

Travellers' TIMES

The national magazine for Gypsies and Travellers

SPRING 2010 | ISSUE 41 | £3.50



www.travellerstimes.org.uk

Nowhere to celebrate for riding star's Dad

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Music from 'Down Under'

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an inspiration**

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No room at the club

Riding star's family claim race bias

IF RIDING STAR Phoebe Buckley does well at this year's Badminton Horse Trials in April, her dad, Tom won't be celebrating at the village social club. They've turned down his membership.

Tom Buckley has lived in Willingham, Cambridgeshire for 23 years. "We've never been any trouble," Tom told TT. "I filled out the forms to join the Social Club, but didn't hear anything for a long time. Then it came back: 'You're not being accepted'."

Tom believes his membership was refused because he is from the Travelling community. "I asked one of the Committee and they told me: 'They don't know who you're going to bring in there'."

The Club chairman is John Sibley. "I imagine the whole village is really proud of Phoebe," he said. Asked why Tom's membership was turned down he told TT: "I can't tell you why. We don't have to give a reason." The Club, he said, had turned down 14 people in the past three years. "Only two of them were Travellers. And we do have a Traveller who drinks at the Club." Mr Sibley insisted that Tom's application was not turned down on race grounds: "I can honestly 100% guarantee that Mr Buckley was not refused



Tom Buckley: nowhere to celebrate his daughter's success PHOTO: Jet Photographic

because he is a Traveller. I presented his application at the meeting. Someone turned round and said he's a Traveller and he's been in the village for years."

Another Committee member told TT: "The Club does not have to give a reason for turning Tom down. I asked why at the Annual General Meeting, but no reason was given."

Asked what he thought of Travelling people the Committee member said: "We have had bad experiences from Travellers in the past. They don't mix with the general public."

FOOTNOTE: Phoebe Buckley, Tom's daughter, (above right) finished in the top quarter at last year's Badminton Horse Trials. "I do a good job," she told TT, "and I expect to be taken on my merits."



PHOTO: SWNS

No pitches for one in five

£3m has been earmarked for sites in Yorkshire and Humberside by the Government's Homes and Communities Agency. Regional director David Curtis said their aim was to increase the "number and quality of authorised sites throughout England. Roughly 1 in 5 of all caravans have no authorised site, despite a desire by the owners for a permanent base."

Firefighting Emily



There was a surprise in store for firefighter Emily Haysom when she visited Cambridgeshire Travellers last year: she bumped into Linda Brown, whose own daughter is a firefighter. Emily, who is also an artist, was compiling photos and items for an exhibition at Ely Fire Station. Read the full story at www.travellerstimes.org.uk



news in brief

Unfounded rumours



PHOTO: Alison Chapman

Rumours of dogs being stolen by Travellers circulated in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire over Christmas. Gloucestershire Police told TT:

"We do have reports of dogs going missing, but it's usually because the dogs have walked off. None of the incidents we have come across have involved Gypsies or Travellers. It's just not true as far as we are concerned."

Vote for change?

Tory electioneering 'stirring up prejudice' – claim

WITH A GENERAL ELECTION on the horizon, David Cameron's Conservatives have published policy plans for Gypsies and Travellers.

They include:

- creating a criminal offence of intentional trespass (as in Ireland);
- limiting the right of making retrospective planning permissions;
- scrapping the Human Rights Act and bringing in a British Bill of Rights to prevent 'human rights' lawyers sidestepping the planning system.

Bob Neill, the Shadow Minister for Local Government and Planning, says (www.conservatives.com/News): "The British public want to see fair play for all, rather than special treatment being given to some. Labour's changes have undermined community cohesion by creating a legitimate sense of injustice in the planning system."

But the plans have been attacked for "playing the race card by stirring up anti-Gypsy and Traveller prejudice". Responding to the plans, Lord Avebury,



Lord Avebury: Tories should be saying sorry.

Thomas Acton, Andrew Ryder and lawyer Marc Willers say it's time the Tories said sorry for "causing the present acute shortage of sites and over 15 years of extreme hardship when it abolished the requirement for

Councils to provide sites back in 1994.

"The Conservatives have not consulted Gypsies and Travellers or established experts about their new proposals – this goes against the established principles of consultation regarding ethnic minorities."

The authors say site provision must be based on local need and historic demand. "In London the Mayor Boris Johnson is seeking to reduce London's identified pitch requirements by claiming there is not enough land, and by dismissing the needs of housed Gypsies and Travellers who have been forced into housing by the shortage of sites."

Tory policies, they say, would make the current situation "even worse than it is already." (www.irr.org.uk)

Troublesome Travellers?

The Bassetlaw Labour MP John Mann has withdrawn a leaflet which listed Travellers among anti-social problems including "fireworks, fly tipping, dog fouling and neighbours from hell" following a call from TT. The flier, said John Mann, was designed to find out about anti-social behaviour. A reader had forwarded the leaflet to TT.

TT's Internet Guide



Jim and Savannah Reilly from Cheshire have helped with the work on TT's new Internet guide for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. The guide comes free with this issue of the magazine. If you'd like additional copies call Alison on 01432 344039

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Council decision causes distress

Family grief over grave

A ROMANY FAMILY grieving the early death of Caroline "Tiger" Escott renewed their plea to Blandford Town Council to be allowed to give the respect due to the dead.

The Dorset Council has turned down the family's request for kerbstones around the grave. A spokesman told TT: "The new ruling was brought in about six years ago." But, he agreed, the Council had allowed kerbing on two graves since then.

Caroline Escott's sister, Diane Brook, said the Council's rule meant that they have been unable to care for Caroline's grave in the traditional way.

"We can't get closure," said Diane, "and it is tearing our hearts apart. All we are asking is to be treated with respect."

Blandford Council have promised to review the decision.



"We can't get closure." Diane Brook

The family's plea is supported by Rev. Roger Redding, Chaplain to Showmen, Gypsies and Travellers. "Romany people afford considerable attention to the graves of their loved ones, and there is very little need for maintenance by a third party," he said.

Caroline died in 2008 at the age of 44, and was buried alongside her infant son after a church service and a traditional funeral procession to the cemetery.

The family knew nothing about the new rules until their request for a kerbstone was refused. Other Romany families, they say, have been allowed kerbstones.

"The way that the Council is now providing cemetery services is particularly hard on Romany people," said family friend Jenny Galuschka. "Their culture requires them to create and care for a separated and well tended burial plot, and they are distraught if they cannot do this."

Footnote: Many families, distressed at new rules on grave stones, have contacted TT. One **Epsom family** member told TT: "I haven't slept for days worrying about this."

A carefully tended Gypsy grave in the West Midlands

news in brief

Showpeople's shortage

Doncaster is a black spot for Showpeoples' sites. Figures from Doncaster Council show a shortage of almost 100 yards. Showman Renny Mulhearn currently lives on an overcrowded Doncaster site with 90 others. "It's the same for Showpeople all over the area," Renny told TT. "The Council's own assessment shows a need for 100 family plots by 2013." A Doncaster Council spokesman said: "We realise that there is an unmet need for more sites within the borough and are working with the Travelling community to resolve this. What we need from the Travelling community is planning applications on land which is suitable and meets national government policy."



PHOTO: Hilary Smallwood

Welsh website

Young Travellers from Wales have been helping commission a new website for the community. Sophie Price from Rovers Way in Cardiff told TT: "There'll be a section on the site for 11 - 18 year-olds and we hope it will be up and running by June." The website is a partnership project between the Welsh Assembly and Save The Children.

Talking Travellers

Patty Linfoot has been invited to talk about her way of life by the Galloway Society for the Blind at Lancashire College this spring. Patty and her family have been fighting for a legal place to live in the Chorley area (see TT 40). Could you help the Society's course on Travelling life? Give Lyn Garside a call on 01772 753704



PHOTO: Jason Smalley



Let's Bling It Up!

TRAVELLERS' TIMES IS planning to host a Gypsy Traveller Fashion show. Anyone who could help with a venue, sponsorship, clothing companies (shoes, bridal, prom and baby wear) can contact Travellers' Times. We would also like to invite along other Gypsy Traveller organisations. Call us for more information (01432 344039) or e-mail: barbies@ruralmedia.co.uk.

MARCH

7th Smithfield, Southern Ireland
14th Langley Horse Fair, Slough, London

APRIL

5th Holmfirth
10th Dick Smith's Show Out Day
11th Kent Horse Fair
17th Kirkby Stephen
18th Tom and Frank's Show Out Day
25th Kenilworth

Diary Dates

MAY

2nd Wisbech Horse Fair
13th Stow Fair
20th Wickham Horse Fair
28th-30th Scottish King of the Road

JUNE

3rd-4th Epsom Races
3rd-8th Appleby Fair
12th-13th Doddington Country Fayre
23rd-28th Cambridge Fair

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Wannabe Gypsy

How come *gorjas* get the good jobs?

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD Mariapolly Anderson is a girl with ambition: she wants to become a Traveller Liaison Officer. The trouble is she doesn't know how to go about it.

Mum Maria, a Kent Traveller, explained: "Mariapolly's at college now, but when she leaves she wants to give something back to her own community. She wants to become a Traveller Liaison Officer."

"The trouble with a lot of these jobs is that they're held by gorjas and, quite honestly, they don't know what they're talking about."

"Mariapolly wants to help Travellers who are suffering evictions. She wants to get involved in Travellers' rights too, because there just isn't enough information out there."

David Bailey is head of Equality and Diversity at Fenland Council. "There is no static qualification for becoming a Traveller Liaison Officer," he says. "It helps to have a degree (I've got one in estate management and I'm a qualified surveyor), but acting in a humane and compassionate manner is as important. Common sense is also a very good qualification to have and Mariapolly needs, and probably has this, as well as her undisputed desire to fulfil her ambition. I wish her well and hope she achieves her desired aim."



Mariapolly: wants to work for the community.

Making it in the movies

Extras work for Roma Bobi



PHOTO: Eva Sajovic

Bobi Rostas: working with Ridley Scott and Clint Eastwood

SEE THAT GUY breaking into the Mercedes in a recent screening of The Bill? You'll see him again in Ridley Scott's new epic, Robin Hood; as a sailor in the forthcoming Clash of the Titans; and as a tube train passenger in Clint Eastwood's new Hereafter, due out in December.

It's 19-year old Bobi Rostas from East Ham, London and he's been an extra in a string of films and commercials. "It's not very well paid, but I enjoy the performing," says the 19-year-old.

Bobi came over to London from Romania in 2001, joining parents Mircea and Maria. Coming from rural Romania to London's East End was, he admits, a bit of a culture shock. "It was tough at first because I could not read or write."

But now Bobi has finished a drama course at sixth form and is waiting to hear if he's landed a place at London's prestigious School of Speech and Drama.

Meanwhile he's ready for any more film parts that come his way.



Irish Traveller, 14-year-old Kerryanne Ryan from Southwark, photographed by Eva Sajovic.



Eva Sajovic

Eva Sajovic: faces of a community

AN ESTIMATED 12 million Traveller people live in Europe. Although they make up Europe's largest ethnic minority group, many still hide their identities. It's their way of coping with the prejudice and discrimination they routinely face.

However, the Slovenian photographer, Eva Sajovic, has been photographing the faces of the community for two years. Now her pictures are on show at Be-Longing at 198 - Contemporary Arts and Learning until March 20 (Barby Asante 020 7978 8309). See Eva's photographs of a Dale Farm double wedding on pages 12 and 13.

Wagon works

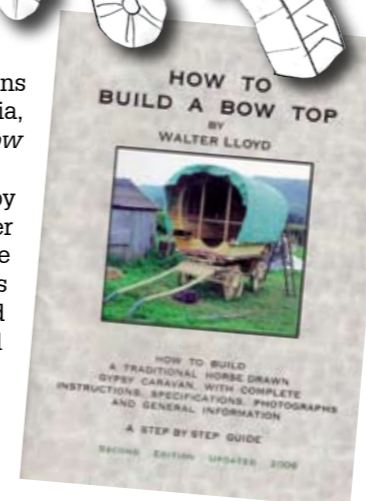
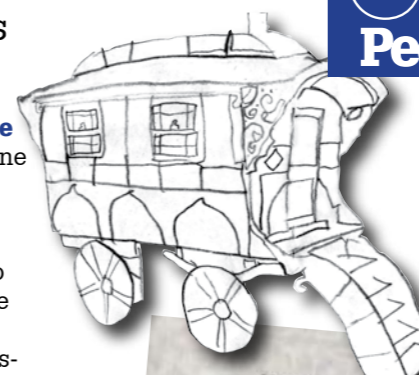
Trailer makers come forward

"HOW DO YOU make a vardo?" asked Shane Leroy Hughes in our last issue.

"I'm in HMP YOI Ashfield and I'd like to learn how to make one for when I come out."

Damian Le Bas responded with a set of plans while Walter Lloyd of Cumbria, sent a copy of his classic, *How to Build a Bow Top*, to Shane.

Walter, a regular at Appleby Horse Fair, is not a Traveller – but he was set on a horse before he could walk. He's travelled at home and abroad with ponies and donkeys and lives in his wagon in the Lake District. You can get a copy of Walter's book at www.woodeducation.org.uk



Schools' tour

IN DONCASTER a model vardo built by five young Travelling men has gone on a tour of local schools.

Nathan Wilson, Peter Birt, Mark James, Matthew Nunn and Stephen Smyth built the perfect scale-model bow top during their school holidays after taking a close look at bow-top life. The project was jointly run by Doncaster's Ethnic Minority Traveller Achievement Service and Connexions.

Next time, say the wagon builders, can we build a bigger one!

Find out more from David Scott, 07867 908411, David.scott@doncaster.gov.uk



Travellers in care

DANIEL ALLEN, a student at De Montfort University, Leicester wants to talk to Travelling people who were taken from their families and raised in care. "I want to raise awareness of the unique challenges faced by Travelling people," he says. He can be contacted on 07701 011819, dcallen007@hotmail.com or www.irishtravellersandromanygypsies.co.uk

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Speaking out for the community

Sophie speaks up for her community

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD Sophie Cushty Price walked out in front of 500 people on **Cardiff's Holocaust Memorial Day** in January. She was there to speak up for her community.

"I asked people to remember the horror and suffering that Gypsy people went through. Mine was the only mention of the Gypsy people during the event."

As Travelling people marked the event across Britain, Hampshire Gypsy Kenny Ayres warned: "If we let our children forget about it, it will happen

again." Kenny was taking part in another Holocaust memorial event.

Sophie is the daughter of Francis Price whose uncle, John Lee, died in the Second World War. "We need to be reminded of all the suffering the Gypsy people went through in the War," she says.

FOOTNOTE: Sophie is currently studying for an **NVO in childcare** ("I'd like to thank Val Hawksworth for that") and is on the steering group for a new Welsh website for Travelling people (see page 4). Her brothers, Thomas Hope, Tony John and Jason, are, she says, the best MCs around.



Holocaust survivor

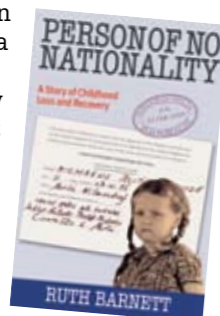
"Half a million Gypsies were murdered"

RUTH BARNETT IS a Jew. She was only four years old when she was put on a train out of Berlin with her seven-year-old brother.

It was 1939 and Adolph Hitler's Nazi party was planning to annihilate all Jews and Gypsies as Ruth fled Germany on the Kindertransport. (Kindertransport sent thousands of children abroad for their own safety, and without their parents.)

"My mother stayed in hiding in Germany, but my father escaped to Shanghai. For the ten years' separation from our parents my brother and I were raised in London by three foster families and a hostel.

"I was sent back to Germany in 1949, aged 14 and against my will. It was impossible for me to settle there – I had been disrupted too many times! I was back in England within a year and have lived here ever since."



A teacher and psychotherapist, Ruth regularly speaks on racism and the Holocaust. She's also supporting the Irish Travellers at Dale Farm fighting Basildon Council's planned eviction.

"I am very concerned that the last bastion of 'culturally acceptable' racism is against Gypsies, although it is just as much a Hate Crime to attack Gypsies (verbally or physically) as it is to do so to Muslims or Jews or Gay people.

"Travellers' Times is a very good read and important in changing images in children's minds. I try to change attitudes in schools by linking my Holocaust story with the persecution of Gypsies and Travellers today. The fact that half a million Gypsies were murdered in the Holocaust is often left out."

Ruth Barnett tells her story in *Person of No Nationality* (David Paul ISBN 978-0-9548482-7-9, £9.99 www.davidpaulbooks.com)

How many lives were lost?

NO-ONE KNOWS exactly how many Romani and Sinti people were murdered by the German state. Most were herded into concentration camps like Auschwitz where they died in special gas chambers. Many families were simply hunted down, shot and buried in unmarked graves. Sinti children were used in the Nazi film, *Tiefland* by German director Leni Riefenstahl (right). After filming the children were said to have been sent to the death camps.

Read the full story at The World Remembers: www.travellerstimes.org.uk/news



FOOTNOTE: London will host **two Holocaust exhibitions** this year.



University challenge?

Oxford graduate Damian Le Bas weighs up the odds facing Zoah Hedges-Stocks

ZOAH HEDGES-STOCKS is 20 years old and grew up working the fairs with her Showman family. This winter, she was awarded a place to study History at Cambridge University. Although it was nice to see her story plastered over the national press, she's not the first person from the Travelling community to study at the highest level.

Many people in Britain might find it difficult to believe that Gypsies and Travellers are as intelligent as they are. Our lives, cultures and priorities can be different.

Rather than spending forever trying to get qualifications, most Travellers would rather get straight on with their career – so we tend to start working at a young age, like Zoah Hedges-Stocks did on the fairs.

From the age of ten, I spent my weekends working on flower pitches and building jobs. You learn as much maths taking money on the market as you do studying in the classroom.

But whatever the papers say, there are plenty of Romany Gypsies, Travellers and Showmen who have done very well in education. And we've gone on to work all over the place in very different careers.

Patricia Knight has worked as a fully qualified social worker. She organises Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month. "We don't need to be marginalised as an illiterate ethnic minority any more," says Patricia.

Horse dealing, building, buying and selling scrap, fair work and selling flowers are still thriving amongst Gypsies and Travellers, even if mechanisation has meant fewer Travellers work the fields these days.

As far as I know, I'm the only Romany Gypsy to have studied at Oxford University, but the work skills I learnt from my family have been just as important to me, as they are to all Traveller professionals.



"You learn as much maths on the market as you do in the classroom"
- Damian Le Bas

On a learning curve: Zoah Hedges-Stocks starts her degree course at Cambridge.

PHOTO: Geoff Robinson

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Life in a box

A GROUP OF YOUNG Shropshire Travellers have been filling the memory banks of a local museum.

A couple of years ago Travellers Richard, Henry, Bobbie, Cacey and Cody built a model Romany Gypsy wagon for the Museum of Myth and Fable in Aston Street, Wem. Now Cacey has been back, along with Sylvester, John and Charleen from Prees Heath, and Jamie Nadine, Sherel and Alisha from Park Hall, Oswestry.

The young Travellers have made four special boxes to slide under the wagon settles and filled them with stories and memorabilia. "Each box has a short story and some things that could relate to the people who might have lived in the wagon," explained the Museum's Dez Quarréll. Find out more:

info@mythstories.com 01939 235500 / 07969 541552



Young stories

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Storybook (NATT, £5, 0113 274 8050 www.natt.org.uk/storybook)



Traveller children from across England sent their stories in for this imaginative collection, produced by the National Association of Teachers of Travellers. TT asked 12-year-old Diana Jones what she thought.

"I enjoyed the book because there are stories in there for all ages and from all ages. And there are lots of pictures which brighten up the book. It gives you a good insight into Travellers' life."



Prison

It starts with crime
After you might end up doing time
Think of all the horrible food
Good enough to put you in a bad mood

Locked up day and night
Nothing but bricks in sight
Never having no fun
Just thinking about what you have done

All of them wardens
Just standing there with the rest of the bored ones
People all with you for murder, theft and drugs
Shoved in a cell like all the other mugs

You get months and years
Think of your family who have shed all them tears
When you get let out you have done your time
We hope you won't go back to crime.

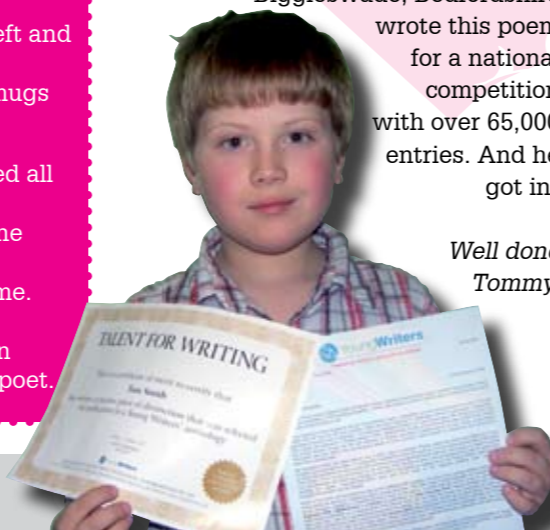
Blossom Lack, 14, goes to school in Cambridgeshire and is a talented poet.

My imaginary friend

I have a friend called Fred
And he's good at hide and seek
So every time we play
I always have to peek
But now it's time for bed
So night night Fred
See you in the morning
When the new day is dawning.

TEN-YEAR-OLD Tommy Smith, who goes to Edward Peake School, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire wrote this poem for a national competition with over 65,000 entries. And he got in!

Well done Tommy.



TT
TOP MARKS
Award
★ ★ ★

An inspiration

TT's Top Marks Award

TEACHING ASSISTANT Shirley Joyce is 23 and an inspiration. "I'm passionate about my work," says the Irish Traveller who works for STAG (Southwark Travellers' Action Group).

"My family were travelling around until I was 11. Then I went to secondary school, but I only lasted two weeks because of bullying. After that I worked in a hotel, a bowling alley, debt collecting – I made my way around! – before starting community development work and becoming a teaching assistant in Lewisham.

"My role model was my aunt, Annmarie. And now I hope I'm a role model for some of the young Travellers. It used to be seen as a shame for a Traveller girl to be working. Now they're saying: 'I want to get a job. I want nice clothes, a bank account, my independence.' It's important to make the Travelling girls realise they can do that."

Best in school? Who inspired you?
Call TT or go to www.travellerstimes.org.uk

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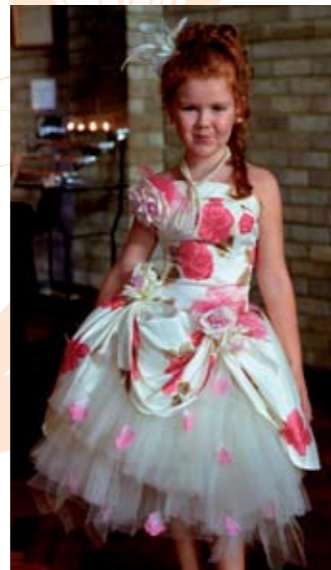
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Our Dale Farm double: John and Maryanne, and Thomas and Margaret invited Eva Sajovic along to their joint wedding in a Basildon church. The couples are both from Dale Farm, the site threatened with closure by Basildon Council.



June: GRT History month

Gypsy Roma Traveller
HISTORY MONTH June 2010

Jake Bowers reports on how you can get involved in the nation's third Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history month

FOLLOWING THE launch of the event in 2008, the month of June has quickly become established as a time when Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities come together with those working in education, museums, the police and even prisons to celebrate their history and culture.

Events in June 2010 will expand on the achievements of previous years. After its enormous success last year in Hampshire, the Travellers Got Talent competition is going national, with regional finals and a national final. The success of last year's national storytelling competition will be matched by a national poetry competition.

To mark the 65th anniversary of the end of the Romany Holocaust, London will host two powerful exhibitions about the Nazi persecution of Roma and Sinti communities.

For those wanting to do their bit to educate the world about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history and culture, a guide to getting involved is available online at the GRTH month's website at: www.grthm.co.uk. It includes details of all the regional organisers working hard to make the month a success and how local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities can get funding to put on events of their own.

The GRT History magazine will also feature fascinating articles about the incredible journey Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities have taken throughout the ages. The huge number of local events held on every day throughout the month will also be listed on the GRTH website. Last year events spread to Wales, with many more being planned across the country this year.



Lydia Lee was well known in the Cardiff area. She was believed to be 110 years old when she passed away.

FOOTNOTE: Cardiff has a new Romani Culture and Arts Company (02920 440 187). "We want to promote positive images of our own community," says the Company's Issac Blake. Look out for more news of The Company at www.travellerstimes.org.uk

PLAYING THE penny whistle: My father, Thomas Albert Hibbs, 72, is a colourful character. Born into a Romany Gypsy family in Yorkshire, his family moved on when he was a baby and settled in West Bromwich for work, and he then joined the Royal Navy at 16. During this time, his Romany father (my grandfather) passed away, and so the Romany roots remain a mystery! He seems to have every Romany Gypsy trait imaginable: he's very musical and plays the accordion, penny whistle, and mouth organ. He is a great nature lover, creative, and writes poetry. But he also has that stereotypical Gypsy characteristic of being hugely suspicious of everyone! Zoe Hibbs lives in Birmingham



The day we got wet feet

ALBERT CANNON from Southampton penned this childhood tale on the back of an envelope.

"We were ten years old, my twin brother Jim and me, Gypsy boys. In 1932 we went to Sholing Boys School in Southampton. One day we reached home to show our Mum and Dad we both had a hole in the side of our boots after walking in the rain.

"Given our feet was very wet my father told us he would make another little hole in the sole because, the trouble was, the water went in, but could not come out. We thought that would be better, but we found out later it was not true, but a trick!"

Albert died aged 83 in 2005 after more than 64 years' marriage to Gwendoline. His daughter-in-law Diana from Southampton sent in his story.

Albert aged 15 working as a delivery boy at Lancaster and Crook in Woolston, Southampton



PHOTO: Marsha O'Mahoney



Albert Cannon: memories on the back of an old envelope

Have you anything to share from your Family Album? Check out www.travellerstimes/familyalbum

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Rabbiting at Christmas



AFTER A GOOD and snowy day's ferreting on a fruit farm in Kent, Joe (left), Bill, Tom and Daniel show their catch. The boys got permission from the farmer and all the rabbits they caught were eaten or cooked for the dogs. Minnie Smith of Dartford took the photograph.

PHOTO: Minnie Smith

TT Award?

I LIKE YOUR website and the magazine, but I would like to see a Travellers' Times Award. You could have a number of categories from Traveller of the Year to Education – for example encouraging giving an award to parents who've learned to read and write.

Tim Joyce, email



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Travellers' Times classified adverts

GYPSY BOOK SALE (Fred Price – new books). Two exciting illustrated Gypsy history books from the 1500s to date. Special price: 2 for £40 (plus £4.50 p&p) 07919 361033

LAND FOR SALE: Travellers' plot, outskirts of March, Cambridge, 3.5 acres, mains, electric, water, with propane gas on site and septic tank. Stables, dog runs, etc. £150,000. 07515 948095 or 01354 740959

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HELP WITH Planning Permissions for private family sites in the east of England. Contact Candy Sheridan 07919 997464 *Traveller To Traveller!*

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GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Expressions of interest are invited from suitably experienced organisations to carry out an accommodation needs assessment of Gypsies and Travellers living within Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd and Ynys Mon, as part of the North West Wales Local Housing Market Assessment process.

The successful organisation will be expected to interview an agreed sample of households from Gypsy and Traveller communities living on established sites and in bricks and mortar accommodation across all five counties.

The survey is due to start in April and be completed by 30th November 2010.

Send written expressions of interest by 31st March 2010 to

Jeremy Grant, Conwy County Borough Council, 26 Castle Street, Conwy, LL32 8AY or by e-mail to jeremy.grant@conwy.gov.uk



TT is reaching more people from the Travelling community than ever before. More than 4,000 of you get your copies through the post. And many more are taken round sites and homes by TT's many friends and supporters.

"If you ever want us to pay for the magazine or postage, don't hesitate to ask," writes Gary Payne.

You can guarantee your copy, post-free, for just £14 a year.

We've also introduced discount rates:

1 copy every 3 months	£14 a year
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3 copies every 3 months	£36 a year
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For overseas rates please contact Travellers' Times, Tel: 01432 344039

From little acorns . . .

TT was started 10 years ago by Professor Luke Clements, with Rachel Morris as editor, at Cardiff Law School. In 2006 we went full colour and late last year changed to the new design. In 2009 the Rural Media Company, which publishes TT, started the new TT online website www.travellerstimes.org.uk



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THE KEEPER OF LIFE There was, once upon a time, an old man who was the keeper of life. That was his job, every day. He would go to this big brick building, open the huge door with a special key, and go inside.

Inside this building there were thousands of candles, all lit up. The ones he found not lit were of people who had died. He would start all over again and light new ones for the births.

He had tried for many years to tell his daughter to pick a nice sensible man to marry, one he could rely on to take over his job as the keeper of life. But every man she brought home wasn't suitable.

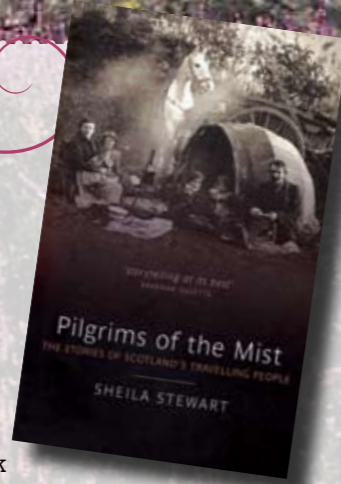
One day he went to his work as usual, and he said to himself, "I must look at my own candle today, and see how it is getting on." When he arrived, he went straight to his own candle. "My god," he thought, "it is getting very small."

So he cut a bit off one of the other longer candles and stuck it on his one to make it bigger.

That night his daughter brought another young man home to meet her father and mother. He was the nicest young man anyone could ever meet. The old man was so happy and excited. "At last I have someone to take over my job for me," he thought, "and let me retire."

So he asked the young man if he wanted the job, so that he could retire.

"Yes," said the young man, "I would be grateful for the job." The old man said he would teach him the job the next morning.



A magical, new story from the queen of Scotland's storytellers, Sheila Stewart

The keeper went to his job that day, humming to himself. He was in a jolly mood. When he got to the door of his work, he opened it and went inside. It had always preyed on his mind about the candle he had made shorter, so that he could have a longer life. He went up to the candle he had cut, and he found out, to his horror, it was his daughter's candle he had taken the bit off. Panicking, he cut his own candle and put the bit back to the way it was.

Next morning, and for the next week, he showed the young man the job. At the end of the week the young man said to him, "What are you going to do now, as this is your last day?"

"Well, for the years I have left, I am going to do what I have always wanted to do – I am going to be a storyteller."

(© Sheila Stewart 2009)

Last in line Before the memories melt away

SHEILA STEWART is a singer, storyteller, author and a Scottish Traveller.

The last in line of the Stewarts of Blair, she spent her childhood travelling over Scotland, working on farms with her family. In the 1950s she sang in concerts with her parents and sister Cathie.

More recently she published a biography of her mother, Belle Stewart, *Queen Among the Heather*.

She is now working on a play, based on Belle Stewart, due to open in Perth in the autumn.

"I've been 57 years on the scene," Sheila told TT. "The way of life of the old Travellers – tramping the country roads, camping in the woods, hawking, fortune-telling, and temporary work on farms – has now all but died out."

FOOTNOTE: Pilgrims of the Mist, by Sheila Stewart is published by Birlinn (www.birlinn.co.uk £8.99 ISBN 13: 978 1 84158 752 3) Read a review of Sheila's new book by Billy Wood on www.travellerstimes.org.uk



PHOTO: Birlinn Ltd

Sheila has gathered a collection of stories from her family and friends in order to tell them "before the memories melt away like winter snow".

Do you have a story to share? Call us at Travellers' Times 01432 344039

Land For Sale

Advertised in Travellers Times December 2009

SCHEME WITHDRAWN

Site size 6-10 right 20 wrong, so scheme withdrawn.

Thanks to...

The Gypsy Council, President & Family, Callers, Home Office, Gypsy Traveller Unit and The Rural Media Company

Geoff



Local Development Framework

Gypsy and Traveller Sites

Development Plan Document



If you are interested in Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire District, we would like to hear from you.

Contact **01480 388388** and ask for the Local Development Framework team. The next stage assessing site options will be online at: **www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk** from May 2010.

County Durham Gypsy, Roma & Travellers Support Service

The Gypsy, Roma & Travellers Support Service is a housing advice, advocacy and support service across County Durham which has been developed to offer help and advice on the following issues:



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Please contact Leanne Wilkinson
Office Suite B, St John's Business Centre,
Meadowfield, Durham, DH7 8TZ
Tel: 0191 378 3718
Mobile: 07824 436 322
Email: leanne.wilkinson@disc-vol.org.uk



TT's book club



Pinnies and Pegs,
Ryalla Duffy (Robert Dawson,
www.robertdawson.co.uk
ISBN 978-1-903418-64-2)

MUCH OF THE Romany's cultural distinctiveness springs from their life on the road, and their attempts to make it possible in sometimes adverse circumstances.

Not surprisingly the Romanys are knowledgeable about the natural world, their animals and their horses and useful saleable objects which they can fashion from materials near at hand. Ryalla Duffy has written an excellent book on the Romany culture so true to life.

Reviewer: Billy Wood



Our Forgotten Years,
Maggie Smith-Bendell
(University of
Hertfordshire Press,
www.herts.ac.uk/uhpess
ISBN 978-1-902806-91-4)



OUR FORGOTTEN YEARS is passionate, exhilarating and despairing. A rich work of high literature, a portrait of Travelling through the years. The heartache of constantly being moved on. I

particularly identified with the war years and my childhood: it was so true to life. An excellent book, Maggie. Congratulations.

Our reviewer Billy Wood lives in Hampshire.

FOOTNOTE: Congratulations to Diana Connor of Southampton for sending in her Family Album photo story. Her free signed copies of Maggie's and Ryalla's books are in the post.



Snapshot: a group of young Roma women taking photos in East London for the recent **Roma London** exhibition, organised by photographer Manuela Zanotti and Jacob Garber of The Children's Society.



Romany Johnny Joe by Hilda Brazil
(Athena Press £5.99 ISBN 978-1-847485-56-4)

A CHILDREN'S BOOK, again written by a member of the community, Romany Johnny Joe is a wise tale of how an underdog can take on a more powerful opponent. Packed with illustrations for children to colour in, her story features an epic battle in Toadville where Romany Johnny Joe prepares to face up to very large toad indeed, Sir Burty Marshland.

Hilda works for Surrey County Council's youth justice service. "I didn't have a great education myself," she says, "but that doesn't mean I haven't got a great imagination. With the help of a computer and spell checker I've proven that anybody can produce a book."

All Change! Romani Studies through Romani Eyes
edited by Damian Le Bas and Thomas Acton (University of Hertfordshire Press, www.herts.ac.uk/uhpess ISBN 978-1-905313-78-5)



THERE IS A growing awareness in our wider community and a need to 'own' our past, because once we do then the future will also be ours. And this is really what the book is about. We have dual editors, one being Damien, who holds a First Class Degree from Oxford, and all done whilst living in a trailer! We, in the community, know this is a major achievement, because so many of the community are not even able to finish school and it is the Traveller boys who find it the hardest to remain in the school system, not through their own fault, but the lack of understanding shown towards them.

Reviewer: Candy Sheridan

Read more book reviews at www.travellerstimes.org.uk

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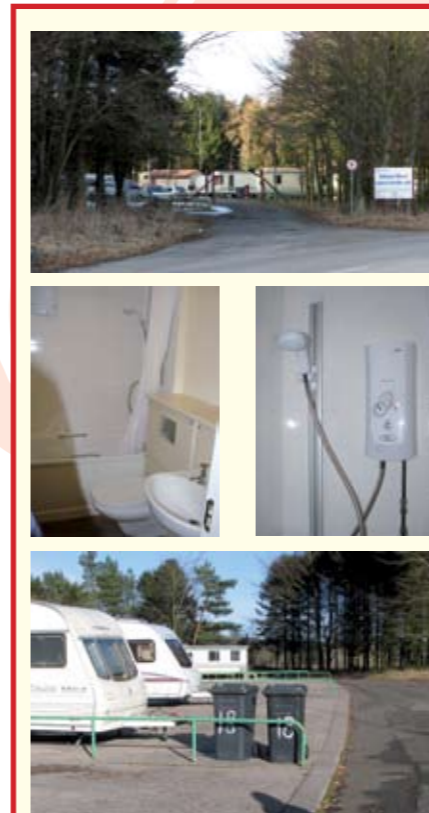
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Gwynedd, Conwy, Anglesey, Flintshire and Denbighshire Councils and the Snowdonia National Park Authority in North Wales are working in partnership with Bangor University and with members from local Travelling Communities to undertake a **Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment** to help Councils to make sure there are enough good sites, suitable housing and quality services for Gypsies and Travellers in North Wales.

If you live on site, in bricks and mortar, or if you travel through North Wales we'd like to hear from you, so you can tell us about your experiences of staying in this area. This Assessment will give you the chance to have your say about what's important to you, so you can get your voice heard and help us to make sure there's enough sites for Gypsies and Travellers in North Wales in future.

We want this assessment to reflect the true needs of Gypsies and Travellers living in or travelling through North Wales. To do this we need your help. **Your involvement, views and opinions are vital to make sure we get this right.**



If you'd like more information or want to have your say please contact
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Country style

Tina Mckinstry may have moved 'Down Under', but she's making her voice heard across the world

TINA MOVED TO Queensland, Australia eight years ago and she now runs her own beauty business. "Myself and my family go travelling quite a bit over here. All the Travellers meet up once a year in Coffs Harbour, New South Wales and put on Gypsy music, dancing and singing."

And that's the great love of her life: singing.

"I'm an English Traveller (my family are Stanleys and Fitzgeralds) and we always had country and western music around. Us Gypsies love our country music."

Tina is a self-taught pianist and guitarist, but it's her voice than wins the audiences over. "I always knew

I had a great ear for music. Although I started singing at school my family didn't know about my singing until I was older.

"I loved the sound of yodelling, my inspirations are Frank Ifield, Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline, LeAnn Rimes. People who have heard me sing tell me I have the voice of an older country singer like Patsy: that was great to hear as I love the older style of country music."

Tina Mckinstry uses the web to make the most of her own brand of music. She has recorded CDs and sent them to friends and family and now she has put some of her songs on YouTube.

Listen to Tina singing at www.travellerstimes.co.uk

EUROPE and the world



PHOTO: Jason Comans

Tina: "We love our country music."

Euro Appeal

ROMANY GYPSIES and Irish Travellers across Britain are being asked for nominations to the European Roma Travellers Forum, based in Strasbourg.

Kay Beard from the UK Association of Gypsy Women, who has represented Britain for the past four years, is standing down along with Cliff Codona from the National Travellers' Action Group.

Any constituted Gypsy or Traveller group should send their nomination, together with a profile of the candidate and a copy of the group's constitution to the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, Ernest Bailey Community Centre, New Street, Matlock DE4 3FE by April 30 2010. The Federation will collate and distribute the nominations by post, website and email for an election later in the year.



Kay Beard



Cliff Codona

Final thought

When are we going to stop being used as cannon fodder in local and national politics? When will land be identified which is suitable for Gypsy and Traveller occupation? When is society going to stop being antisocial toward us? When are our children going to have the same aspirations as every other child? When are we going to get the same rights of freedom? When are our many questions going to be answered, or better still, when will our five hundred years of struggle end? When can I be happy, educated, trained, employed and healthy with a home where I chose? When?



Joe Jones

Travellers' TIMES is published by **The Rural Media Company**

Travellers' Times is the national magazine for Gypsies and Travellers, and people and organisations who work with Gypsies and Travellers. We are guided by our editorial group and strive for accuracy and fairness.

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THE RURAL MEDIA COMPANY
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Supported by



COVER: Tom Buckley (Jet Productions) and Tina Mckinstry
The Rural Media Company is a registered charity (number 1041335; in Wales 2732325). Company limited by guarantee.
Printed and designed by Kingfisher Print and Design, Totnes, Devon.



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