

GYPSY, ROMA AND
TRAVELLER
NATIONAL
SYMPOSIUM *2012*



ROMANI
CULTURAL & ARTS COMPANY

DELEGATE GUIDE

FRIDAY 22ND JUNE 2012 - CITY HALL, CARDIFF, WALES



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

Dear Delegate,

We welcome you to the first 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. The previous annual workshops; held in Newport, have been aimed at promoting a better understanding and appreciation of the developments needed to establish improved social cohesion and integrate GRT communities for the greater good and have been led by Dr Marsh and Professor Thomas Acton in 2011.

This year, the message has been 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 recent report from the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammerberg has noted. 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 these communities are now present in the UK and Wales in particular, in increasing numbers as they seek asylum, better opportunities for improved quality of life and access to services and goods that are denied in their countries of origin. In particular, concerns to improve access to quality, early childhood education and care services, seen as the key mechanism to achieving long-term change for Romani peoples, are at the heart of this year's symposium.

The day will challenge delegates to think outside the box and we will all be inspired to leave and spread ideas into our own contexts and organisations.

Enjoy, participate and above all else, think.

Isaac Blake

Director, Romani Cultural & Arts Company



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 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, 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



9.00 **Registration**

10.00 **Welcome & Official Opening**

Isaac Blake - Director of The Romani Cultural & Arts Company

10.15 **Key Note Opening Speech**

- Jane Hutt - Minister for Finance and Leader of the House - Welsh Government

Additional Speakers

- Keith Towler - Childrens Commissioner for Wales

- Ian Hancock - Professor of Linguistics - University of Texas at Austin

11.00 **Break and networking opportunity**

11.30 **Themed Presentations**

The Way Forward in the Assembly

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

The Right to the City: Romani Histories and the London Olympics

- Ethel Brooks - University of the Arts London

Roma Children and Youth in South East Europe: Save the Children's response and strategic priorities

- Linda Pérez Bukåsen - Regional Director, Europe and Middle East - Save the Children Norway

13.00 **Lunch and networking opportunity**

14.00 **Themed Presentations**

Roma Inclusion in Education

- Costel Bercus- Chair - Roma Education Fund - Hungary

International Romani politics: more successful than commonly realized?

- Thomas Acton, OBE – Emeritus Professor of Romani Studies, - University of Greenwich and Patron of the Roma Support Group.

15.00 **Break and networking opportunity**

Symposium Agenda



15.30 WORKSHOPS

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Communities and Early Childhood Inclusion - Making the difference in the future Lower Hall
- Adrian Marsh - Open Society Foundation

How can we engage the GRT community through the Arts? Room A
- Isaac Blake - Director - Romani Cultural & Arts Company

HealthCare Needs of UK Traveller Populations Room B
- Margaret Greenfields - Reader in Social Policy/ Director of the Institute for Diversity Research, Inclusivity, Communities and Society (IDRICS) Buckinghamshire New University

17.00 Event Summary & Close

- John Davies - Programme Officer (Gypsy & Traveller) - Save the Children
- Isaac Blake - Director - Romani Cultural & Arts Company

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

BBC Children in Need

Cardiff Council

Ethnic Minority Communities Team

Gwent Education Minority-ethnic Service

Heritage Lottery Fund

Mencap Cymru

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Newport City Council

Open Society Foundation

Save the Children

Wales Migration Partnership

Welsh Government

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.

Costel Bercus - Chair - REF Board

Costel Bercus is a Romanian Roma, graduated in International Relations and European Studies from the Spiru Haret University in Bucharest. Since 1997, he has been working as a human rights activist with Romani CRISS (Roma Center for Social Interventions and Studies), which is a well-known human rights organization in Romania. In 2000, he was appointed Executive Director of Romani CRISS, which made him exposed to extensive international activities and ultimately led to his appointment in 2005 as Board Member of the Roma Education Fund (REF). The same year, he was asked to take the Chairmanship of the REF Board which he is carrying on still today. Between 2006 and 2008, he was leading the Roma Civic Alliance of Romania, a network organization linking over twenty Roma NGOs in Romania. He has also worked as an international consultant providing technical assistance in policy development on Roma inclusion for several countries in the Western Balkans and Romania, commissioned by different international development agencies.

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 Gorjer (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 - 2011-2012 Fulbright Distinguished Chair, University of the Arts London

Ethel Brooks is the 2011-2012 US-UK Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the University of the Arts London. She is an Associate Professor in the Departments of Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology at Rutgers University. Brooks is the author of *Unraveling the Garment Industry: Transnational Organizing and Women's Work* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), which received the award for Outstanding Book for 2010 from the Society for the Study of Social Problems. She is co-editor of the special issue of WSQ on "Activisms," (2007) and editor of the forthcoming "Comparative Symposium on Romani Feminisms" for Signs. She has contributed articles to a number of academic journals, including Nevi Sara Kali, The International Feminist Journal of Politics and International Labor and Working Class History, as well as book chapters in *Sweatshop USA: The American Sweatshop in Historical and Global Perspective* (2003) and *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust: Memories and Identities in Jewish Diasporas* (2007).

She 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, cultural production and the increasing violence against Romani (Gypsy) citizens worldwide. Her op-eds on the expulsion of Romani people in various European countries have recently appeared in the Guardian.

Speaker Biographies

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

Margaret Greenfields initially trained as a lawyer and thereafter fairly rapidly moved into the field of social policy. She has worked with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities for over twenty five years and was a founder Trustee of Travellers' Aid Trust in the mid 1980s. Since that time she has acted as a specialist advisor and undertaken research on accommodation, health and social care needs of GRT communities on behalf of a number of local and national charities and for agencies such as the Equalities and Human Rights Commission as well as carrying out a significant number of GTAs in partnership with community interviewers and acting as an expert witness in planning cases.

Dr Ian Hancock - Professor of Linguistics - University of Texas at Austin

Ian Hancock has taught as a member of the minority faculty at The University of Texas since 1972. His principal academic areas are the origins and standardization of the Romani language, creolization and language contact, and English dialectology. He is Director of RADO (The Romani Archives and Documentation Center) at The University of Texas, where he is Nowlin Regents Professor of Liberal Arts. He has published widely with over 400 articles, chapters and books authored or edited. In addition to his academic work he is a human rights activist, having represented the Roma at the United Nations as a member of the UN Economic and Social Council and of UNICEF. He is North American member of the Vienna-based International Romani Parliament and was a member of the Project on Ethnic Relations' Roma Advisory Board. In addition he addresses the US Congress and the Council of Europe on Roma issues, and has represented the US State Department at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Warsaw and spoken in Brussels, Geneva and New York before the EU and the UN. He was recipient in Norway of the Rafto Foundation International Prize for Human Rights (1997) and of the Gamaliel Chair in Peace and Justice from The University of Wisconsin (1998). In 1998 he was appointed by President Clinton as the sole Romani member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. He serves on a number of editorial boards. He was granted an honorary doctorate with distinction by Umeå University (Sweden) in 2005 and received a second honorary doctorate from Constantine University (Slovakia) in 2009. He currently serves as State Commissioner on the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission.

Jane Hutt - Minister for Finance and Leader of the House - Welsh Government

Educated at the University of Kent, the London School of Economics and Bristol University, Jane is also an Honorary Fellow of University of Wales Institute Cardiff.

Prior to her election to the National Assembly for Wales, Jane was director of Chwarae Teg (Fair Play) and was the Welsh member on the New Opportunities (UK) Fund and was an elected Member of the former South Glamorgan County Council.

Jane is married with two children, is a Welsh learner, and lives in Barry.

Having served as Minister for Health and Social Services (1999-2005), Minister for Assembly Business, Children and Equalities (2005-2007) and Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (2007-2009), Jane was appointed as Minister for Budget and Business in December 2009. Following re-election to the National Assembly for Wales in May 2011, Jane Hutt was appointed Minister for Finance and Leader of the House.

Speaker Biographies

Sarah Klaus - Director - Early Childhood Program, Open Society Institute

Sarah Klaus, Director of the Early Childhood Programme (ECP) at the Open Society Institute (OSI), leads a team of specialists who develop and implement OSI's global early childhood portfolio. ECP seeks to improve services and policies that impact young children, particularly minority and marginalized groups, and to build capacity of early childhood professionals. Since 2006, Klaus has expanded the program's original focus in Central Eastern Europe and Eurasia to include Africa, Asia, Latin American and the Middle East.

Over the past two decades, Klaus helped launch Step by Step, OSI's flagship early childhood program, and the International Step by Step Association (ISSA), a network established to support early childhood professionals in Central Eastern Europe and Eurasia. She served as ISSA's executive director from its inception in 1999 to 2006.

Prior to joining OSI, Klaus worked in the former Soviet Union as a guide to an official U.S. exhibition and assisted researchers at the Kennan Institute. Sarah received her Bachelor's degree in Russian Studies from Brown University and her Master's degree in Developmental Psychology from Columbia University Teachers College. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education at the Institute of Education in London. Her research interests include Russian developmental psychology, child and family policies in pre-revolutionary Russia, and transition of children-at-risk into primary school.

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.

Linda Perez Bukasen - Regional Director Europe and Middle East - Save the Children Norway

Master in Political Science, specialization in Development Management. Worked nine years with Save the Children Norway; the last three years with the Balkans, Russia and Middle East. Roma inclusion an important working area in the Balkans. Additional work experience from Amnesty International Norway, Norwegian Refugee Council and Latin American Solidarity Group.

Speaker Biographies

Keith Towler - Children's Commissioner for Wales

Keith is a respected children's rights expert with over 25 years' experience in social work, youth work and youth justice roles.

After graduating from Exeter College of Art and Design with a degree in Fine Arts, Keith initially pursued a career in Social Work. A career in youth justice beckoned with a role as Head of NACRO Cymru (the crime reduction charity). He then went on to become NACRO Director of Crime Reduction (England and Wales) in 2001.

Prior to taking up the post of Children's Commissioner for Wales in March 2008, he was Programme Director for the Wales Programme of Save the Children for two years and Chair of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Monitoring Group for Wales.

As the country's second children's commissioner, he has published reports on child trafficking young carers and looked after children. Keith was also member of the Welsh Government's national Children's Safeguarding Forum and a panel member of the Family Justice Review – an independent review commissioned by the Ministry of Justice, Department of Education and the Welsh Government - where he represented children's interests.