

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
February 2010	Damian	Julia J	84	0:09:20

Key timing	Initial of person speaking	Transcription of Interview
00:00	Julia	<p>Snow was on the ground about 6 feet deep when I was born Near Alton, In Shaldon Green at Alton, 1927 in a wagon. A reading wagon it was called. And the Doctor had to walk from Alton not Shaldon which was a long, long way and umm... my dad said when I was born the doctor said 'You've got a baby girl make me a nice cup of tea'. You can imagine making a cup of tea outside in all that snow making a fire an' that, which he did do, which he was used to doing. And from then on we travelled, grew up round Alton. Travelled round Alton. Mostly lived out live round Alton. I grew up on the farms round there, which my dad worked farms all his life like. 'Part from a bit of horse dealing an' that he done.</p> <p>They had 4 children I think 2 died one after the other after they were born, you know Damian. A little girl, she was 3 when she died, Maisie her name was and my mum said aft..., my dad was in army when she died, my mum said you could see all her little foot prints in the mud where she used to run around after she died. My dad was broken hearted over it for a long time, you know and then they had the others like. There was 4 girls and 12 boys altogether so ... 10 boys I mean, 4 girls. There was 14 of us altogether. But like I say my mum lost the 4. I can remember one of my sisters Hildaro she died when she was 8 years old but she was a bit backward, you know, and the doctors did tell my mum that she wouldn't live to be a great age. So she died when she was about 8 years old and they was heart broken over that. But me dad was very superstitious. He bought her a green velvet dress with a smocking like they use to have well they still have them now. She never got to wear it. He said I'll never ever let my girls wear green again and we never. He never let us wear green. Its simple as. I'm lucky. Because that happened to him you see, he believed in it. So its strange the things that can happen to you.</p>
02:03		<p>My dad used to make pegs and all to go out and sell, to get a living. It was during the war he used to make so many dozen a week and then take them on a weekend to Portsmouth, Cosham in Portsmouth and I remember going with him once during the war and the planes machine gunned the bus we was on and we all lay down on the floor. He used to take a gross or 4 gross or whatever down there every Saturday and that used to help buy a bit of food and that. And then get pegs the rest of the week if he wasn't working on the farming to go down there every weekend. And that's how we used to live Damian. So it was a hard old life. Apart from that we lived all our life in Alton and we enjoyed our life, you know. We went hop picking, worked out in the fields fruit picking umm, shocking up and well we did everything there was to do on a farm. My dad died when he was 56. He left my 2 little brother, which my mum brought them up and my elder brothers Georgie and Bill and that. And of course theres only 2 of us left now. There was 10 of us 8 boys and 2 girls. I can remember my dad going up the hop country. We used to go hop picking every September. Going up the hop country with about 6 horses and coming away with nothing. He used to wheel and deal and that was life, that was what it was all about. Sometimes you was alright and sometimes you never had nothing. You had to go out the next day and sort of earn money to buy some food with or go to work on the farm and hope the farmer would let you have sump.</p>

03:46		<p>We used to save our pennies and to the picture at the weekend if we could afford it. We never had a... well there weren't no televisions then. We never had a radio. We used... had a gramophone sometimes if my dad would get one, but then again you never had money to buy things like that, you only had money to buy a bit of food with. And you could go in the bakers in Alton until these recent years it was still a bake house and my dad used to go in there a get a shillings worth of bread; what they called a gallon of bread you used to call it then. And used to get it in a flour bag, what the flour used to go in and they used to fill it up with bread for me dad and yesterdays cakes. A bag full of cakes for sixpence. That's what I mean. When we got married, even when I worked at the Dome I got £2/17/06 a week, which was a not a lot of money, but we managed on it. Look at the money they got to manage on now and they can't really can they?</p>
04:47		<p>We lived round Alton all our life. Lived there right up until I got married. We travelled down here when I was about 20 and got married when I was 21.</p>
04:58		<p>We went to school in Alton we worked hard even when we was at school we worked in the fields at night when we got home from school. I couldn't read and write when I left school, but I taught myself afterwards coz I was determined to do it I knew ABC and things like that. My brothers non of my brothers could read and write I was the only one</p>
05:21		<p>Mind you we enjoyed our life when we was all kids together as I think that's the best part of any family life is when you all growing up together because when you grow up you all split up one go one way and one go the other and that's it the families gone and sometimes you don't have connections anymore 'coz families split up and they don't talk to each other and they row and that some go abroad to live and that's life. It was a hard old life, but we got by. Lovely mum and dad we had. I mean he was a good dad to us, but look out for yourself when he was upset. When he said a thing, he meant it. You know if you had to have a good hiding, just for go and get now as wait 'til tomorrow that's how he was. He was a lovely, lovely man really. We appreciated him that's more than a lot of kids do today but we wouldn't dare answer back and you had to get out in the morning no matter how cold that was even when there was snow on the ground the other week you had to get out the tent and get outside and have a wash even if you had to break the ice on the water to have a wash. My dad was a sergeant major you had to get out and wash yourself wouldn't let you touch any cups or have tea or anything until you had a wash and comb you r hair and that. And err everything directly you finished your meal all the stuff had to be washed up and put away even though we never had a lot my dad was so clean you couldn't believe it and he cut a thing out the edge and hang the buckets up and cover them over you know you cant believe it. But he was in the army during the war and that's when he met my mum and they got married at Micheldever they went to the church in horse and cart and got married. Her and George had already got their marriage lines she was 18, my mum was.</p> <p>Quite a lot of travellers really in the err... There was the Frankhams and the Scotts, the Coopers we used to mix with them in the hop country the Users and that they used to come up hop picking and that quite a lot of them you know travellers years ago the Blarneys and loads of different people and some what I've forgotten about really some of the names see its all different especially at hoping times when they all used to come hopping see</p>
07:42		<p>Sometimes people do accept they do accept travellers more than what they do then I mean because if you went to a house they wouldn't even let you have a bucket of water. I mean now they do mix more with travellers I've found that even so I mean at the hairdressers where I go they knows who I am but they're very nice to me they don't treat any different to anybody else we are more acceptable to what we were then. They wouldn't let have a bucket they wouldn't even give you a cup of water let alone anything else don't want no gypsies round here you know but then they would let, you did be able stop on the farms and that because they always find you work on farms so you served a purpose you see and I mean during the war the traveller boys went in the army and they accepted them there and they got on alright so I don't know where all this comes from really it has got better like I say in some cases . Well I wouldn't change my life for nothing no I wouldn't. Johnny Doe asked me he said don't you wish you was 18 again I said nope. Cos I loved all my family and I still do love my family now all those that</p>

		are alive and I love all my brothers that are gone and I wouldn't change it for nobody because I've been happy with my life I've got 3 lovely kids and we enjoyed them when they were little that was the best time when the three kids were growing up and we used to take them out and really have fun with them you know Damian so no I wouldn't change it fro nothing so I loved all my people all my grandchildren like you and Delane and that I wouldn't change nothing I wouldn't want to even if I could.
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Key Timing Index	
Time	Topic
00:00	Family
02:03	Employment
03:46	Entertainment & Money
04:47	Marriage
04:58	Education
05:21	Past Times
07:42	Discrimination