	Yep, and they don't even know how much it affected their own people, and their own breed and their own kind, and they don't really know how much it pushed them to the edge as people think we are today, but it definitely changed their way of life. It really did.
	Jane	Can I move on now to religion? You've used the word providence before when we've spoken about things, so I just want to ask you about God and the gypsy communities view on God or what ideas they've got about religion?
	Gloria	I would say its quite varied, their views on God. My idea about which was given to me is providence is nature given to which we are all the beneficiaries. You could say providence is God given and if God is omnipresent and in all things, and in nature then that is true. Providence is 'provide-ence' which is free, just for the cost of the labour of. God in the gypsy community I would say is quite diverse I do believe, but I didn't come from any particular religion, I think ours was more free-range than saying, and if somebody asked you 'what religion are you' we'd say church of England.
	Jane	Yeah it's a bit of a cover all isn't it?
	Gloria	Yeah it was. Now mothers breed came over from Ireland, my mother was a Yorkshire woman and they were Catholics and I know that because of the stories she told, but there was a time when my grandfather was torpedoed in the first world war and my grandmother was asked to contribute to the school ha-penny, and when she told them that she couldn't afford the ha-penny they came to see her and she was a good provider my granny although she was a widow and had 3 children she was a good provider as in providence, and they had a look around her place, her home and they said 'can you afford jam?' and she said 'I make jam when I can get the sugar' and they said 'oh well you-re not poor then, so you give the ha-penny' and my mother felt that she wasn't being supported by the people that were prominent in the church, my grandmother thought she wasn't being supported so she just walked away from it. She decided that to support herself and not ask for anything and for fear it would be refused, so that was a bit of something that left for my granny who was a widow, and a few judgements about the man that she married when her baby was 5, there was a few judgements on that, so I think my granny just walked away from that and so it wasn't really mentioned any more about religion, it was more to do with 'goodly is Godly and nothing else is true' so we don't have to belong, it wasn't necessary to belong in that sense.
	Jane	So people don't feel tied to a church or a religion, people are just of a Godly thought.
	Gloria	And if someone needs help, if you're in a position to share what you've got, mother used to say, some man got prison and the woman was over there and she hadn't got any money and it was difficult and it was difficult, it was on the road, so mother shared the shopping up and we had half each, their family had half and we had half. This woman wasn't that domesticated like my mother, my mother was a Yorkshire woman, my mother put rice in an iron pot on the outside fire, she made it with goats milk because the goats milk was free, we had the goat, she put raisins in it and all the campsite children came and she said 'bring a spoon and bring a dish cause I'm not washing up

24:35	Jane	<p>after you' and the next night she would do something else, she would do upside down cake in a big iron frying pan and she would put apples in there, whatever she could get, windfalls, fruit, berries, anything, or plums that we had been given and as they bubbled in the pan with the sugar she'd pour this pudding on the top and she'd grease a tin plate, shove it on in the middle of this fire and it would just rise up out of the pan and she called that upside down cake, she'd make custard with goats milk and all the children would come running and she'd feed them all and mother said it was like feeding the five thousand, my mother could feed anybody and if somebody needed help you didn't ask them what their circumstances was because it was like mother talked about in the depression she said 'when you've been through two wars and a depression you don't waste anything, you do share' and it was like there's a word for it when someone comes around and looks at your circumstances to see if you need assistance, do you know what that word is? They get assessed, and mother didn't think that was a goodly way to go because there were people that used to smoke and buy cigarettes and if they couldn't afford the right amount of food she wouldn't refuse them food because they had a cigarette, she wouldn't make judgements about that, and I think that was the difference we didn't have a set of rules and regulations, values, we didn't impose those values on each other it was more of a free range existence and I think it was probably organised religion for my mother that watered that down. I'm not saying that's wrong or right, or good or bad, any kind of religion, that was just my grannies experience when she was just trying to make ends meet with no money.</p>
	Jane	<p>And I know that you've been working a lot with some women that you know and I'd just like your experience of the change in lives of women, how lives have changed over the past few years and the second part of that question is how then have the men folk had to react to that and have they changed as well?</p>
	Gloria	<p>As I was growing up I was the one that could read and write and I used to go in there and sit amongst the children and read a book and id read peoples letters, and since I was a little girl they didn't mind me reading those letter back to them because they were very private people and they didn't want their business to be known. So they'd say 'come here daughter! Read this letter' so I'd read this letter and say what it said and she would say 'thank you very much' she'd fold it up and put it in her pocket then a few weeks later she'd ask me to read it again because letters were few and far between and she'd say to me 'isn't that nice?' the same thing would happen again. I had that job all the time I had that job, and I was reading a book in a field one day and I told this children we got this off the rag and bone cart this book and it was about the festival of Britain but the front cover was missing and it showed London bridge and I said that London bridge wasn't always like that, it was a brick built thing and it was like a town, it was like a village, people lived on it and in it, there were little markets over London bridge, and I was telling them all that and all of a sudden this boy jumped up and said 'you're a gorger you are!' as if to say, you're not a gypsy if know all this, you're a gorger you are and I just looked at him and my heart jumped out of my body. I get that at school about being a gypsy and when I come home, where do I fit in I thought? I went back and told father I said 'father that boy called me a gorger today' he said 'you know that man that came in the field when your brother was ill? He saved your brother life, he was a doctor, he was a gorger, would you like to be like him? The next time anybody calls you a gorger you want to thank them'.</p> <p>I realised that I was somehow different and not being accepted sometimes because I</p>

could read and write, and I done things different to everybody else, I thought things and it seemed like the more you did that they did understand, didn't know, didn't want to know it was like a smack, it was like against your loyalty to them or beliefs, it was some kind of rejection of them and I never got it, I never grasped it so quite often I didn't tell people what I did, quite often I kept what I knew to myself because if I didn't somebody would say something about it and it seemed like a slap against the kin, the kind. I was coming home from school one day and I was going along, not my usual self because I was very fast and this long red hair fiddling at the back and the plats would never stay in, and I was making it home like this because I probably stayed too long at school to do something, and I knew when I got home I had chores to do, I had animals to do, the mother and the cooking and the fire and we used to drop bills in the daylight, go around dropping bills around the doors for different things, and I came along one day and this old lady said to me 'what ails you me dear?' I said 'well to tell you the truth aunt, I don't fit in at school cause they call my gypsy and when I get back here they call me gorger' and she laughed and she pointed her finger at me and it was a finger that was bent at the end, she said 'listen, don't every try and be like them because you lose, you're different, don't try to be like them' she more or less told me that if you try to copy them to fit in you lose your own self, and in the pan while she was talking to me and doing all her actions she put a bit of pudding in the pan like a duff that you cut made of suet and if you leave it cold it was quite hard and she laid it in the pan and it went brown on one side and the other and in the middle it was sweet and it was soft. She poured me tea in a cup done with tinned milk, she gave me that tea and that pudding, it wasn't only her kindness and the food, it was actually that she lifted my spirits and she sent me on my way and I was a different person from when I sat down on that log to when I got up and went, and I model myself on her, I model myself on her kindness, I model myself on my mother, and I model myself on the good aspects I could find in my father and in that early age it changes your life.

As I was growing up I noticed the women were mothers, young, they did a bit of schooling or none, it wasn't long before they got married and had families of their own, they were very good at their job, their mothers were very good, their grannies were very good, they held together this whole family unit that kept the home fires going and some of the women were very good hawkers and fortune tellers, and the men stayed at home to keep the home fires going and as they moved and changed the men would go out and the women would stay at home so if they were among the chimney pots where the women could get the hawking, and selling the pegs or heater, or telling their fortunes then the men would stay at home and when they got somewhere else the men would go out, doing woods or whatever. I could see how the roles were changing and how everybody was good at something, I could see that was a very goodly thing to be happening to gypsy people, and gradually you could see as time went on you could see that there were girls that had done schooling and wanted to get a job somewhere else. Most of them used to work for their fathers, I remember a girl that used to drive a cattle poke for her father and she was very, very, very good and she was one of those girls that didn't get married early because she had a career and she was good at her job, she'd go around the options with her father and those that didn't married young. As the times went on you can see there's a change because once you get educated and you get a chance where you can do something that you've always wanted to do instead of getting married then that happens too. I've got young women that work with me, doing campsite training now so they can be campsite managers, one of my girls has got 2 children at school, she's pregnant again but she can still do a campsite management, she

		<p>can still do the training, she's got back up from her family, but where else can a young woman with 2 children and one on the way have a job like this? She lives there, she knows what to do, she understands her job, she does it very well, she gets paid very well, so there is a woman that's got a good job however she wants to play it. My other 2 girls they left school at 11 they're training to be campsite managers, they've got their business management training, campsite training, they've done the B-tec in the last year, that is a qualification. So I can see that things are changing because what has happened is the more stopping places you can get, the more education our girls can get, therefore it stands to reason that they've got more opportunities, they've got choices that they never had, if they choose to get married that's fine and dandy, if they want to have a job they've got choices, they've got opportunities, they've got privileges that they've never had. I think we want the same things as settled people do, we'd like our children to get through this system, to come out of school the other end with education, with skills, with knowledge, where they can be upstanding in their own community, the wider community and society as a whole. I don't think they're going to stop being gypsies, I don't think they're ever going to stop being Romany people in the heart but they're going to have more choices, more opportunities than they've ever had before and I think that's where the big change is coming and more so now because we've got further education and of course if you learn the children to read, they'll read to learn and its like Mark Twain said 'don't let your schooling interfere with your learning' there's more isn't there? But it's the choices I think and to empower these girls to be upstanding and take a job, and hold it down, and to keep their commitments, and keep their agreements, and being happy in what they do, because the most important thing in life I think is to be happy in your work and I think they are enjoying it, and they're enjoying how they're progressing and I think that's a big change.</p>
	Jane	How have the men responded to this?
	Gloria	<p>You know before how I told you how the men swapped roles? Well I think once you get a woman that is determined that she is going to do something, I think she will and I think if you get a couple where the man and a woman both encourage each other to be all that they can be, that is something worth having. Maybe first of all you look at this couple and they're not getting on, here's his road, her road and the middle, and mostly we find it, mostly we find that middle road. Now if this woman, this young woman, she's had education, she wants to do this, she wants to do that, if she's clear enough with her husband and they've got this kind of relationship that can work, cause she can put her little foot down and say this is what I want to do, this is what I'm prepared to do, this is what I want to do, and I think the man out of love for the woman falls in with that, and so long as there isn't those prejudices where there harm because where there's judgement there's harm and if there's no judgement there no harm and I think that's how its going to work. The way forward is for these girls if they want to is to pick up the challenges, to have the opportunities, still have a lovely marriage and a loving family, and there are opportunities for people to do that, so if the women want to change they can and the will and then men will accept it.</p>
36:01	Jane	What can you see are the changes in the future for gypsy life? The changes that you can kind of see on the horizon, are they necessarily good or bad?
	Gloria	Depends on anybody's opinion I expect. I think the good things are the things that we've covered about education and scope, to be skilful. I have a nephew and he was brought up in the old fashioned way, we've got our foot in two camps haven't we, you know like

it is you're brought up in a village but you're still a gypsy, but this boy is very talented in training horses and animals and he wants to get his own place, and set up doing animal behaviour psychology, therapy. Now I know this boy is extremely good and the changes in there is that he's going to be bold enough, he's clever enough to get the certificates to get the exams that you need, or not because reputation goes before bits of paper and to get his own place and to start to do this and I'm feeling that as soon as he does it, and as soon as I do what I do the girls want to follow you. They think this is goodly, we'd like to do this, it might not be in the same field but its still empowerment, its still learning, its still being good at what we gypsies can do.

Now were very good at waste management, gypsies are very good at that, very good with scrap, my sons do that and a lot of other people do that, there's lots of things we're very good at, we was always very good at coppicing, tree surgeons but to get skills and have certificates to say you can do it and do it well, you get a reputation you can always go back so I think that is the way forward, the changes are to be skilful, professional and be good, have quality in your work and that way you don't need to advertise, you don't need to travel so much but you'll never ever stop them from being gypsies, they've still got that in their soul, they're still Romany, I don't think that will ever change because I've got people that are settled down, I've got a cousin who works in banking and I've got another cousin whose been to university and he said 'the people that I work with, they're educated gypsies' because when the put the family tree together all they come up with their family history as well, so there's a lot of people out there that are in the settled community that are professionals in all walks of life and they have been gypsies, their people have been gypsies, and we've got a lot of famous gypsies, one of the very famous ones was Jango Rinehart who was the gypsy guitarist. So the changes are going to come about and its going to be a quality and excellence, I think we need to be is impeccable and excellent at what we do, and that's going to carry us a long, long way, it always has and it always will, quality and excellence I think that is the way forward for gypsy people, nothing that's half baked, half cocked or half hearted is ever going to do for us or our children and I think quality and excellence and impeccability is going to be the way forward for all of us.

Jane What are the continuing struggles that you think are just going to be the same that follow for years to come?

Gloria Prejudice. We are just a microcosm for any other walk of life so we get good or bad and all sorts and we have had to pick up the flag for any person that's been up the highway that has had ASBO behaviour and thrown rubbish, that hasn't always been the case because we were the tidiest people ever because if you've got respect for the countryside you don't leave it in a mess, the Romany people wasn't like that and if you treat people badly they will behave badly and I think there's been a lot of the things that have happened, they've been treated badly and they behave badly and if people are pushing them on constantly and treating them badly and treating them with prejudice, that could be the case that they behave badly. So we have to pick up the flack for all of that and also we haven't had a very good press, not all of us have got a good reputation, but I would say that the settled community are the same. There was that man Ian Huntley who got that job at the school in Soham, now he took those girls away from there, stole them, killed them, chopped them up and he burned them, and he buried them over the back of my village, now that wasn't a gypsy story, I wouldn't hold it against you, he wasn't gypsy he was part of the settled community, I wouldn't hold that against you to stop getting your children into school, I wouldn't stop being respectful to you over that would I? And the main man who was the biggest mass murderer that we've ever had was a doctor, now I don't hold that against every doctor that ever lived

do I? Its like somebody said to me 'the papers are full of gypsy stories' well actually no ma'am have another look, they're not. So the bad press that the gypsies have got is something that we need to change ourselves, lets have some good press, we've got quite a bit of good press. I had a health visitor come to my camp and she said 'I wasn't looking forward to coming here because really the only thing I ever knew about the gypsies was that they were dirty trouble makes' so she hadn't looked forward to this at all, and the girl that she was going to come and see said 'now look here I don't want her to come and see me, they are nousey interfering, nousey parker, busy bodies, they don't understand us and I don't like them! So there was the two of them, they didn't want to meet, so I went up the camp to deliver some mail, I forgot all about it I said to the gypsy girl 'give her a chance when she comes, they're very knowledgeable these women that come round, give her a chance' she huffed off I walked around the camp and I heard these two people having such a belly laugh, I felt jealous and I wanted to go up there and be part of it but I didn't, I walked on and thought 'no, this is their bit of time' and I walked on, but it was such a powerful thing to hear these two laugh, and when I met this gypsy girl a few days later I said 'how'd you get on' and she said 'oh what a wonderful woman, I found myself telling her things that I wouldn't even tell my mother' and when the welfare woman came to see me she said 'I never felt so nurtured in my life than when that baby was born, I sat with the baby on the boat, the old granny had her arms around me and the old mother had her arms around me and the baby, and all the men, all they could do is peer through the window, they weren't allowed in there, all they could do is hold the children up and peer through the window. That wasn't their domain in that caravan they were out of it, only us women, she said 'I never felt so loved and so nurtured in all my life as I felt that moment' so she changed her mind about the gypsy people, and the gypsy girl changed her mind about the settled people and that is all that we can do, change hearts and minds because in any conflict situation that you know all around the world they demand to be understood but they're not willing to understand otherwise it would be over wouldn't it. For any moment in their time for them to think they're better than, better than is dangerous, its elitism, it's the difference between war and peace, it's the basis for all ethnic cleansing, for anybody to think they're elitist or better than, and id say that the difference in war and peace is only a thought away, only a choice and a thought away between war and peace and we make a choice in that moment. So I think the way forward, I'm optimistic, were in the 21<sup>st</sup> century now, it was meant to happen, everything that's happened, has gone before us, everything that's happening right now in this moment has been prophesized, its meant to happen, its exactly as it needs to be in order for it to be different, and its resolving itself as well and I don't think we need to add to the conflict and I think that is the way for us all. The 21<sup>st</sup> century Nostradamus predicted that we would be glad enough to claw our way back to nature in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because we had gone too far the other way and its happening, with the carbon footprint and everything else, when father said never take more than you need because it goes into greed, to respect nature because whatever it is that you give to nature it will pay you back, because giving and receiving is one in truth, so if you look after nature it will look after you and we haven't done that but this is the time, this is our time, so I'm very optimistic about the future for the gypsy people, for any other walk of life that's been misunderstood because I think this is our time because when you talk about community cohesion you must remember this; community means common-unity people with something in common united, unity in oneness, that is important because as soon as you mention race you separate us because we're part of the human race. So community cohesion and common unity and cohesion means sticking together, pulling together come what may to make some sense of all of this, so I don't believe that there's any shortage in the world, that there is providence, I don't think there's any shortage in the world, I think we all need to pull our weight, be accountable, responsible, accountability is important, demanding rights without responsibilities I think is important, we need to care for one another and I don't think there's any shortage at all, the only real shortage is understanding, human kindness, and I think we should be impeccable with the way we treat one another

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