

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller

Workshops For Schools

Wigan Traveller Education Service are very pleased to offer information about these Gypsy Roma Traveller workshops for schools. These will provide an exciting opportunity for schools to promote their equality, diversity and community cohesion agendas through the arts. They will also contribute to achieving the Stephen Lawrence Education Standard, the Inclusion Chartermark, help celebrate different languages – including Rromanes, Albanian, French, Italian, Polish, Czech, Spanish – and the rich contributions of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities to society. These one day workshops provide stimulating, enjoyable learning experiences for the whole school. They can stand alone or be integrated into a project over the term featuring the different artists and using them to help children create and enrich their own narratives

or that of the many GRT folktales or stories. These artists and performers offer skills and talents which have inspired many children and will have a major impact on your school. This work can be an exciting introduction to the GRT communities and help the school plan how best to celebrate **Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month** in June each year. It will also have a great impact on any GRT pupils in the school and their families who will value the celebration of their communities in school and will further promote good home school partnerships. All of the artists and performers have had great reviews of their work from schools and are all CRB checked. Schools will be sent a pack of information about the workshops when booking and schools can plan their day/s with the artists to focus on particular skills/themes.

How to Book

Please contact individual artists and performers directly to discuss prices. Costs may vary due to particular requirements. Melanie Price has special rates for Wigan schools – contact her through the Wigan Traveller Education Service to take advantage.

Ferdinand Koci: 0782 654 173
ferdinand@grtleeds.co.uk

Richard O'Neill: rroneill@aol.com

Nick Dow: 01282 871 891
mallydow983@btinternet.com
thedows@atchantan.freeserve.co.uk

Jess Smith: 0176 465 6278
info@jesssmith.co.uk

Ray Langton: ray.langton@talk21.com

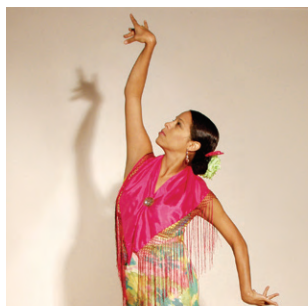
Melanie Price: 0779 083 2654
pricemelanie2003@yahoo.com

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Peter White: pete.lawless.white@googlemail.com



“We need to create an inclusive learning environment for all children. All cultural backgrounds should be understood and respected. Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities should feel safe and cherished in school and therefore parents and pupils will be proud to identify themselves.”

Lord Adonis 2008

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller artists and performers spiralling clockwise from the top-left: Ferdinand Koci, Richard O'Neill, Nick Dow, Jess Smith, Ray Langton, Melanie Price, Kirk Mulhearn, Carla Soto and Peter White.

Ferdinand Koci: International Roma Artist

Art Workshops

Ferdinand is Roma and from Albania. He was the first Roma to attend the Art School in Tirana and has since studied in France and has exhibited widely across Europe.

Ferdinand has led successful and exciting workshops for all ages combining art appreciation with practical work. He can demonstrate, encourage and inspire. Whether talking about his art, viewing and discussing artworks or working via activity sheets, Ferdinand's workshops are lively and enriching.

The workshops include learning about Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (GRT) and show work by GRT artists. This gives an insight into the GRT culture and contributes to the equality, diversity and community cohesion agenda.

He can provide the experience of visiting an art exhibition; one of the requirements of the national curriculum. The workshop can contribute to the Stephen Lawrence Education Standard or the Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Programme.

He provides a range of art activities and workshops for children and young people that include:

Art exhibition for the whole school with engaging activity sheets

Drawing classes – pencil, ink, charcoal, gouache and pastel

Portraiture demonstration to encourage drawing and visual recording

Printing – exploring different techniques

Collage – how to plan and effective use

Painting – exploring different techniques

At lunch time he will do a portrait of one of the pupils so everyone in the school can see this talented artist at work.



"Excellent input. The children were mesmerized when Ferdinand was at work."

"Fantastic! He encourages children to have a go and believe that they can draw and paint."

"Very much in keeping with our enrichment programme – the results will go into a huge display for the new academic year."

Richard O'Neill: Gypsy Storyteller

Storytelling Workshops

Richard O'Neill is one of the UK's best loved storytellers. Working across all key stages his authentic, interactive and unique stories provide entertainment and important subtle lessons to children and students.

Richard uses the storytelling skills passed down to him by Romani families to promote their rich culture in all schools.

A workshop can be a mixture of traditional stories, assembly performance, storytelling skills, creative writing and perceptions.

Richard believes in the power of storytelling to educate, inform, build bridges and entertain. Storytelling helps with literacy and personal confidence. Days can be customised to schools requirements.



"The children took hold of the storytelling skills that they had learnt and continued to develop them in their own way. The children's awareness of the Traveller community was broadened in a very gentle and subtle way."

"I really liked the way his very important message was got across in an amusing, light hearted way – it somehow made it more powerful for the children."

Peter White: Circus Performer

Circus Workshops

Peter White is a professional performer and instructor. With his Suitcase Circus show and his circus skills workshops he has been entertaining and inspiring children and adults for over 15 years. Pete's Circus Workshops are great fun and a good form of exercise, developing concentration, hand-eye coordination, motivation and self discipline. By breaking skills down into simple steps, practicing them in a fun way, children participate, succeed and enjoy learning juggling, plate-spinning, Hula Hoops, diabolo and performance/presentation skills.

In April 2010 Pete will perform his Suitcase Circus to over 2,000 children at the Royal Albert Hall in

London for Camden Education Authority Music Festival for the 4th time. The show is also perfect for smaller audiences (up to 250) in the school hall.

Pete's show and workshops are accessible to all and can be arranged to tie in with a particular part of the curriculum, as an end of term treat, as part of an Arts Festival, Fete or Fair.

Performances are easily staged in the school hall and can last up to 1 hour.

Single Workshops last 1 hour and are for up to 30 participants, while a Circus Workshop Day can cater for anything between 30 and 120 people. A Circus Week can culminate in a performance of the participants showing off their new skills.

"Every year I ask the children if they want Suitcase Circus again or something different, and they always enthusiastically insist on having you back."

Paula Harmer, Head Teacher Thorpe Hesley Junior School, Rotherham.



Carla Soto and Mike Holland: Flamenco Artists

Flamenco Dance Workshops

Discover and try out the Gypsy rhythms. Explore the use of the different parts of the body in Flamenco dance. The objective is that all participants will have fun, learn about a different culture and learn to dance some Flamenco steps. Carla Soto, Venezuelan Flamenco dancer comes from a musical Cuban-Spanish family. She is a Spanish tutor, professional dancer, choreographer and dance teacher. In these workshops she encourages the utilization of the basis of movement, technique, body, space, coordination and rhythm. Carla is accompanied throughout by Guitarist Mike Holland.

Participants will learn about the story of the Gypsies and how they influenced the art of Flamenco. By learning some basic steps and Flamenco dance elements (clapping, stamping, curling hands and clicking) they will develop and improve confidence, posture, balance; hands, arms and hip technique as well as coordination, motor and



rhythm skills. They will also pick up some Spanish words along the way! After questioning the class about Spain, Flamenco and the Gypsies the class begins with a story recited by the guitarist about the Gypsies and how they were treated as an oppressed culture. The story is illustrated with map, poster and artefacts. A demonstration of Flamenco dance follows. After learning some basic steps the class will use their new skills in a choreographed dance. Working in small groups the class will choose an animal of their preference and mime the animal without making any noise; improvising movements by using some of the steps and the Flamenco dance elements. Participants will then choreograph their own performance. Carla will also teach how to play castanets and the drum. All that is required is a suitable floor for dancing, (such as wooden floor or a bouncing floor), to demonstrate Flamenco foot work. The workshop is for a maximum of 30 from age 5+.



“Brilliant history lesson – telling how Flamenco began ... smiles, smiles and more smiles.”

Hawthorn Wood Primary, Leeds

“All children and staff enjoyed this activity. Some children inspired and continued to dance the next day.”

Ingram Road Primary, Leeds

Nick Dow: Wagon Painter and Musician

Wagon Painting Workshops

Nick Dow can work productively with all ages from Year 1 upwards. He has hand-built many traditional Vardos. He teaches about the different types of Traveller wagon and gives a demonstration of traditional wagon painting and Narrowboat roses and Castles painting.

He supervises, helps and encourages children as they have a go.

Nick Dow is best known for restoring a Gypsy Caravan for Rolling Stone Ronnie Wood.

Nick is also a musician and can sing traditional Gypsy songs. Lyric sheets can be provided. Nick is an experienced guitar tutor should you wish workshops to be more musical.

Nick can also speak about his own experiences in relation to prejudice.



Ray Langton: Musician

Traveller Songs and Music Workshops

A multi-media show including a mini concert and the opportunity to learn a scale and a tune on a Mini Melodeon.

Ray Langton has been playing music on the melodeon and singing for over 30 years and has had many years of experience delivering his show ‘Songs and Music of Travelling People’ in both Primary and Secondary Schools. The show was originally devised for a ‘Community Cohesion’ event at a Secondary School in Cheshire designed to improve integration between the local community and the Traveller community. Ray has been invited back each year to be part of this event ever since.

The show lasts up to an hour and introduces the idea that Travelling people can be found all over the world. Links are made to the pupils’ own experiences of enjoying life outside when on camping and caravanning holidays. The show emphasises the importance of music and song

amongst Travellers wherever they come from and each song introduces a different instrument; guitar, concertina, old fashioned one row melodeon and button accordion. Other pocket based instruments such as mouth organ and tin whistle are also included to show how even simple instruments can raise the spirits on cold winter nights. Each song is backed by a computer projected slide show timed to fit with the verses of the songs and providing visual cues. This ‘mini concert’ part of the show lasts 20-30 minutes and is followed by an opportunity for all the young people to learn a scale and a tune or two on a ‘Mini Melodeon’. Ray brings with him at least 30 Mini Melodeons and there are usually enough for accompanying adults to have a go as well! The Mini Melodeon is a very accessible instrument and with Ray’s unique approach to teaching the instrument very few people leave his sessions without being able to play a scale and a simple tune on the instrument.



Jess Smith: Scottish Traveller Storytelling Workshops

Jess Smith was raised in a large family of Scottish Travellers. As a traditional storyteller and writer she is in great demand for live performances and workshops throughout the UK. This is a terrific opportunity to get Jess to run a workshop in your school where she “raises cultural awareness through storytelling”.

Her repertoire is extensive and she can provide workshops for children (Key Stage 2 upwards) or adults. She has used Persona Dolls as well as

music and storytelling to promote Traveller culture. Jess has run workshops and performed as part of the annual Gypsy Roma Traveller History Months in June. She was also involved in the successful storytelling project in Leeds in 2006.

Note that as Jess will be travelling some distance she would prefer at least 2 days in approximately the same area. This doesn't have to be in the same school so it could be possible to collaborate with colleagues at other nearby schools.



Kirk Mulhearn and Lloyd Holland: Showpeople Fairground Workshops

Kirk and Lloyd have been Showmen all their lives. So they have plenty of experience of life on the road and the cultural differences they have found as they meet and interact with the general public. This is something they are keen to share as part of the two workshops they can offer schools.

One is centred around fairground art and the other on fairground attractions.

In the art workshops Lloyd shows examples of his artwork and discusses fairground patterns and decoration and the techniques of using enamel, metallic paints. There is a display for the class to view and pre-prepared worksheets are used. Each child has their initials drawn in a fairground style, within a background of ribbons and flourishes. They later colour and decorate these themselves using pencils and crayons.

The fairground ride workshop is a more recent venture for the pair. In this they demonstrate

setting up a 'Chair-o-plane/Galloping Horse' ride. The class gets to see the ride set up right from its delivery, to public use. Teaching here is on the planning and teamwork required and discusses technology, engineering, construction and maintenance of fairground rides: including the use of bearings, gearing ratios and power. This workshop is aimed at older children and needs to take place out of doors. And at the end the whole class can enjoy the ride!

In each workshop Kirk and Lloyd discuss the lives of showpeople and talk about the history of fairgrounds. Each ends with questions and discussions prompted by the class themselves. In morning sessions they are happy to talk to whole school assemblies.

Each workshop takes just half a day as Kirk and Lloyd prefer to keep the fairground workshops tight and intense.



Melanie Price: Romany Gypsy Culture Workshops

Melanie Price is a Romany Gypsy. She works across all Key stages using dance, music, crafts and history to raise awareness of Traveller Culture. (Promotes cultural awareness through the medium of the arts). A workshop could be a mixture of craft (flower making) cooking or dance. Melanie has spent 20 years travelling the world supporting Roma and Gypsy people. She would be able to share her experiences with both children and adults. She has worked extensively in schools and other settings. Her annual contribution to

Middlewich High School's (East Cheshire) Diversity Day is increasingly popular.

Melanie Price gives talks and performances, runs workshops and conducts assemblies and art activities in schools about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller lifestyles and culture.

"The pupils' evaluations put Melanie's workshop top of the list."

Lynda Kappes – Assistant Head

