

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
10-12-09	Sinead	Maria E		0:15:53

Key timing	Initial of person speaking	Transcription of Interview
00:00	Maria E	Growing up was lovely for me as in, within the family. I had a family, wonderful family life, wonderful parents, lovely sister and brother. I was very lucky.
00:15		But going to school I found hard because not many, but there were a few who obviously didn't like the gipsy ways, the people. We didn't live in that caravan. Well I didn't, well nor did my parents; when my brother was 5 they moved out. So I found it easy when I came home but hard when I was a school.
01:37		Playing. I played with my cousin Celia or there were a few other girls, which we played and we kept our own little group and they weren't gipsies, only my cousin Celia was. Umm, so that way it was ok, but if I came out of that circle and mixed with others then it became hard for me. I felt really out of my depth. I felt that there was 4... there was bullying; I could say bullying, nasty bullying sometimes. Verbal. Verbal bullying. As a child, with my parents it was wonderful; my mum and dad, my sister Anne, my brother Patsy. I was lucky, very lucky there. So when I got home I had that comfort. My father when he eventually stopped the romanying, roaming around. He worked in the London hospital as a stoker, what they used to call in those days. He used to work up there 7... 5, 6 days a week, whatever, but my mother, she used to sell flowers. Umm, in the summer months when the peas were ready and all the other ones, you know, fruits and that. Then she would go fruit picking, pea picking, potato picking but in between then, she would go selling her flowers. If there wasn't any work on a Saturday in the fields which usually there weren't, she would go off selling the flowers.
	Sinead Maria E	Did you work with her? Yeah, yeah. I always, I didn't actually work with my mother in the fields. I was lucky again. I used to pull the bine and I used to pull the bine and I used to put it all round her and then she... once she picked it she put the bine round the back of her so she shielded herself and I would then pull more bine and she wouldn't go any further. But I did have an uncle... had a rather large family and all those children had to work. I didn't and he used to say to my mum 'I don't know why you don't get that child to work. She would get you more money' and my mum used to say, 'No she isn't here to work and leave her alone.' So I was lucky but I enjoyed pulling the bine. But the potatoes, Course I couldn't do anything with the potatoes so I just used to play whatever I'd got. Whatever I taken that day. 'Coz too young to stay at home, sister and brother was working. But used to play 5 stones a lot. Used to find some nice little stones and clean them off and play 5 stones.
	Sinead Maria E	You mentioned a job that your dad did before, before he worked in the hospital. What was that? He used to go out in his umm... horse and cart sometimes selling his logs. But I cant remember much about him other than working umm... either at the London hospital or umm... Coz he was a stoker or doing brick laying. 'Coz he used to do the drains err... whatever you call it on the building he used to work on the buildings quite a lot when he came out of the... to be a stoker he worked on the buildings.
04:18		I try and keep my ways going. Obviously you can't keep that many ways going. I don't do anything of selling flowers or anything because I was a nurse. Trained to become a

07:34	<p>nurse, so umm, but things have changed and you have to go along with the change, but I tell what I do find is I'm..., its wrong perhaps but when I'm in a group of people and they don't really know me and then some people might mention gypsies or something I never mention anything not until later on then I say, 'Why did you not like those people?' 'Well no'. 'Would you not speak to them?' They say 'No'. 'Well your speaking to one now.' Yet though I got mine in. Yet I don't like the way people say it, because you know I think its sad and children now, I mean the children at school, which is lovely but I do think that they probably get the bullying. They don't get no more bullying than the other children do. But its sad sometimes when they're at school. It must be hard for them; it was hard for me.</p> <p>Where we lived my father bought a bungalow, he bought 2. My uncle lived in one, after a while and then we moved from one to the other. So no everybody know us as family and everybody used to talk and called my mother Mrs Hearne and Mr Hearne and... No, I didn't find anything like that which was nice, I mean, not with my eyes I didn't see it even when I went out with my ... Once I went out with my mother selling flowers and these children came up behind us calling names and my mum said take no notice just carry on walking it happens. So perhaps it had happened then to her.</p> <p>School, my parents were very strict on that. Went to school when I was 5. Hardly had any days off from school. If I did I was ill and if I was off school I had to be indoors and that was it. Umm... and once I left school. Left school on the Friday and went out on the Monday and got myself a job and I hadn't ... I always worked right up until I was 50 and I became ill and I was pensioned off, but I always worked.</p> <p>Although I, as I said before, I had that the children call me names. I used to try and shut it off I had good friends as well so good friends helped. But I used to try and shut it off. Because I used to think 'Well I look nice, I look nice and clean. My clothes look nice.</p> <p>Mums got a nice bungalow. Its all nice and clean and I used to visualising that. I used to visualise the home and the home got me through every day.</p> <p>My father said once to me you can only be a traveller... When my husband married me he was a none traveller so therefore my father used to say he isn't a traveller that is fine you haven't got any blood in you as a gypsy blood. To be a gypsy you got to marry in; the family has got to be a gypsy. Otherwise your not a gypsy there is no way that you can be a gypsy unless you married a gypsy person and they've got to be a well true blooded gypsy. I was very lucky my husband knew my father, my family quite well and he used to like my way of life. He, in fact, switched over to my way of life than he sort of did his and he used to love it. No I was lucky, so I kept everything going as I wanted to really and also he wanted it as well.</p>
09:22	<p>I still want to carry on as I am 'coz I'm really happy as I am. Stay with my background, I don't want to lose any of that. Not at all, not one bit of it. I wouldn't want to travel, you know like some of these gypsies do, travellers do, whatever they call their selves. I never know these days 'coz some call their selves gypsies, some call their selves Romany don't they? I wouldn't want to do that, I'm quite happy with my feet firmly on the ground and that's me.</p> <p>One of the things that the youngsters now are...I want them to drive say, to learn to drive ok, learn to drive but if they haven't been school to get the education they've got read that manual to be able to pass the test. If they haven't had any experience of that computer, they've got to do all that. There's so many hurdles that those children now have got to jump and they're hard hurdles for those children. Perhaps it will be ok for the women, the girl, that she marries, that's if she doesn't work she's fine, but if she wants to drive there's a big hurdle there. There's lots of things that they got to look at, whereas years ago it was so easy to go an get a job, tarmacng or whatever they did. But these days they cant do it, they cant do it can they? They want the recognised people to do it and when they aren't recognised they are probably good at their job but they can't get the work can they. I spoke to a few recently and they said its very hard there's hardly any work around, hard. Mind you, a lot now have gone into houses. Haven't they? Coming out their caravans and gone into houses. They've got to get a living. They've got to look seriously at their way of life. They've got to look ahead, not so much</p>

11:31		<p>what they're doing at the moment, but they've got to look ahead to try and do something else.</p> <p>I'd like to see children really go to school and not get the bullying. I would like to think that they got the good education and that they looked at that education and used it as a good tool for the future. As that is what the education is. It's a good tool. I'd like to think that they'd do their education and use their education as good tool.</p> <p>Fond memories? I think fond memories really were in the pea fields on the warm days. I can never remember the days raining. I can only remember the sunshine and pulling the bine for my mum and so she got all this bine all round her and in front of her and she d always got a cigarette on, bless her, and yet she didn't smoke a great deal. But yeah, I think that's one of the memories. And, also, I can remember going to school one day and we had P.E. and I got out of my dress and I stood it up and it stayed there, stood with starch. It was so lovely with all the petty coats underneath and the starch and when I came back it was still standing and everybody sort of said 'wow how did you do that?' you know, and of course, I think that was lovely and I can see that and you can see all those times can't you? Yeah, yeah. They're fond memories, yeah. My cousin for instance, he was only young at the time. Umm, he saw my dad. My dad was always painting and of course my cousin Michael said to my dad, 'Can I do some painting?' And my dad said 'Course you can my boy.' Well he went home and got a paint brush, didn't he? And painted my dads gate. Well my dad didn't know what he was doing. Painted my dads gate. Of course that was lovely and Dad went round to my cousin Genty, your boy has just painted my gate. Bright blue I think it was, but I was... They're memories and they're in front of you.</p> <p>But I used to like going out with my mum in the mornings on a Saturday when my sister wasn't there I used to go and you know when she used to sell the flowers. Romford we used to go to when she used to get the flowers. Mr Sims he was. She used to get a basket, fill her basket up. Massive great basket she had. All these flowers she had into lots and lots and lots of flowers and rolls of paper he'd give her and all that would cost was in those days it was a lot of money was a pound, a pound. That basket would be full packed with all those lovely flowers. Then we would get back on the bus and go to Harold Hill or round by Warley actually we moved back to Warley, not back to Warley, but we moved to Warley a t one point. Yeah, so they were lovely memories walking beside mum when she had the, you know, flowers and you could smell those flowers every so often when the breeze touched them, you could smell them.</p> <p>And I used to like go home in after school there was a cake and a cup of tea. That was always nice.</p>
14:44	Sinead Maria E	<p>So you've written your autobiography and I just wondering to know what it is about your life that you wanted to pass on to your family and friends?</p> <p>Umm... Everything really I just started it ermm... I just sort of did little tiny bits; snippets to start off with and it just snowballed from there. So what I did, I started to think about something and wrote about it and thought about something else and wrote about it and wrote about it and wrote about it and in the end, it just got put into a nice sequence. And that was lovely all these nice little stories, you know, funny little stories, sad, very sad stories sometimes. Very sad ones, but umm... that was nice when it was done when that was all finished That looked really nice. Very, very pleased with that and it went quite quickly, I was, you know... The radio, Essex radio found out about it, gave me a ring, and I went up to see them. Spoke on the radio, which was quite nerving.</p>
15:53		

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