



# **“ON THE ROAD AGAIN?” GYPSIES, ROMA, TRAVELLERS ACCOMMODATION TRAINING DAY**



**An insider's guide to working with Romani and Traveller communities around housing and accommodation issues**

# General Information



Welsh Gypsies at Dolgellau Folk Festival 1958 Geoff Charles © NLW

What do the changes in housing and planning regulations and laws, over the past few years, mean for Romani and Traveller communities? How do local authority housing officers, voluntary sector accommodation officers and caravan site managers interpret these changes and remain both within the guidelines yet sympathetic to the needs of local residents, businesses and Romani and Traveller communities? Who is responsible for implementing national and local housing and accommodation policy and strategy? What role do the police play in evictions

of unauthorised encampments? What are the responsibilities of social workers, education staff and health visitors, with regard to housing, accommodation and Romani and Traveller families?

The Romani Cultural Arts Company is the leading Romani and Traveller community-based organisation in Wales, using the arts and culture as a vehicle for advocacy, education and empowerment, amongst the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities and the wider society in Wales. RCAC also supports individuals to become “Community Champions”, as actors and agents of change in their own communities, making a difference for themselves and the wider society. RCAC is managed by a Board (voluntary management committee) made up of representatives from the GRT communities, meaning that community members have a role as decision-makers and are part of the process of shaping the advocacy and rights agenda that RCAC promotes. The Company believes it is essential that the GRT communities be at the forefront of social progress and positive developments in social inclusion, in the struggle or the recognition of GRT rights and promoting inter-cultural understanding. Within Wales and increasingly across the UK, our advice and expertise is sought by local governments, policy-makers, decision-takers and local or national institutions. We are asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their policies and strategies or to support them in consultation to ensure the voice of the GRT communities they serve, is heard. We lead on advocacy for these vulnerable communities, influencing the policy and strategy agendas in the context of a devolved Welsh Government and increasingly internationally across the UK and we deliver quality training for those who work with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities and who wish to improve their reach and their impact.

Recently we have been able to:

- Influence the Welsh Government through a robust consultation process in relation to the drafting and implementation of the Scrap Metal Act (UK) and Horses Act (Wales) that has had a profound effect upon the GRT communities;
- Deliver arts based workshops to children and teachers in schools, providing knowledge, empowerment and models of ‘best practice’ in working with Romani and Traveller children (2016);
- Provided training to a large number of practitioners and professionals from a wide range of services and sectors in 2015-16 (160 individuals trained), through training days held in Cardiff;

- RCAC is currently managing a grant from NHS Wales' Centre for Equality & Human Rights to fund our project, "Stories of Health and Wellness from Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities in Wales" (2016-2017), using digital media to document health and wellness experiences amongst our communities, improve knowledge and access to services and build training for health practitioners.

Our organisation was founded in September 2009, initially using small grants to develop work with GRT children aged 3-16, in the area of South East Wales, where we began working on Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites and with housed Roma families. We have gradually built up our position as a leader in "best practise" with our community-centred approach to arts and advocacy workshops for GRT children and young people.

### Why is the work of the Romani Cultural and Arts Company needed?

The Romani Cultural and Arts Company intend to challenge the prevailing, negative stereotypes and myths relating to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people living in Wales and to promote knowledge and reliable data about GRT communities in wider society, as part of developing evidence-based practice and inclusive services and provision that meets the needs of the GRT communities and recognises the contributions and positive benefits brought by Romani and Traveller people to Welsh society. Challenging racism and discrimination in order to build a better, more diverse and representative society based on social justice, equity and inclusion will bring improvements for all, as more egalitarian societies that demonstrate tolerance and appreciate diversity have shown (see Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson, *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*, 2009). The RCAC also works to achieve a greater sense of self-worth among members of communities, who have largely internalised the racism and discrimination that they experience on a daily basis.

Racism is widely recognised as anti-social, at least in most cases. However, there is plenty of evidence, in the everyday lives of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and in academic text, that racism against these people is still perceived as socially acceptable. The following quotes explain why and what affect this has:

- Nearly 9 out of every 10 children and young people from a Gypsy background have suffered racial abuse and nearly two thirds have also been bullied or physically attacked...

*This is who we are, – Children's Society, 2007*

- Go to most museums, libraries and schools and nothing about *our* history and culture is kept or taught. The result is a widespread ignorance about who we are, which sometimes turns to hatred, fear and misunderstanding. In schools, children learn more about the Romans, Vikings or even fairies than they do about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures and what they have contributed to this world. As a result we are misunderstood, feared and loathed...

GRTHM – [www.grthm.co.uk](http://www.grthm.co.uk)

- The two groups identified as the most threatening – asylum seekers and Travellers – were the only groups with whom most interviewees had had no contact...

*Understanding Prejudice, Stonewall, 2004*

The Welsh Assembly Government's own report on the accommodation needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people (Niner, 2006) spoke of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people having 'distinct demographic and economic characteristics' and being one of the most socially excluded groups in Britain. It also spoke of the extent to which that social exclusion was reinforced by their experiences of discrimination.

- They noted the tendency of the settled community to stereotype and lump all Gypsy-Travellers together, and felt that Gypsy-Travellers are the population group against whom it is still 'acceptable' to make racist remarks...

*Accommodation Needs of Gypsy-Travellers in Wales, Niner, 2006*

The Romani Cultural and Arts Company is a response to these experiences of racism.

### Who should attend this training?

This course is suitable for anyone interested in ensuring that their accommodation services are inclusive and accessible for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. It would be particularly useful for those who work in Planning, Housing and Accommodation, Equality, Health, Education, Social Services, Public Health and the Early Years.

### Why should you attend this training?

It will assist you to:

- Ensure effective engagement with the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities in your particular area
- Be understanding and informed in your interactions with people from the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities
- Be better able to assess the accommodation needs that address the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities in Wales

### Aims

To increase awareness about the cultural diversity in Wales, to address issues and needs of Gypsy, Roma, Travellers in Wales particularly related to housing and accommodation, to inspire and improve the services and provision delivered to GRT communities and to generate trust and understanding between GRT communities and local authority service providers.

### Learning Objectives

- To achieve a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the housing and accommodation needs of GRT communities, from a local authority perspective;
- To develop a level of knowledge that will enhance and inform local authority officers' interactions with individuals and groups from the GRT communities in their areas and localities, particularly related to housing and accommodation;
- To introduce knowledge regarding the differences between Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities and their cultures, languages and origins, insofar as is useful to participants in the training, with the aim of inspiring best practice and improving service delivery;
- To introduce to participants examples of community members who are role models and who can challenge the prevailing stereotypes of Gypsies and Travellers or the negative images of Roma, present in media and popular press;

### Outcomes

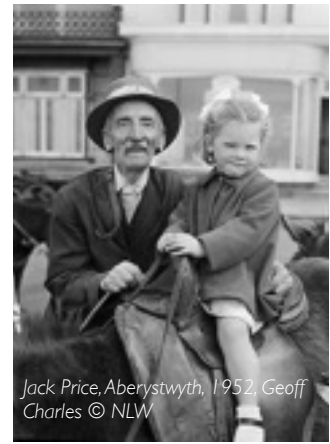
By the end the session participants will have:

- Increased their knowledge of the culture, traditions and history of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (this includes a timeline of key historical events and legislation);
- Developed an understanding of diversity within the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (that is, who are Gypsies, Roma and Travellers?);
- Increased their awareness regarding the prejudice and discrimination faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Wales and more widely across the UK;
- Identified obstacles to access and attitudinal issues or barriers in housing, accommodation, education, health, employment, safeguarding and other public services, that inhibit the delivery of quality provision to GRT communities;
- Improved participants' understandings of how to engage effectively with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community particularly over housing and accommodation issues and what they can

do to address exclusion and ensure inclusion in the delivery of services;

- Developed an Action Plan that will put their learning into practice, in the workplace;
- Established a baseline of knowledge and support that can be accessed to assist officers in carrying out their statutory duties.

There will only be 50 places available so please book early to avoid disappointment. The cost for the day (to include light refreshments, lunch & VAT) is £150.00 per delegate, if you book before the Tuesday 1st November and £175.00 if you book between 1st November and 15th November. Places will only be secured with a confirmed payment.



Jack Price, Aberystwyth, 1952, Geoff Charles © NLW

The venue will be in Bangor, North Wales at The Management Centre, Bangor Business School, College Road, Bangor LL57 2DG (Room D2:07) on **Wednesday 16th November 2016**.

The day will start at **09:30 and finish at 16:30**, with refreshments included for the workshop participants.

Please email for a booking form or copy, paste and email the attached booking form (p8) to:

**isaacblake@romaniarts.co.uk**

Isaac Blake, Director  
The Romani Cultural and Arts Company  
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13a Cathedral Road  
Cardiff  
CF11 9HA

Tel: 02920 786 439  
Skype: romaniarts  
Visit our website at: [www.romaniarts.co.uk](http://www.romaniarts.co.uk)

# Agenda

The day is designed to be interactive and participants are encouraged to participate in a dialogue about the topics, challenges and issues in question.

9:00 Registration

9:15 Welcome and introductions

- How well do you know Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people? Most people rarely come into direct contact with Romani and Traveller people, yet have views and opinions about them (short group exercise).
- Ethnicity, identities and communities: who and where are Gypsies, Roma, Travellers? What are the differences? (Information based on RCAC 'factsheets' and explainers)
- Cultural practices, traditions and religious beliefs and their impact upon housing and accommodation; (drawing upon research and the lived experiences from the trainers)
- Myths and realities: the truths behind the popular media stereotypes about 'Gypsy camps', stopping places and *mahalles* (Roma neighbourhoods);

Discussion

*There will be a brief break at 10:45 during this session.*

11:00 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families in modern Wales – an accommodation perspective

- Policy and strategy - including housing policy and accommodation (drawing upon UK and other examples);
- Legal framework- the housing and accommodation regulations, planning regulations and the law pertaining to Gypsies, Roma, Travellers; human rights (conventions, protections for minorities) and responsibilities in the UK and Council of Europe countries;
- How to build trust – effective strategies and approaches in dealing with housing and accommodation issues (examples of successful projects and programmes that have addressed housing and accommodation with Romani and Traveller communities);
- Accessing community – working with community members and representatives as cultural navigators;
- Engage for Success – designing *your* 'action plan' to identify obstacles and improve services in *your* field (individual exercise and short group discussion);
- Short film "Gypsies, Roma, Travellers: An Animated History" (OSF, 2012); clips from films about Dale Farm, Lunik IX, Sulukule and other housing related documentaries concerning Romani and Traveller communities

12:30 Lunch, including networking time and action planning following the morning sessions

13:30 Working with Gypsies and Travellers: small group work

Participants will divide into small groups to tackle particular *scenarios* developed for the training day, involving case studies utilising different challenges, issues and topics, including:

- Permanent caravan sites
- Accommodation and housing
- Encampments, stopping places and community negotiation
- Romani and Traveller fairs

*There will be a brief break during this session at 15:15.*

15:30 Developing practice: how to implement your 'action plan'

16:00 Questions and answers about the day and the material

16:30 Close (approximate time)



# Trainer Biographies

## Dr Adrian Marsh - Researcher in Romani Studies & Romani Early Years

Dr Adrian Marsh 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 for many years and been teaching and training professionals and practitioners in various countries across Europe over the last decade in London, Malmö, Stockholm, Trondheim, Pristina, Tirana, Cairo, Istanbul and Diyarbakir and has held an ERSC fellowship at Greenwich University, London. He recently managed Early Childhood Development projects for Roma, Gypsies and Travellers for the Open Society Foundations, London and lives and works in Istanbul, as a consultant expert for differing OSF programmes, the Council of Europe, Save the Children and ISSA's Romani Early Years Network, also currently coordinating the RCAC "Stories of Health and Wellness" project, amongst Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities across Wales.

## Christine Lee - Community Champion

Christine Lee is of Welsh Romani heritage and grew up in north Wales. She currently resides in Barry near Cardiff. Chris worked as a graphic designer in advertising, theatre, education and publishing for over thirty years. She also established and ran her own successful graphic design company - Chris Lee Design. Through contact with the Dollar Park Traveller Site in north Wales and other Romani and Traveller families, Chris became aware of the serious issues that affect life for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, which many families face on a regular basis. She is keen to contribute to a greater understanding of these issues by the majority population, to bring about changes in circumstances for the better and to make the non-Gypsy community more aware of the rich culture and traditions of Gypsies in Wales.

## Bill Cooney - Community Champion

Bill Cooney was born in the early 1960's in southern England. He is of Romani descent and his family have also married into Irish Traveller families as well. Bill has lived all over southern England and his family have also lived in Ireland. Bill and other Travellers acquired some land in 2006 and built one of the first private Gypsy sites in north Wales. In 2014, Bill found a piece of land in Conwy, moved onto it, and with Conwy Council and a government grant, he and other Travellers helped plan and get permission to build the first Council Gypsy site in north Wales since the early 1990's. The Travellers occupied the site in 2016 and Bill Cooney now lives there and helps to look after it. Billy leads on the 'Bangor Back Lane' Residents Association and is a key advocate and voice for his community.

**“On the Road Again?” Gypsies, Roma, Travellers accommodation Training day  
Wednesday 16th November 2016**

at The Management Centre, Bangor Business School, College Road, Bangor LL57 2DG  
**Room D2:07**

Application Form

Please complete **one** form per person. (complete in BLOCK CAPITALS – thank you)

Name: .....

Position: .....

Address (for **all** correspondence to be sent): .....

..... Post Code: .....

Telephone: ..... mobile: .....

Email address: .....

Service/Organisation: .....

I would like to attend the RCAC training day: The cost is £..... (please see below for cancellation charges) - please enclose a cheque to the value of: £..... made payable to the **Romani Cultural and Arts Company**. Or contact us about BACS transfer.

If you require and invoice, please indicate here: YES/NO.

State who and where you wish the invoice to be sent to if different from your above address.

.....

Requests for invoice need to be emailed to [isaacblake@romaniarts.co.uk](mailto:isaacblake@romaniarts.co.uk).

***A place is not secure until payment has been received***

Dietary requirements: Vegetarian/Vegan, other, please state: .....

*Please return the form with payment, no later than **4th November 2016** to: Isaac Blake the Romani Cultural and Arts Company, Temple Court, 13a Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9HA. email: [isaacblake@romaniarts.co.uk](mailto:isaacblake@romaniarts.co.uk)*

*Once payment has been received confirmation of place and further details will be sent to you direct.*

Cancellation charges / no show:

In the unfortunate event that you would need to cancel your place at the conference, RCAC would make every effort to re-sell your place, but in the event of RCAC being unsuccessful in reselling the following cancellation charges would apply:

Cancellation between 4 - 6 weeks prior to Training day	50%
Cancellation between 2 – 4 weeks prior to Training day	75%
Cancellation between 8 days and 2 weeks prior to Training day	100%
No show on the day of the conference, regardless of reason	100%

**The charges apply to the total amount paid for the conference.**



