

GYPSY, ROMA AND  
TRAVELLER  
NATIONAL  
SYMPOSIUM *2013*



ROMANI  
CULTURAL & ARTS COMPANY

DELEGATE GUIDE

MONDAY 24TH JUNE 2013 - CITY HALL, CARDIFF, WALES



Dear Delegate,

We welcome you to the second GRT National Symposium in Wales.

The National Symposium is a development of the annual Gypsy, Roma & Traveller History Month Workshop, inaugurated by Dr Adrian Marsh in 2010, that encourages members from Local Authority, Central Government and GRT communities to discuss openly the challenges experienced in accessing services and provision. In 2012, the symposium examined many issues facing these vulnerable communities, including health, education and policy development. Some key players joined us in an open debate about the future for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers including Dr Adrian Marsh and Professor Thomas Acton, OBE.

Once again this year, the message is extended to include the concerns regarding wider Romani communities across Europe and beyond. The situation in many countries in the European Union is a cause for profound concern, as the reviews of the EU Member States *National Roma Integration Strategies* have argued (<http://www.opendemocracy.net/bernard-rorke/national-roma-integration-strategies-failing-romani-children>). Beyond the borders of the EU, the economic and social conditions for Roma and other Gypsy groups grow more grave day by day. Many of the former eastern European Roma communities from Slovakia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania are now present in the UK and Wales in particular and they seek better opportunities for improved quality of life and access to services. In particular, this year's symposium is concerned to address this issue of migration, mobility and what is left behind, the main theme being 'Home'. This year's symposium seeks to raise awareness of the miserable living conditions of many Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in the UK, Europe and worldwide. It aims to explore this situation in the presentations and workshops and to open and connect minds, to encourage policy makers and practitioners from all fields and services, to truly make a difference.



**Isaac Blake, Director,**

Romani Cultural & Arts  
Company

(as a child on the Shirenewton  
site, Cardiff)

# General Information



## Visitor Parking

Parking is available in the avenues surrounding City Hall. To park in these bays you will require Parking Vouchers, these can be purchased from City Hall (West Entrance) or from the National Museum of Wales.

Alternatively, parking is available in the NCP Car Parks situated around Cardiff [www.ncp.co.uk](http://www.ncp.co.uk) The closest to City Hall (and within walking distance are):

Cardiff Greyfriars, Greyfriars NCP, Greyfriars Road, Cardiff CF10 3AD

OR

Cardiff Dumfries Place, Dumfries Place NCP, Quay Street, Cardiff CF10 3FN

## Assistance and medical help

If you have any concerns during the day either speak to one of the stewards or someone in the registration area and you will be directed to the relevant staff. First Aid assistance will be available throughout the day.

## Security

There is a cloakroom and storage facility available for delegates.

## Refreshments

There are coffee breaks provided and a vegetarian buffet lunch is available during the lunch period. The lunch will be in the lower hall.

## Mobile Phones

As a courtesy to speakers and other delegates, please ensure that all personal mobile devices are 'on silence' or are switched off during the events.

## Evaluation Form

For quality assurance purposes and in order to improve our services, please complete the attached Evaluation Form and place in the relevant box at the registration desk at any point during the day.

# Symposium Agenda



9.30 **Registration**

10.00 **Welcome & Official Opening**

Isaac Blake - Director of The Romani Cultural & Arts Company

10.10 **Key Note Opening Speech**

**The Work of the Cross-Party Group on Gypsies and Travellers**

Julie Morgan - Assembly Member for Cardiff North and Chair of the Cross-Party Group on Gypsies and Travellers

**Home is where the hurt is: historical factors in the migration of eastern European Roma**

Dr Thomas Acton - Professor Emeritus of Romani Studies, University of Greenwich

11.15 **Coffee and tea; showing of a short video, "The Roma and Open Society"**

11.30 **Themed Presentations**

**Roma Early Childhood Inclusion studies and reports – a comparative study for Wales?**

Arthur Ivatts - former HMI for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller pupils, Department for Education

**Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities & the early years: developing early childhood care and education provision**

Dr Adrian Marsh - Senior Programme Manager, Roma 'Kopaçi' Initiatives, Early Childhood Programme, Open Society Foundations

12.30 **Lunch and networking opportunity**

13.15 **Launch of the short film, "Gypsies, Roma, Travellers: An Animated History" for GRT HM by Damn Fine Media, with an introduction by David Percy, Damn Fine Media**

13.30 **Themed Workshops**

**Justice and the Romani communities in the UK**

**(Lower Hall)**

Zena Brabazon, local councilor Haringey, magistrate and former head of Early Years & Play Services, London Borough of Haringey, Petr Torak, police constable with Cambridgeshire Constabulary

**Ensuring quality health provision for Roma, Gypsy, Traveller communities in Wales: using the power of the Welsh Roma Inclusion Strategy**

**(Room C)**

Dr Margaret Greenfields, Reader in Social Policy, Director of the Institute for Diversity Research, Inclusivity, Communities and Society (IDRICS), Faculty of Society & Health, Buckinghamshire New University & Dr Thomas Acton, Emeritus Professor of Romani Studies, University of Greenwich, London

**Developing Romani early years provision: working with Slovakian**

**Roma parents**

**(Room L)**

Miroslav Sklenka, Director, Wide Open School Foundation (Step-by-Step Slovakia), Ziar nad Hronem, Slovakia, Arthur Ivatts, former HMI Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Pupils, Department for Education

# Symposium Agenda



15.00 **Break and networking opportunity**

15.15 **WORKSHOPS**

**Family social work and intervention: a Roma social worker's perspective (Lower Hall)**

Mario Hassledal, Social Worker, Helsingborg Social Services Department, Sweden & Dr Adrian Marsh - Senior Programme Manager, Roma 'Kopaçi' Initiative, Early Childhood Programme, Open Society Foundations

**Ensuring quality health provision for Roma, Gypsy, Traveller communities in Wales: using the power of the Welsh Roma Inclusion Strategy (Room C)**

Dr Margaret Greenfields, Reader in Social Policy, Director of the Institute for Diversity Research, Inclusivity, Communities and Society (IDRICS), Faculty of Society & Health, Buckinghamshire New University, Dr Thomas Acton, Emeritus Professor of Romani Studies, University of Greenwich, London

**Romani arts and the educational curriculum (Room L)**

Isaac Blake, Director of the Romani Culture and Arts Company

17.00 **Event Summary & Close**

Isaac Blake - Director - Romani Cultural & Arts Company

The Romani Cultural & Arts Company is also grateful for the support of the following organisations and people:

BBC Children in Need

NHS Centre For Equality & Human Rights

Cardiff Council

Open Society Foundation

Gwent Education Minority-ethnic Service

Wales Migration Partnership

Heritage Lottery Fund

Welsh Government

Newport City Council

Clive Ward

Aleksandar G. Marinov

# Speaker Biographies



## **Thomas Acton, OBE - Emeritus Professor of Romani Studies, University of Greenwich**

Thomas Acton, O.B.E. (b.1948) ran the first Gypsy Council Caravan Summer School in 1967, helped organise the 1st World Romani Congress in 1971, finished his PhD on UK Gypsy politics in 1974, the year he joined Thames Polytechnic, which became the University of Greenwich, and where he is Emeritus Professor of Romani Studies. He is Patron of the Roma Support Group, and secretary of the Gypsy Lore Society and the Brentwood Gypsy Support Group.

## **Isaac Blake - Director - Romani Cultural & Arts Company, Cardiff**

Born a Romani Gypsy, Isaac Blake is a professional choreographer and Artistic Director of the Romani Cultural and Arts Company, which is currently funded by the BBC Children in Need, Big Lottery, Cardiff City Council and Newport City Council. In 2000 he received a scholarship to attend a 3 year undergraduate Dance Theatre Course at Laban in London. While at LABAN, Isaac worked with numerous artists and companies including Adventures in Motions Pictures (AMP), DV8 and Rambert.

Since graduating from LABAN, Isaac has furthered his studies in New York and has choreographed performances at the Wales Millennium Centre and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

Utilising the skills as an Artistic Director Isaac Blake has raised the necessary funds to take arts development onto both Gypsy / Traveller sites and gadjo (non-Gypsy) communities across Wales. This project is close to his heart knowing how artistically barren these sites can be. But using arts Isaac has found a way to engage with children and young people.

## **Zena Brabazon**

After university Zena spent 7 years community organising around children's services in Boston's poorest sections. The civil rights movement there was hugely influential. After establishing a successful charity for families with learning difficulties, she spent 20 years working for Haringey Council managing the Early Years & Play Service, developing first-class under 5s provision and Sure Start. In Regeneration she led on community involvement. She then worked in Islington and in 2010 was elected to Haringey Council. She is a magistrate in the Adult and Family Courts. In 2012 she started as a consultant for the OSF Early Childhood 'Kopaçi' programme.

## **Dr Margaret Greenfields - Director of the Institute of Diversity Research, Inclusivity, Communities and Society, Buckinghamshire New University.**

Margaret Greenfields initially trained as a lawyer before undertaking a PhD in Social Policy at the University of Bath and subsequently becoming an academic. She has over 25 years of research and local and central Government policy experience in working with UK Gypsy and Traveller communities (and more latterly Roma migrants) as well as other 'excluded' populations such as refugee women. She is currently Director of the Institute for Diversity Research at Buckinghamshire New University. Margaret's present research interests include European inter-faith social justice practices which challenge xenophobia and racism and support Gypsies/Traveller/Roma – a study developed through her association with the Woolf Institute, University of Cambridge and undertaking partnership working around health needs assessments for Gypsy/Traveller/Roma populations. She is the author with David Smith of a forthcoming book entitled 'The Decline of Nomadism: Housed Gypsies and Travellers in Britain' (Policy Press, 2013).

# Speaker Biographies



## **Mario Hässledal**

Mario Hässledal is a trained social worker and family therapist who has worked with families, couples, adolescents, unaccompanied refugee and guidance to staff in the public schools and state institution. In addition, he also worked to develop models for working with young people and their networks, and implementation of models. Mario has in partnership with Reach for Change started the organisation Building Bridges. Building Bridges is a nonprofit organization that works to improve the educational motivation and attendance of Roma children in primary and secondary school. Mario intentions is to interact with actors of society to make discriminatory norms and structures visible and create a better understanding of Roma culture and traditions.

## **Arthur Ivatts OBE**

Arthur Ivatts worked initially as a teacher and youth leader. Following a higher degree in anthropology, which focused on the Gypsies/Roma in England, he became involved with the early efforts to secure education for Roma/Gypsy and Traveller children.

After some years working within the voluntary NGO sector concerned with Gypsies/Roma and Travellers, he joined Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) in England in 1975 and soon became the HMI with national responsibility for the education of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller children. He held this post until 2003 when he decided to do consultancy work for government departments and intergovernmental organisations.

Arthur Ivatts has been involved in Roma/Gypsy related projects in Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Sweden and Romania. In 2003/4 he worked with a small research team on a report for the European Commission in relation to Roma and EU enlargement "(The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union" – EU November 2004). He is currently working as an international consultant.

## **Dr Adrian Marsh - Senior Programme Manager Roma Early Childhood Program, Open Society Foundations**

Adrian Marsh is of Romany-Traveller heritage and has been working with Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities in the UK, Sweden, Turkey, Egypt and central eastern and south eastern Europe. Dr Marsh has taught Romani Studies in London, Malmö, Stockholm, Cairo, Istanbul, and Diyarbakir and has held an ERSC fellowship, as Researcher in Romani Studies at Greenwich University, London. He is currently Senior Programme Manager for the Open Society Foundations' Roma 'Kopaçi' projects.

## **Julie Morgan - Assembly Member**

Julie Morgan has been the Assembly Member for Cardiff North since 2011, having previously been the MP for the area from 1997-2010. She is the Chair of the Cross-Party Group on Gypsies and Travellers in the Welsh Assembly – this considers issues of importance to Gypsies and Travellers in Wales and provides a forum for representatives from relevant organisations to meet with AMs to discuss areas of concern.

# Speaker Biographies



## **Miroslav Sklenka**

Miroslav is a Roma man from Slovak Republic. He works as an Executive Director of Skola dokoran n.o. - Wide open School non-profit organization in the town Ziar nad Hronom, Slovak Republic. Main activities of the organization are connected with the support of the development of education of children, youth, adults, especially Early Childhood Education of Romani children. His organization is a member of Romani Early Years Network and also international Step by Step Association. He is cooperating very closely with Open Society Foundation in London in the program "Roma Kopaçi" as an expert. He prepared the "Roma Confident Parents Program" project for Civic Association "The Way of Hope" from Ziar nad Hronom, Slovak Republic and he still supervises the project. He used to work for Slovak Government as an expert in Roma project financed from Structural Funds.

## **Petr Torak**

Petr Torak was born in the Czech Republic and is of Roma / Gypsy heritage. Torak is a serving Police Constable and since 2006 has been actively engaging in improving living and working conditions of Roma families in the UK and other European countries. He is President of International Association of Roma Professionals, the Chair person of police staff association UNITY, Coordinator at COMPAS Group and has provided tactical advice to Police Forces across the EU, CoE and to OSCE.