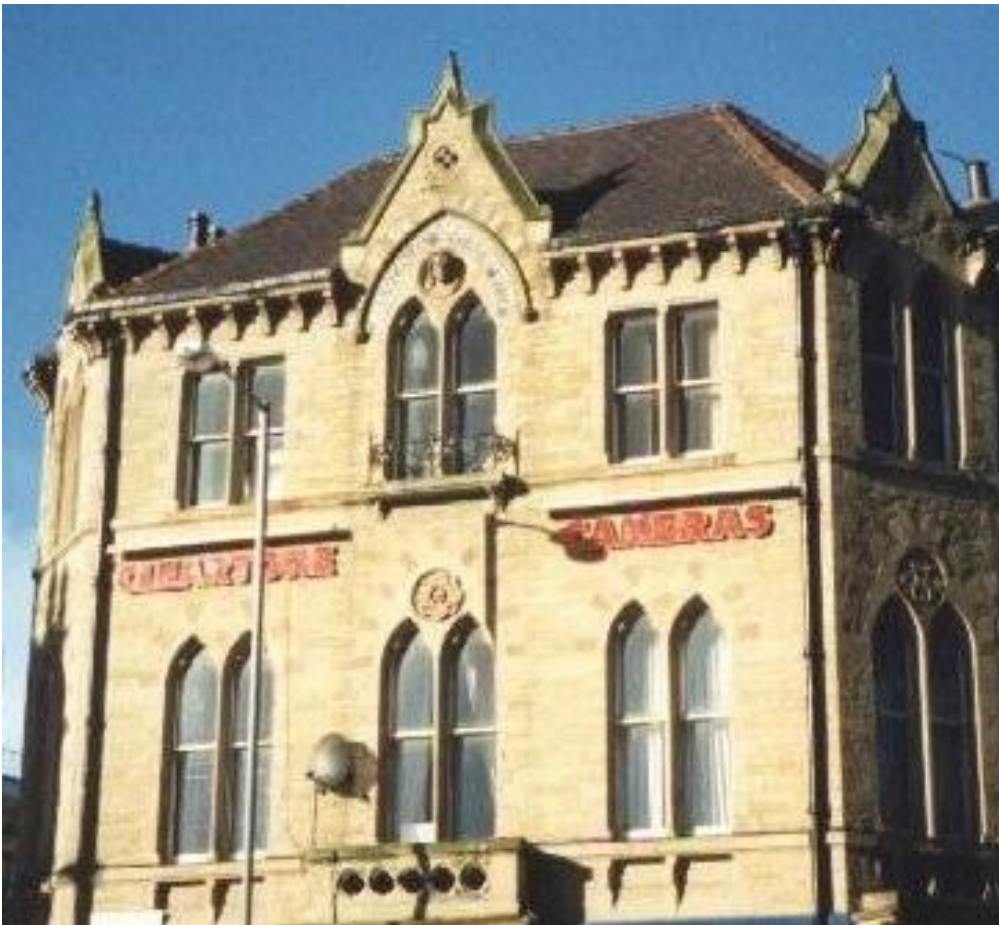


Mic Darling at the Topic

Mic Darling is a singer songwriter banjo player and half of the GIPSY/TRAVELLERS musical duo Mic and Susie Darling. They have busked on back streets, performed in pubs, folk clubs and at the House of Lords

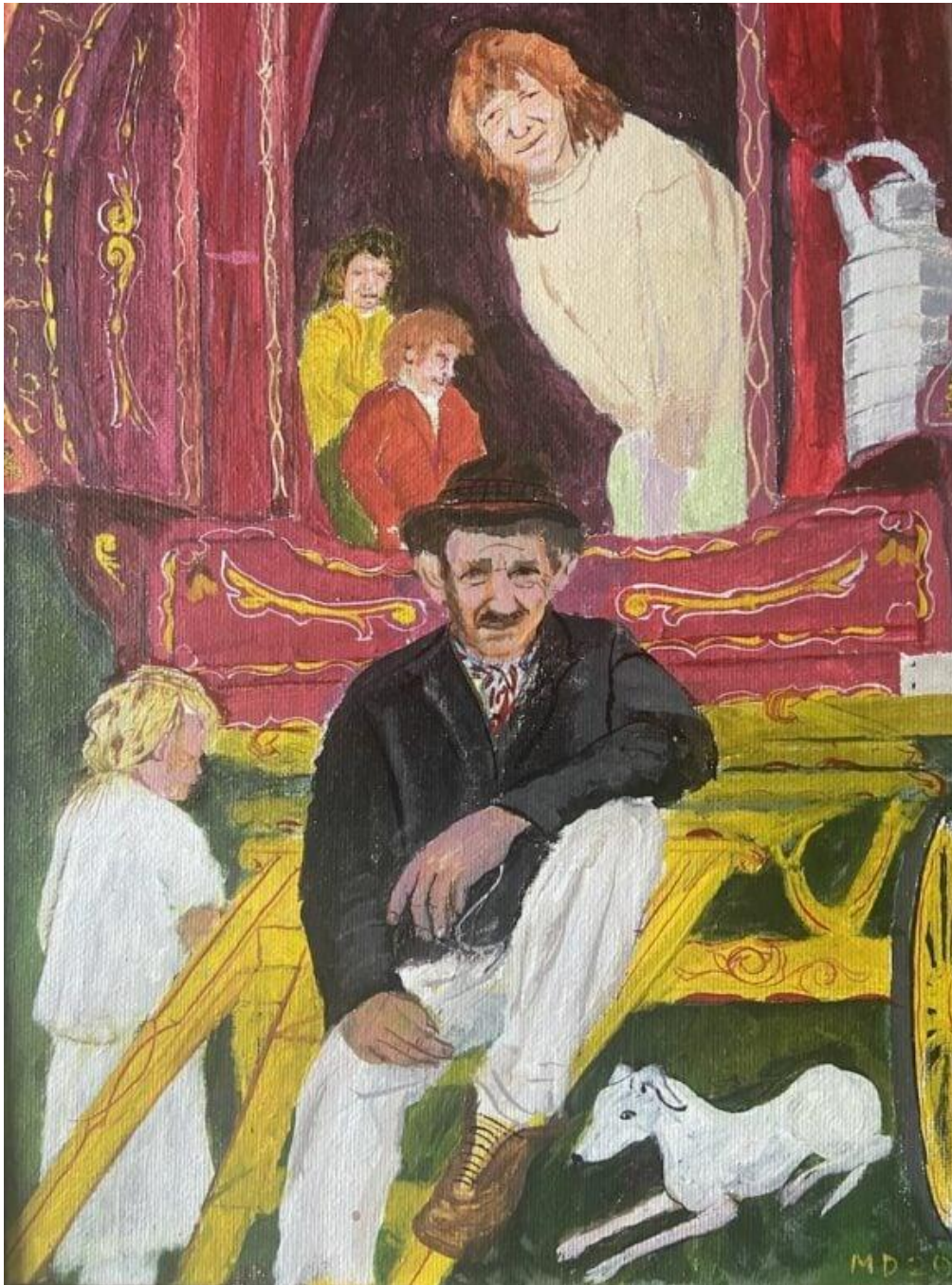
1. *When were your earliest visits to the Topic Folk Club and your impressions at the time? And where was the club located?*

In the late 1950's and early 1960's .The club was in Rawson Square in a cellar at the Oddfellows Unity Hall .Because it was a club not a pub a teenager could buy a pint and act 'grown up'



2. *Where were you living at the time?*

Illingworth Fields by Thornton Road in Bradford



3. *What were the performers like – what music/ songs did they play? And your favourite performers?*

In the 1950's and 60's the club supported mainly traditional British unaccompanied songs. Memorable performers were:

The Spinners – talented group



Ewan MacColl – you weren't allowed to eat crisps while he performed

Bill Connolly – even though he didn't play traditional music he was accepted as a result of his good humour and charm .Singing about the health benefits of Woodbines and granny being kicked off the bus.



4. *What was the audience like?*

It was a comfortable and well caring audience comprising of students, mill workers and musicians and 'young conservatives' who often arrived in sports cars. It was a fashionable place to visit in the 1960's



5. *What's changed over the years?*

The Folk Club wouldn't book Bob Dylan in the early 60's when he was touring Britain because he wrote and performed his own songs. Clubs now provide a space for performers to share their talent, art and a platform to express their views

In the early days people in general were much more positive about their surroundings reflected often in music and now life's negativity receives more publicity

6. *Approximately how many times have you been to the Topic :*

Hundreds of visits in the early 1960's to listen to the performers and from the 1980's as performers at the many venues including the Melborn Pub on White Abbey Rd, the Irish Centre, Glyde House, The Groove Pad



7. *What are your favourite songs you've performed :*

Cover versions – 'Raggle Taggle Gipsies', 'Freight Train'

Songs you've written – 'I thought this was England', 'Diane's Song' – for our daughter, 'Enjoy Every Minute While it Lasts'

Mic uses a vintage Cammeyer banjo along with Bill Connolly who commented on this whilst watching Mic and Susie busking

8. Have you any advice for up and coming musicians and performers?

**Use your god given ability to share your talent and art. Make it a tool of life
Folk Clubs provide a vehicle for expressing views and fighting discrimination
– use them. Mic and Susie have supported the gipsy/travelling community
this way**

Learn your lines and tunes – easier to connect with your audience

9. Any thoughts or advice on how Folk Clubs are run these days?

**Make sure there is always time for craic and conversation whilst running a
session**

**They call me Mic Darling
And I'll sing you a song
As I have done many times before
There are times I've been sad
'bout the things that I've had
And there's times I've wanted no more
With a song or a tune
Or a few of our pegs
Or a cartload of scrap iron too
A paint job or baskets
Or some flowers made of wood
With Gods help we've always got through**