

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
14-4-10	Sinead	Patricia	60-70	00:11:30

Key timing	Initial of person speaking	Transcription of Interview
00:00	Patricia	<p>I've had so many different changes. Where we lived, we was all travellers. They was all travellers, you know, and nobody see any different really. We was all travellers, I never said 'oh I'm not a traveller' or... We was travellers and that's it.</p> <p>That wasn't as bad as what it was. It sort of did get a bit bad later on and then, you know, as they're growing up, you try and hide the fact that your travelling. I lived here because I always wan... my roots mean everything to me, but I know my sisters, even now, they're very sort of quiet about it. This is what's happened over the years because (although I'm saying over the years, I think its always been the same) there's prejudice, there's prejudiced. As I look back into my family history I'm finding it there; the prejudiced, how it affected them. How they had to keep moving on all the time. You're just not allowed to live how you wanna live as a, you know, as a free spirit and err you know its always you've got to conform; you've got to fit in this box, you've got to fit in that box. But who's blinking box is it? Who makes these boxes and says you've got to fit in that box? It reminds me a little bit of the north American Indians. They took away their country, they took away the air they breathe, but I believe it was Chief Seattle in the civil war that said 'How can you take the air that we breathe? How can you take this earth? You know the water, how can you there universal gifts?' I'm not going to say they are gifts from god because not everyone believes in god but they're there, they've always been there and they always will be there; apart from the pollution that everybody's chucking at them and I don't see how people control your life. As a traveller, as a traveller, as a gipsy, as a Romany that's been going on for hundreds of years. Its not just all of a sudden, ok lets opt out of this lot. Its not, it goes back hundreds of years and now all those stopping places've all been blocked up, all been barred up. I know that we went off as a family one year; me, my husband and my little un and me mum. Never left my mum anywhere, you know, she's come with us everywhere we've gone. We stayed at this place little old place out in Gaston, had a nice bit of stream. It's a stopping place that travellers used for years and years and years and years. Im going back about 20 years, you know, we stayed on there, you know, and we went down the shop and we had like the flat cart and was all piled on the flat cart and we was going down the shop and there was like a narrowish road, but it seemed to me there wasn't just one tractor. All of a sudden about ten tractors up that little... you know, where did all they come from? They're trying to..., you know, the horse was.... went a bit... she could, he could not she, he could, Ben could be a bit paranoid now and again and all of a sudden I could remember my mum saying, she was talking to herself, saying ' get off Mary' (Laughs) and she slid off the back and the horse sort of... coz they all kept their engines on, you know, and everything and err the horse sort of pulled its way through an 'edge. Cut its chest a little, we had it under control, but I mean.... Their ways like that you know and they're just sitting there smiling. I'm not saying everybody's the same, you know they're not, no people are people and you get good and bad everywhere, you know. I mean, my dad's apart from what I've said about him, he was a nice bloke. The drink used to get hold of him, mum used to panic, mum would have a go at him, you know, and also the way its changed its really its not like it used to be I think it is a disappearing culture, to be truthful. It's totally different now because travellers today don't really know enough about travellers from yesteryear. I mean it's like even the language you know my nana would talk Romany all the time, but it dies out don't it. It</p>

dies out so you don't umm you don't hear it. I mean, I used to think she was making up the words, half the time I think she made them up, you know its funny, 'ahh! don't git there that's muckadee, don't you touch that', you know, and Id think muckadee I thought it was like a word shed made up between mucky and dirty you know but yeah it has changed, definitely changed. I'm in a bungalow now but I cant start in I've got a conservatory there, and one on the front the back yard is really useful because I use it as a... you know, I'm living out there really because to be in here, I cant stand it. So it's the air; going out and having freedom and the working and being friendly with each other you know and of a night time sometimes the men would play the old accordion and that outside and we'd have a sing song and you know its all that sort of things and games you know like goppas on the ground an' that. Its mainly that and having like you don't have the freedom. You know I said to my friend Bonny, I said if I had wheel a big cartwheel on the side of me bungalow, I'd be all right you know because you do miss it. I mean the fairs you can go off to the fairs and everything and you can still see like meet up with all your old mates and that and err that's nice. It has changed and there's a lot of people on the road that are not travellers. That's ok, if that's the way they want to live, that's ok, but a lot of it is, there's so much rubbish about and people used to care about the countryside. They used to use the herbs. They needed that people just chucking all your rubbish and everything all over it. There's something wrong with it. isn't there?

I did go to school all the time because we were brought up in a 'ouse. We weren't brought up on the road so we were virtually stayed put, although I changed quite a few schools. Mother never lost the moving, but we was never anywhere longer than a year, 2 years, never had any problems. Most of us, I believe most of us travellers, I think we were, you know, nearly all travellers. I didn't know nobody else hardly that wasn't a traveller, you know. My best friend was Tracey Butler. When I first started going to school, she lived up the gipsy steps, Sugar Lane Fields in Chatham this is, well known stopping place and she lived there. I used to walk home with her. Ever such a quiet girl she was and I can remember walking home with her and the group use to walk up through Luton and would go to Luton School. She went to Luton School and all. And I'd leave her at the top of the Gipsy steps and she would go down to her wagons. There was wagons, there was all sorts down there: buses, wagons, but I mean we knew them all, we knew them all. They was our cousins and Gawd knows what, you know, friends and everywhere we go. When I first got married and had me council house. They moved me up next door to Chrissy Ripley. We all ready knew each other. The Butlers lived down the road, Butlers lived opposite, Lewie Beanie, you know we was all there together. I suppose, now thinking of when I was a little girl, sometimes we were sort of picked on, but I didn't think that was because we were gypsy I thought it was because me mum and me dad was always rowing. You know, we was there you couldn't sort of slide into the back ground, you knew we was there and so I never thought it was because we was Romany, because were by gypsies. I mean, we were clean and we had manners. We were polite, my dad always made sure we were polite, my mum used to help anybody and so would I because there was a little girl there, I mean, because I was only 6 and there was this little girl there. Mind you, this is me, I'll always stick up for the under dog, as well. If I see something going on that I don't like I have to butt my nose in.

Unfortunately and that's got me into trouble sometimes really because, and I think that is because, of my upbringing but this little girl used to, used to erm I remember we was all queuing up outside the err classroom waiting to go on in and she was... she stunk. She did, you know, and her hands were all sweaty and everyone moved away from her and said 'urgh! she stinks. Get away from Lucy. Get away from her' and this little girl stood there and she sort of cowered up. I mean, she wasn't quite the ticket, I don't know if she was all there, you know, but I felt so sorry for her that, you know, I went over and I got hold of her hand and I dared the lot of them, you know, take me on then, I was about five or six (Laughs) none of them did but err we was... I never felt it any really different. I did know we were actually different, but I thought it was... I never put it down to being a traveller, no one actually said it was because you was a traveller, but we did get called some funny names and I just thought it was you know coz the police was

		<p>always up(laughs) stopping a row and something else you know. I think its what you are, its in your blood. I don't think you'll ever get rid of that traveller is, is erm... You can trace back your roots, well with a bit of difficulty I should say so, because (laughs) the different names, but, you know, that's like with me finding me roots, you know, all the different names. I think also what you find a traveller is, they live by their hearts, they get on with what they need to do, you know, you don't normally find them interfering with other peoples business. If there's things to do they'll get on with it and they just want to be left alone. We love the air, we love singing, we love dancing. I suppose we can turn around and be a bit quick, you know, to stick up for ourselves, but on the whole we are peaceable people that like to be just left alone, you know, know I get on with everybody. I've worked with people in their houses. With the toffs, if ya like, but they just... You know, we're all people, all people are equal and that's how I look at people. There's no body higher than me and there's nobody lower, we're all people and we just need to be left alone get on with our jobs what we want to do and make our way in the world. I wanna give the kids the best, the kids you know they need to be looked after and we put a lot into that like my Nan bought up her brothers children as well as her own and I'm bringing up my grandchildren now. I brought up my 4 boys, I'm bringing up my grandchildren now and to me that more important than anything that's what defines a traveller though. I do think it's in the blood.</p> <p>What do I want in life? What does anybody want from life? Happiness, peace to be left alone. Like to be able to just, you know, pull up along side of the road and, you know, and stop where ever you need to be. There's places we cant stop, but there is places that should be left alone. There was all blinking common ground once until someone came and put a flag on it and said that's mine. Why do they have to own everything? Why cant we share everything? Why cant we all live together, peaceful and leave each other alone. Stop the name, everything s got to have a label on it. Don't matter what it is, you have to have a label on it and I'd like to get rid of all those labels. I suppose I am proud of my Romany roots, am proud of them. To me all people are equal. We're all the same but that's what Id like for us. All to be left alone do what you want. I'd like to see ermm Id like to see people left alone.</p>
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Key Timing Index	
Time	Topic
00:00	Changing Times