

## 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
	DL	ML	24	00:23:41

Key timing	Initial of person speaking	Transcription of Interview
	ML	I'm Maria Loveridge and I'm 24
	DL	Maria can you tell me a bit about your life when you were younger?
	ML	Yeah when I was younger, say the age of 4 to 8 we actually moved everywhere there was to move. From being born until I was about 7 to 8 years of age and we used to do a hell of a lot of travelling. A hell of a lot, but then it all started to dwindle down, there wasn't so many places to pull so we had to get settled on a site which we didn't really like that much to be honest.
	DL	Is there many in your family?
	ML	There's just my brother and sister and myself, a small family.
	DL	Did you used to move around with cousins and relations?
	ML	Not necessarily no, one time we could be pulled in Cambridge and another time we could be pulled over the Isle of Wight, we was like that, one time we were pulled at Dunstable then we'd move back to St. Ives, we just used to be pulled all over the place really. We used to pull with all different kinds of travellers and some relations and practically moved with a hell of a lot of people over the years a lot of them that I've forgot now.
	DL	So thinking back is there things you could do back then that you can't do now?
	ML	Yeah you could mix with travellers more than what you can now, travelling people were more open to everybody but I find now that, me I talk to everybody, but not all travellers are like that anymore, its not that I'm upset about that because there's a lot of trouble sometimes with travellers now and peoples more feared to talk to you than that they want to talk to you and I'm the same myself its got to be someone I know or know a bit cause otherwise you're a bit wary of trouble. Travellers' year ago just used to talk to everybody and they'd be outside chatting but things aren't like that any more, that's what I've noticed over the years.
	DL	So there have been a lot of big changes?
	ML	To me there has like moving up and down and not being able to like we used to and travellers not mixing with each other its like our own clique, the only few people they choose to mix and vice versa, nobody all mixes together any more when years ago they did. I have found that hard really even until today. I

		still find it hard to deal with that, it wasn't something that I was used to growing up.
DL		So that's a big negative.
ML		It is really yeah
DL		Do you think there's any positive changes for travellers and gypsy people the last twenty or say fifteen years?
ML		Travellers are getting more educated now which I think is a really good thing because my granny and granddad and cousins they couldn't read or write and I'm thankful that my mum and dad learned me how to read and write because I can scholar and as times going on my own little children they can read and write and I think it's really good that travelling people know that the kids have got to go to school now and that's a real positive, I think for me that it's really good that we're coming into a time now that you've got to read and write, so that's a positive thing for me.
DL		So what's the biggest changes then?
ML		Moving up and down really 'cos there's nowhere to move and the last few camps what were about are either a hell of a lot of money to pull on or you're very close pulled to each other which you don't really want to be window to window with somebody, it's not ideal with a family of children screaming.
DL		That was the way they used to do that with much bigger families. Do you miss that sort of thing? Do you miss being window to window?
ML		Sometimes yeah, I do miss it sometimes cause now we're in one place and you know that the moving up and down just don't exist any more, it's not there even if you want it to be and that's the hardest thing about it I think and I'd like my kids to move up and down more than what they do, so they could live how I used to live and they haven't really done that, not really.
DL		With all this moving up and down I suppose you went to school?
ML		Yeah loads of different schools
DL		Did you ever suffer racism?
ML		Yeah, hell of a lot, I don't know why I guess I was an unlucky one, my last school was really bad that was why my dad took me out of school at 9, he was keeping me in until I was 11 but he had to drag me out at 9 because I used to get beat up. The last straw was I was having a drink out the water fountain and a boy got a hold of my head and banged my head into the water fountain and busted my nose open and gave me two black eyes and me dad never sent me no more after that so I did suffer a lot especially at my last school I really did suffer really bad with that, that was why I didn't go again.
DL		Is racism something you worry about for your children?

ML	Yeah, I really worry about my kids, they haven't seemed to have any problems at the minute, only at the school my son was at when he was first four and a half but he's not at that school any more. He did suffer, he did get beat up once, but apart from that the school that he's in right now thank god I've had no problems at all and they've been getting on fine but it does worry me.
DL	So are all your children in school?
ML	Two are in school and I've still got a little son at home
DL	Do you think, I know it's a biased thing to ask but do you think traveller's ways and values are better than gorgia values or do you think they're different.
ML	Travelling ways are very different, travellers are very high standard, like about being clean, even down to the way we cook. We're very different in different ways, gorgias and travellers have got different ways, we'll always be different.
DL	Do you think gypsies and gorgias can learn anything from each other?
ML	Yes and no because I'm not prejudiced against the gorgias and I don't judge anybody and I'm not racist against anybody and I will talk to anybody but travellers and gorgias, I'd say that they agree, travellers and gorgias are two different kinds and we'll always be two different kinds, and we'll never be the same as what they are and they will never be the same as what we are, its just what we are, cause if we were half of what there were and they were half of what we were there wouldn't be two different sides to two different people you know. So I don't think we'll ever be the same and united in one no, not that I've got anything against gorgia people because I haven't its just the way I've been brought up and brought up old fashioned, perhaps my beliefs are wrong but I cant help what I believe, I just don't think that we never will mix not as to be the same, it just wont never be.
DL	What do you think is the best of the traveller ways speaking as a gypsy woman 'cos it's a totally different thing to be a gypsy man because its just a different outlook.
ML	Its nice that 9 out of 10 gypsy women stay at home and look after their children, look after their husbands, its nice to know that you're needed, that your husband relies on you for everything, and I rely on him to earn the money so that's his job and my job is to look after him and the children and me own, and its nice to know that them values are still carrying on quite a bit, its nice, I do like that. The kids understand that, I wouldn't want them to be completely different to what me and their dad is now, but whether they will or not nobody knows.
DL	Another gypsy quality is the language, how do you feel about the language? Do you like the language?
ML	Yeah I do, what I know my kids know which is not a lot and really what I speak is slang, its not proper romaness, I only know little bits and pieces, because my

		mum and dad taught me what they knew and vice versa, but what I do know I do tell my kids and they do understand but everybody knows our slang now, gorgia people know it so its not really your own any more.
	DL	Would you like to keep it going?
	ML	Yeah definitely 100% I'd like to know more, I'd like my kids to know more and I'd like to know more meself.
	DL	So if there was a way to learn it properly would you want to learn it?
	ML	Yeah I would definitely, and I'd know 100% I'd definitely want my kid's to yeah, cause its nice to learn and keep to what you are so yeah I would.
	DL	As a travelling child, what were the best things that you learned being a traveller and you learn things you aren't necessarily told but you just learn through instinct, what was the best things you learnt like that?
	ML	Learning to have respect mostly, to have morals, to know when its right to say something and know when its right not to. To know when somebody's feeling down that there's a way that you can pick them up like a travelling person would, silly ways, like me if I've got a friend what's feeling down I'll buy her something or take her somewhere, its nice that you can see your family do that so you can learn by them, and it was nice that there's things that you should do like you shouldn't go out with boys til you're 16 and it goes on and on and on, there's loads of different morals and ways, and its nice to know them so you can teach your children what they've taught you.
	DL	Is there things you would have changed about your childhood
	ML	Yeah, if it would have been my way I wouldn't have been settled down I would have liked my mum and dad to have carried on what we used to do when i was younger, move up and down, mix more and stuff like that, I would have liked to have done that more. In my eyes it wasn't enough, so that's one thing from my childhood that I wished I could go back and do more.
	DL	Did you ever work on the land?
	ML	Yeah we done taters at Huntingdon, we done apples in Chiverses, which was the other side of on the way to the farm, you know where I mean. We used to do apples there and we done plums, but then me mum and me sister got factory jobs and then we never done the field work or orchard work any more and that was hard as well because all travellers used to be together working on the land so it was good because you were still being with all your own kind having a laugh and a chat as everybody was working so that was hard when that happened.
	DL	What age was it when you started working?
	ML	I can remember being out in the fields, I wasn't actually working but being in the fields with my mum and dad and sister and brother working, from the age,

		<p>well they done it from when I was a baby but I can remember from being about 4 - 5 years old I can remember being in the fields and the cold frosty mornings, but its something I wouldn't change, It didn't do any harm, its them sort of things I wouldn't like my kids to do it today, if me and my husband had field work I wouldn't want my children in the field with us because I'd be thinking of them being too cold, where us it didn't bother us we was wrapped up and just used to sit with a comic book or something and that was that but I wouldn't want to do that to my kids now.</p>
	DL	<p>Working in the fields from a young age that must have had an influence on your life and it must have given you some meaning to what you had and what you were going to get?</p>
	ML	<p>Oh yeah, like money. I'm very tight with money because I've seen work different times and I know how hard money is to earn, bit of a tight one with money because the cold frosty mornings with everyone working so hard makes you have a bit more respect for money itself because of how hard it is to get it.</p>
	DL	<p>So in your opinion Maria, what's your point of view on non travellers?</p>
	ML	<p>Some gorgia people are really, really lovely people, some do get on my nerves some time when they're very prejudice and you can see that they're prejudiced because I'm not a prejudiced person and I'm the same to them as what I would be to yourself. So when they come across and they seem a bit snotty, snobbish and turning their nose up at you and you think to yourself well why are you being like that because I'm not being like that to you? Them sort of things do get to me but gorgias in person I've got nothing against them, really nice people 99% you just get an odd one or two now and then that are very prejudiced and they give the rest a bad name and all travelling people think all gorgia people are like that but I don't look in that frame of mind, I look at a person as how they are in person and how they are to me.</p>
	DL	<p>When you've been around travellers, what is it like for a traveller with a disability?</p>
	ML	<p>Travelling people take more pity on that person, they feel more sorry for them and say there was a pull on the camp and somebody had a disability with walking and they were struggling with a can of water to go and get some water from the tap another travelling person would be running out trying to help them and a travelling person would do more for that person than someone never had a disability which I'm very open minded on that if somebody wants help you give them help but you shouldn't make people feel that they have got a disability and that they cant do anything for themselves, I'd help anyone do anything but if I could see that they didn't want help I wouldn't run out to make them feel like they needed help.</p>
	DL	<p>What about those poor individuals with mental disabilities?</p>
	ML	<p>That all depends, if it was a travelling woman with say depression, which is a lot of depression going about now cause it's the times what we're in with all</p>

		<p>the things going on in your life. I would try and help another travelling woman to cheer her up but if somebody had a really serious one that they could hurt me or hurt my children I don't know what I'd do, to be honest I'd still try and help but I just don't know what way to be honest, I haven't really come across anybody, women that's got depression yeah and all you can do is just be there for them you know. If somebody had a really serious, I haven't been with anybody who's been like that yet you know.</p>
	DL	<p>From what you're saying travellers and gypsy people keep an eye on people not because its suspicion, they keep an eye on them so they don't get hurt.</p>
	ML	<p>Yeah cause if I pulled on a camp and I saw a strange woman trying to kill herself I would go up to that trailer and make sure she never, even if I've never clapped eyes on her before you know, that's just something that travellers do if somebody needs help if you see a travelling person broke down on the side of the road, and travellers we always stick out like a sore thumb so we can tell we always pull over and help a travelling person regardless of whether we know them or not and that's something I've kept to, I haven't changed my ways.</p>
	DL	<p>I ask a lot of questions but there's some questions I come across to ask that I've never really thought about and here's another one, what's it like in the gypsy community to be a gypsy woman, cause we know what its like to be a gypsy man because a lot of stuff has already been said but what's it like to be a gypsy woman?</p>
	ML	<p>Its hard really because gypsy women don't have much time for anything really because we're always cooking, always cleaning, cause all travelling women have got a very high standard with cleanliness, making sure the children are spick and span, making sure that the grubs on the table on time for when their husband and kids come home that its there, that is the way that I've always been when I was at home and my dad was at work and my mum was at work I would cook tea and it would always be on the table for them when they got home its just the way you get brought up and its just the way you get used to. Travelling women's life is totally different than a travelling mans life is more about homeliness than what it is about anything else really because we don't get much time for anything else not really, I'd like to!</p>
	DL	<p>Are you proud to be a gypsy?</p>
	ML	<p>I am yeah, you're born to who you are and what you are you should be and that's the way I look at it.</p>
	DL	<p>What do you think then to the new thinking, like this, giving interviews trying to bring the nation out?</p>
	ML	<p>I think its good cause not all gorgias are prejudiced and what this is doing is making gorgias see that not all is as bad as what we seem to be, there's good and bad in everybody I'm not going to say all travelling people are good cause I'd be wrong to say that, and gorgia people would be wrong to say that all gorgias are good and bad in everybody but it just makes them understand that</p>

		bit more about us, so in that aspect I really do think it's a good thing.
	DL	What is being a gypsy person to you? What does it mean to you?
	ML	Well it means everything really because its just how I've been brought up you see when you're a gypsy person from being no age its drummed into you who you are and your morals and your beliefs, things you should and should never do, things what you can do, them sort of things you can only do when you're married, like drinking and stuff like that. They didn't believe you should drink before you're married and all that load of rubbish which I'm open minded on that. My kids if they want an odd drink here and there I don't think it'd matter that much to me but it did in my family even though my dad was a big drinker but that didn't mean that we could be so there's different ways but 9 out of 10 moral what I was taught I'd want my kids to be the same, what I've just said there about the drink if they was over the legal age I don't think it would matter to me that much like it did to my family but everything else I'd like my kids to be the same as me and that's what I try and do.
	DL	And what about the future?
	ML	Just carry on really, to be honest and truthful I'm just trying to learn the kids and bring them up the best way that I can and just to let them know what they are, who they are and what they should do and what they shouldn't do and at the minute I haven't really thought no more forward really I'm just trying to do the best I can with them and bring them up to be travellers.

### Key Timing Index

Time	Topic
00:00:00	Past Times
00:02:48	Changing Times
00:03:42	Education
00:05:44	Racism
00:07:15	Tradition / Values
00:11:05	Language
00:12:39	Past Times
00:17:30	Prejudice
00:18:44	Disability
00:22:25	Identity
00:24:12	Future

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