

GYPSY, ROMA AND  
TRAVELLER  
NATIONAL  
SYMPOSIUM *2014*



ROMANI  
CULTURAL & ARTS COMPANY

DELEGATE GUIDE

MONDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2014 - PIERHEAD, CARDIFF, WALES



Dear Delegate,

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

The Romani Cultural Arts Company is the leading Romani and Traveller community organisation in Wales, using the arts and culture as a vehicle for advocacy and empowerment amongst the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The RCAC seeks to build understanding and community cohesion between Gypsies and others, supporting individuals as “community champions” to become actors and agents of change, encouraging them to become active in making a difference for themselves.

The October 2014 “Great Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Debate” will bring together members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community with politicians, policy makers and public servants to address the issues that have become so prevalent in the past few years. Why are Roma from Eastern Europe coming to the UK? Who are they and how are they related to Gypsies and Travellers? How can our schools, hospitals and housing services work with these communities? The invited panel of experts will address these questions and others, in an “any questions” panel and discussion with the audience.

RCAC is hosting this event to provide an opportunity for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers to express their views, in their own words while responding to the questions and concerns raised by service providers, local authority managers, teachers, health professionals and police officers. RCAC intends this debate to be the basis for a report to government that will better inform the EU National Roma Integration Strategy for Wales, to provide a better understanding between all communities and improve the dialogue between those that have a responsibility to deliver services and provision.



**Isaac Blake, Director,**  
*Romani Cultural & Arts  
Company*  
*(as a child on the  
Shirenewton site, Cardiff)*

# General Information



## How to get to us

### Bus

The Baycar bendy bus leaves from Cardiff Queen Street Station, Dumfries Place, Greyfriars Road, St. Mary Street or Cardiff Central Rail Station every 10 minutes and stops at both Pierhead Street and outside the Wales Millennium Centre adjacent to the Senedd.

Routes 7 and 8 depart from Canal Street and Westgate Street respectively every 15 minutes and stop on Pierhead Street, a short walk (approximately 200 metres) from the Senedd and the Pierhead building. Route 11 departs from St Mary's Street every 30 minutes to Mermaid Quay.

### Train

Services run every 12 minutes from Cardiff Queen Street Station to Cardiff Bay Station. The station is a few minutes walk from the Senedd and the Pierhead building.

### Road

Leave the M4 at junction 33, follow the A4232 to Cardiff Bay and follow signposts to National Assembly for Wales, CF99 1NA.

### Car parking

The nearest pay and display car park is at Mermaid Quay, a short walk from the Pierhead building. The car park is permanently staffed by security guards. Voucher parking is available outside the Norwegian Church.

### Disabled car parking

Parking in the Assembly car park is available by prior arrangement for visitors who are disabled. In the case of visitors who are attending meetings with Assembly Members, Ministers or officials, arrangements should be made with their offices. In the case of visitors attending Plenary meetings, committee meetings or pre-arranged visits to the Senedd, parking can be arranged through the Assembly switchboard on 0845 010 5500 / 01492 523200: a minimum of 24 hours' notice is usually required together with information about the vehicle and driver. Visitors must display their disabled parking badge on arrival.

### Coach parking

A map detailing coach dropping-off points is available on request from the Assembly Booking Line.

### Bike / foot

The Taff Trail, which runs from Brecon along the River Taff through Cardiff city centre to Cardiff Bay, ends at the Oval Basin outside the Senedd. There is also a cycle and footpath, which runs along the A4232 from the Cardiff Bay Retail Park.

### Taxi

A number of firms provide taxi services from Cardiff city centre to Cardiff Bay. Taxi ranks are situated outside Cardiff Central railway station, near St David's Hall and at the bottom of Park Place.

# General Information



## Visitor Parking



## 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. <sup>Page 4</sup>

# Symposium Agenda



10.00 **Registration**

10.30 **Welcome & Official Opening**

Isaac Blake - Director of The Romani Cultural & Arts Company

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

10.40 **Key Note Opening Speech**

Lesley Griffiths - Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty - Welsh Government

11.00 **Panel I: Migration and Mobility; Anti-Gypsyism**

Chairperson: Dr Adrian Marsh,

Panel Participants: Dr Ethel Brooks, Dr Colin Clark, Ms. Lavinia Olmazu, Prof. Thomas Acton, Tanja Vasic

13.00 **Lunch and networking opportunity**

14.00 **Panel II: Access to Services; Community Cohesion**

Chairperson: Dr Adrian Marsh,

Panel Participants: Arthur Ivatts, Petr Torak, Andor Ürmös, Isaac Blake, Julie Morgan AM

15.45 **Event Summary & Close**

Dr Adrian Marsh, with Isaac Blake

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

Open Society Foundation

Welsh Government

BBC Children in Need

Heritage Lottery Fund

Aleksandar G. Marinov (Centre for Migration Policy Research, Swansea University)





# 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.

## **Dr Ethel Brooks**

Ethel Brooks is Romani-American and Professor of Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology at Rutgers University. She is a Tate-TrAIN Transnational Fellow at the University of the Arts London. She was the Undergraduate Director of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers (2012-2014) and the US-UK Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the University of the Arts London (2011-2012). Brooks has served as a Public Member of the United States Delegation to the Human Dimension Implementation meetings of the OSCE and was a speaker in the General Assembly hall for the United Nations Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony; she is currently a member of the US Delegation to the IHRA and its Roma Genocide Working Group. Brooks is currently heading the Consultation Committee for the proposed European Roma Institute. She is co-Director of the annual *Feminist Critical Analysis* course in Dubrovnik, Croatia and co-directed the 2013 Summer Campus in Romani Studies in Lyon, France. Brooks is the author of [\*Unraveling the Garment Industry: Transnational Organizing and Women's Work\*](#), winner of the 2010 Outstanding Book from the Global Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. Brooks edited, wrote the text, and curated the photos for the Autograph/ABP Newspaper *Roma: Europe is Ours* (2013). Brooks worked with Daniel Baker on "A Roma Model/The Cosmopolitan Other" for the 2013 *FormerWest* in Berlin. She had a photographic project in the exhibition *Family Lineups* in Bucharest, and a discussion with Delaine LeBas, "Sister Outsider, after Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde," (2013) for *Feminist Critical Analysis* in Dubrovnik. Brooks is the editor of the 2012 Comparative Symposium on "Romani Feminisms" for *Signs*, and co-editor of the 2007 special issue of *WSQ* on "Activisms;" Brooks has contributed articles to a number of books and journals, including *We Roma*, *White Zinfandel*, *Nevi Sara Kali* and *International Working Class History*, *Sweatshop USA* and *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*. Brooks is currently working on two book projects: *Disrupting the Nation: Land Tenure, Productivity and the Possibilities of a Romani Post-Coloniality*, and *(Mis)Recognitions and (Un)Acknowledgements: Visualities, Productivities and the Contours of Romani Feminism*, both of which focus on political economy, gender and racial formations, visual cultures, productivities, the right to the city, the increasing violence against Roma worldwide and the legacies of the Holocaust for Roma and Sinti.



# Speaker Biographies

## **Dr Colin Robert Clark**

Colin Robert Clark is Professor of Sociology & Social Policy at the University of the West of Scotland. Previous to taking up this post, in September 2013, he worked at the Universities of Strathclyde, Newcastle and Glasgow. Colin's PhD is from Edinburgh University where he was very lucky to work with the anthropologist Professor Judith Okely. Colin's primary research interests are located within the broad field of ethnic and racial studies and he has a specialist interest in Romani/Gypsy/Traveller Studies - indeed, most of his funded research and publications are in this particular area. Issues of mobility, identity, diversity and anti-racism are central to his research. Colin also has interests in intersectional approaches to social theory and research methods, as well as the practice and writing of ethnography. Colin's current work is mainly focused around European socio-economic and political 'concerns' regarding Roma migration, integration and citizenship. Recent publications include: Clark, C. 2014. 'Glasgow's Ellis Island? The integration and Stigmatisation of Govanhill's Roma population', *People, Place and Policy*, 8(1): 34-50 and Clark, C. and Taylor, R. 2014. 'Is Nomadism the problem? The social construction of Gypsies and Travellers as perpetrators of 'anti-social' behaviour in Britain', in Pickard, S. (Ed.) *Anti-Social Behaviour in Britain: Victorian and Contemporary Perspectives*, Basingstoke: Palgrave. Some of his other academic publications can be accessed here: <https://westscotland.academia.edu/ColinClark>. Colin also finds time to 'tweet': @profcolinclark

## **Lesley Griffiths - Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty - Welsh Government**

Lesley Griffiths was brought up in North East Wales and has lived and worked in Wrexham all her adult life. She has two daughters and has served as a school governor and community councillor. She worked at the Wrexham Maelor Hospital for twenty years. Prior to her election she worked as constituency assistant to Ian Lucas, MP. As a strong supporter of devolution for Wales, she played an active role in the 1997 'Yes for Wales' campaign. She is a member of Unison.

She was elected to the National Assembly for Wales in May 2007 and served on several Assembly Committees. She set up and chaired the Cross Party Hospice Group. In December 2009, she was appointed Deputy Minister for Science, Innovation and Skills. Following re-election to the National Assembly for Wales in May 2011, Lesley Griffiths was appointed Minister for Health and Social Services and in March 2013 was appointed Minister for Local Government and Government Business. In September 2014, she was appointed Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty.

Outside of politics, her main hobbies are music, walking and watching Wrexham Football Club. Lesley is formerly an elected director of the Wrexham Supporters Trust.



# Speaker Biographies

## **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 - Researcher in Romani Studies & Romani Early Years**

Dr Adrian Marsh - Researcher in Romani Studies & Romani Early Years, is of Romany-Traveller origins 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 at universities in London, Malmö, Stockholm, Cairo, Istanbul and Diyarbakir and has held an ERSC fellowship, as Researcher in Romani Studies at Greenwich University, London. He recently managed Early Childhood Development projects for Roma, Gypsies and Travellers for the Open Society Foundations, London. He is currently living and working in Istanbul, as a consultant expert for OSF, the Council of Europe, Save the Children and ISSA's Romani Early Years Network

## **Julie Morgan - Assembly Member**

Julie Morgan was elected as the Assembly Member for Cardiff North in May 2011. Prior to serving in the National Assembly for Wales, she was the Member of Parliament for Cardiff North (1997-2010), becoming the first woman MP to represent a part of Cardiff.

Before entering national politics, Julie was a social worker by profession and was previously an Assistant Director of Barnardo's. She also served as a councillor in Cardiff between 1985 and 1997. During her time as an MP, Julie presented three Private Member's Bills: one on banning smoking in public places, one on granting votes at 16, and one on preventing under-18s from using sunbeds. The latter became law in 2010.

She currently serves on the Environment and Sustainability, Public Accounts, and Finance committees in the Assembly, and chairs several Cross-Party Groups: Gypsies and Travellers, Children, PCS, Haemophilia, Justice Unions, and Cancer.

Julie was a founder member of the Women's Arts Association and is a patron of the Women Seeking Sanctuary Advocacy Group Wales, Touch Trust, Advocacy Matters, Pontyclun Bosom Pals, and the Policy Forum for Wales. She is also a trustee of Life for African Mothers, Vice President of George Thomas Hospice, and an Affiliate Member of the Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People at Swansea University.





# Speaker Biographies

## **Lavinia Olmazu**

After graduating in 2001 from University of Bucharest, Faculty of Philology in her native Romania, Lavinia came to Britain 11 years ago to study for her Master degree on European Social Policy at London School Of Economics and Political Science. Between 2005 and 2007 she was awarded an International Policy Fellow by OSF New York – Public Health Program. The research East-West Roma migration and the "culture of poverty" was looking at the European, international and national responses to Roma migration from South-East Europe and their impact on the actual socio-economic situation of Roma. After 17 years of experience in Romani movement Lavinia is now retraining to become a Psychotherapist.

## **Petr Torak**

Petr Torak was born in the Czech Republic and is of Roma / Gypsy heritage. He has fled from the Czech Republic in May 1999 to seek asylum in the United Kingdom after several racially motivated attacks by skinheads groups.

Torak is a serving Police Constable in Cambridgeshire. This makes him the first and only Roma Police Officer, from Central and Eastern Europe, working in the United Kingdom.

Since 2006 Torak has been actively engaging in improving living and working conditions of Roma families in the UK and other European countries. He is a co-founder and current Vice-Chair of Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association, Project Coordinator at COMPAS Group and has provided tactical advice to Police Forces across the EU and to OSCE. In 2013 Torak became a qualified ROMED Mediator under the Council of Europe.

His work has been recognised by 'Exceptional Effort and Support Award' in 2010 and by Medway Area Commander's Award in 2011.

## **Andor Urmos**

Andor Urmos is Policy Analyst at Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (European Commission). His main responsibility covers the thematic coordination of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programs, in particular measures supporting the inclusive growth pillar of the Europe 2020 strategy. It includes – amongst others – Roma inclusion, health measures, shift to community-based services, improving access to basic services by marginalised and disabled communities, measures responding on the demographic challenges, such as ageing, migration. The preparation of thematic guidance for the negotiations on the priorities of the future (2014-2020) programs in the respective thematic fields belongs also to Andor Urmos's tasks. He was graduated as a medical doctor and economist. Before working for the European Commission, he was employed by the Government of Hungary, in the Ministry of Social Affairs, as Head of Department for Roma Integration.

**United Kingdom: Care system fails Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children**

12/09/2014 - A recent undercover project led by children's charity Barnardo's exposed the shocking realities facing vulnerable young people. It revealed that hundreds of children, some as young as 16, are being sent...

A recent undercover project led by children's charity Barnardo's exposed the shocking realities facing vulnerable young people. It revealed that hundreds of children, some as young as 16, are being sent to live in isolation in bed-and-breakfast accommodation when they leave care, even if they are ill-equipped to do so.

While this is a problem that affects all kinds of children leaving care, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children face unique challenges. Even though the numbers of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children have increased significantly over the last five years, little thought is being given to their specific cultural needs in policy documentation.

Read more on <http://theconversation.com/care-system-fails-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-children-31477>