

Travellers' TIMES

The national magazine for Gypsies and Travellers

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www.travellerstimes.org.uk



A fairer future?

The new Government promised 'a fairer, better Britain'. Then slashed the sites budget.

See Britain's shame

PAGE 2 and 3

Britain's

Twenty days. That's all it took for David Cameron and Nick Clegg's coalition Government to cut England's sites and refurbishment building budget from £32m to £0.

They promised a fairer, better Britain: yet they have left thousands with nowhere legal to live.

SIR BOB KERSLAKE, the Homes and Communities Agency boss, announced the Site Grant cut "with regret". Julie Morgan, former MP and chair of the All Parliamentary Committee on Gypsies and Travellers, condemned it as "dreadful. This hits the most vulnerable people in the community."

Gloria Buckley, MBE, has a waiting list on all three of her East Anglian sites. "We've been consulting with government for years:

it's been like the mating of elephants with all the work we've done. For Government to cut the funds now is a tragedy. I say shame on them."

The £45m budget was slashed after £15m was earmarked for sites in places including Corby, Bromsgrove, Barnsley and Gateshead. Ryalla Duffy supported the successful £1.2m bid for the 21-pitch Summergangs Lane, West Lindsey. "I'm relieved

about Summergangs Lane, but to cut £30m, the whole of the year's budget, is devastating when you look at all the talks we've held."

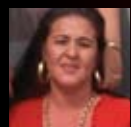
Maggie Smith-Bendall has helped people with planning for years. "We're absolutely shocked. I get two or three calls a day from people desperate for somewhere legal to live. What terrifies me is that more and more people are going to end up on the side of the road."

Ryalla appealed for direct talks with Government. "They speak of family values, community cohesion and fairness: there's a lot they can learn from us."

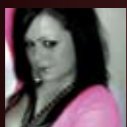
Green field site: Too few new sites are being built, but this 15-plot site (left) at Lower Harker Deane outside Carlisle has been refurbished with an eco-makeover. Run as a non-profit-making social enterprise by Joe and Jane Hurn and business partner Janet Smith from Cheshire, the site provides sustainable accommodation with a geothermally heated community centre, solar roof panels and bio-digestion waste disposal. And it's a friendly site: "Local residents are happy with us here and our local councillor likes to pop round for tea," says Janet Hurn. "Everyone who see it says: 'Oh my God: we need this where we are!'" PHOTO: Howard Stephenson



Inside your big summer TT



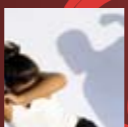
Shirley aids grieving families
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Beccy's big time bid
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Grandad's 1950s car sales
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Combating domestic violence
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shame

A lack of safe sites causes social instability. Yet that's the future facing thousands of Travellers today.



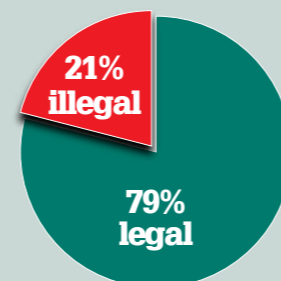
ENGLAND

It's official. England needs 8,000 new sites in the next 16 years. Or it did until London Mayor Boris Johnson challenged the official figures for the capital and reduced them by 300 (56%).

The timescale for providing new sites varies from the end of next year (South West) to within 16 years (Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands).

But the estimated 538 new pitches in London have been more than halved by London's Mayor, Boris Johnson.

The new figure, 238, is put forward as being a "more sustainable and deliverable target. It strikes the right balance between what can be delivered and addressing the needs," Johnson was reported as saying. The new figures are expected to become part of the Mayor's draft London Plan.



In England

- 12,474 families or caravans (79%) on legal sites
- 3,272 (21%) on illegal sites
- On offer? £0

(Source: DCLG, Jan 2006)

GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS make up less than 0.05% of the population of Britain. So why the fuss over every new site?

Most of the Traveller community – around two-thirds – are thought to live in bricks and mortar, some by choice, others because they were forced into housing by bad policy and poor planning.

The rest – just over 17,700 families according to official statistics, although the true figure

is almost certainly higher – live in trailers and caravans.

According to TT's research over 20%, or 3,500 families, have nowhere legal to live in Britain (although Northern Ireland claims the figure is below 5% or 30 families).

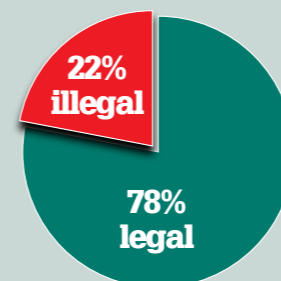
Homelessness causes poor education, poor medical care and social instability. Yet this is the legacy facing an estimated thousands of Traveller people in Britain today.



WALES

Wales needs to find pitches for another 275 to 305 families. There is also need for between 100 and 150 transit pitches according to the Welsh Assembly. There are currently around 70 sites in Wales, each occupied by about 10 trailers.

The job of finding new sites falls to local councils. But don't hold your breath. Carmarthenshire County Council, for example, has yet to produce a Gypsy and Traveller strategy which will look at accommodation.



In Wales

- 597 (78%) caravans on legal sites
- 170 (22%) on illegal sites
- On offer? £1m a year for sites refurbishment; £1.5m for new sites

(Source: Welsh Assembly)

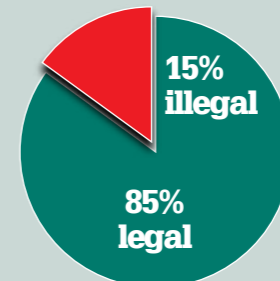


SCOTLAND

Scotland needs at least 108 new pitches according to Scottish Government figures on the number of 'illegal' encampments.

Government officials however, could not supply a figure for how many sites are needed to satisfy any projected demand.

Last year Scotland spent £2m on sites: only half that amount is available this year. Again the job of providing new sites falls to local councils.



In Scotland

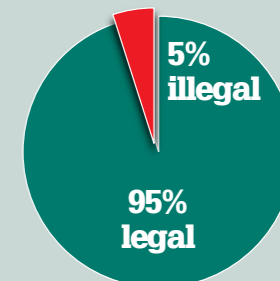
- 606 (85%) on legal sites
- 108 (15%) "on the side of the road"
- Scotland needs: at least 108
- On offer? £1m



NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland claims to have the lowest need for new sites anywhere in Britain stating that there are less than 5%, or 30 families, homeless or living on illegal sites.

But a Northern Ireland Housing Executive spokeswoman told TT: "Last year we had only seven families (living on illegal sites)." Nevertheless the Northern Ireland Housing Executive plans to provide 51 new 'units' across Omagh, Toome, Belfast and Londonderry.



In Northern Ireland

- 531 (1,486 Travellers) (95%) families on legal sites
- 30 (5%) families on illegal sites
- Northern Ireland needs: 51 new 'units'
- Budget for this year: £500,000

(Source: Northern Ireland Housing Executive)

news in brief

A big thank you

"All the Travelling boys here in HMP Lowdham Grange, Nottinghamshire (Shaney Boy Delany, Rikki Johnson, Chad Johnson, Albie Johnson, Toni Coyle and Jerri Cassidy) want to say thanks to those who dedicate themselves to putting TT together. And thanks to Ryalla Duffy (Lincolnshire Gypsy Liaison Group) who made it possible for all the Travelling boys to receive TT which is a brilliant magazine."

Common complaint

Kate Raggett and her husband, like many Travelling people, are fond of their animals. So when they took a picnic to Epsom Common the eight-month-old pony came too, and did what ponies do – ate grass. Kate was surprised when a council official told them to remove the pony. "They have stopped our way of life; now they're stopping us doing the old ways," complained Kate. To add insult to injury a council worker arrived shortly afterwards to cut the grass.

Apology

Our sincere apologies to Richard Evans and his family for using the gravestone photograph in the last issue without their permission.

Hartlebury

MUSEUM | CASTLE | EVENTS

Gypsies, Who are ya?

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Diary Dates

JUNE

23rd-28th Cambridge Fair

JULY

15th Seamer Fair
17th Matchams Horse Fair, Portsmouth
18th Jimmy's New Forest Drive

AUGUST

5th Brigg Fair
18th Priddy Fair
21st-22nd Joe Nineties
22nd Beehive Fair
24th Lee Gap
25th-30th Eddies' Fair
30th St. Mary's Hill, South Wales

SEPTEMBER

1st-5th Great Dorset Steam Fair
4th-6th Barnet Fair
12th Garford Fair
12th Horsmonden Fair
17th Latter Lee



All the fun of the fair: thousands turned up in fine spring weather to enjoy the first of this year's Stow Fairs. Meet the TT Team at Hartlebury Museum (June 13), Priddy Fair and Dorset Steam Fair.

PHOTO: Alison Chapman



Left, Shirley Conde, and above, with funeral director John Cribb and one of their Dutch Friesians that draws the hearse. PHOTOS: Fotoscene

Shirley Conde: a service for Travellers by Travellers

Special plans for a last resting place

ESSEX TRAVELLER Shirley Conde is setting up a unique service for grieving families. In the event of a family death, she offers to plan out a special room of rest.

"We prepare the place of rest so that the last stopping place is a place of grace," explains Shirley.

Forty-two-year-old Shirley, a qualified seamstress and a florist, has herself lost two sons and her father. For years she helped family and friends in their hour of need. Now she's been persuaded to take her talents nationwide.

"When a Traveller dies we like to give them the best send-off we can, but some undertakers just can't cope with the scale of a Traveller's funeral. This is a service for Travellers, by Travellers. "For Travelling people a funeral is an important celebration and we make a big thing of it when someone passes away. With Rooms of Rest we're trying to give them the best send-off we can."

**Shirley is based in Grays, Essex:
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New York, New York! Rebecca May is heading for the stars

REMEMBER Beccy May Cooper, the young Traveller who made a name for herself on ITV's *Stars in their Eyes Kids?* Rebecca, whose family comes from Dorset, has travelled to New York to record tracks for her first CD.

Beccy, 21 this July, was talent spotted by a US producer after her Christmas performance at Yate shopping centre was posted on YouTube (youtube/missbeccymay). Earlier she was forced to choose between her job at Tesco and her singing: the singer, taught to sing by proud mum Diane, opted for her music and she has not looked back since.

"It's been really exciting," Beccy told TT although she admitted she misses her family: Henry, her dad, brothers and sisters Tilly, Henry Jnr, Bobby, William and Lilly, and grandad George Cooper.

Check out Beccy's Myspace (beccycoopersings) and Facebook. And listen to the girl sing at www.travellerstimes.org.uk



Heading for the stars: Rebecca May (above and right). Now she's recording her music in New York.

Firefighter

When a girl's dreams go up in smoke

PERSISTENCE PAID OFF for Cambridge Traveller Katrina Brown when, some years ago, she watched Cambridge Fire Service put on a display at her school. The 15-year-old decided then and there that firefighting was for her.

"I failed to get in as a fire cadet first time, but in the second year they accepted me," says Katrina. She learned the basic drills and commands, then took three years out while she attended college, and signed up for active service on her return. "I'm not one of those who thinks: 'Just because I'm a Traveller I'm not going to get anywhere.' I'd like to see others from my background join the fire service because, for me at least, it was a life-saving experience." Katrina is currently following her dreams, working in Cyprus as a tour guide.



"a life-saving experience"

Katrina with proud Mum Linda Brown: "Never think that just because you're a Traveller you'll never get anywhere."

PHOTO: Emily Haysom

The Gypsies' nurse The day they marched on the Guildhall

HAILED as the Gypsies' nurse, Northampton's Val Dumbleton has retired after 50 years.

Her earliest encounter with Traveller children was in 1969 when she was working in Northampton.

"I started going onto sites and realised there was a whole community that had no health service whatsoever. It was appalling. I took one of the community doctors out with me and we agreed: 'We should have a service for these people.'"

Val started campaigning: "I had to fight," she admits. But even with the support of councillors, MPS, Lord Avebury and a 2000-strong petition from the Travellers her plans met with resistance: "At an open meeting in Northampton Guildhall I encountered the worst racism I've ever seen. So I went straight out and spoke to people at the side of the road." About three dozen immediately marched on the Guildhall.

"It took me around three years to gain the respect and trust of the community. Ever since then I've been privileged to work with and be trusted by them."

Read Damian's interview with the Gypsy Nurse at www.travellerstimes.org.uk



Val Dumbleton on site: campaigning for better health services for Travellers since the 1960s.

Fashion enterprise

Jo embraces the online age

ENTERPRISING Josephine Smith didn't last long at school when she was bullied. But it never held her back: this spring she launched her own web-fashion business with a flurry of Facebook posts and Twitter tweets.

Jo designed her website – www.hollywoodbaby.co.uk – to market one-off fashion exclusives and, as the self-taught entrepreneur told TT: "I did it all myself."

The 34-year-old from Montrose, Scotland originates from Nantwich, Cheshire. She left her family behind (Dad Joe, Mum Josephine and four sisters) when she fell in love with a Scottish man and moved up north. "But I got lonely and, after my first boy Joseph was born, I needed something to do." She set up a successful celebrity placement business, which saw US designers using her services to place their products with the likes of Paris Hilton, Jordan and Fern Cotton.

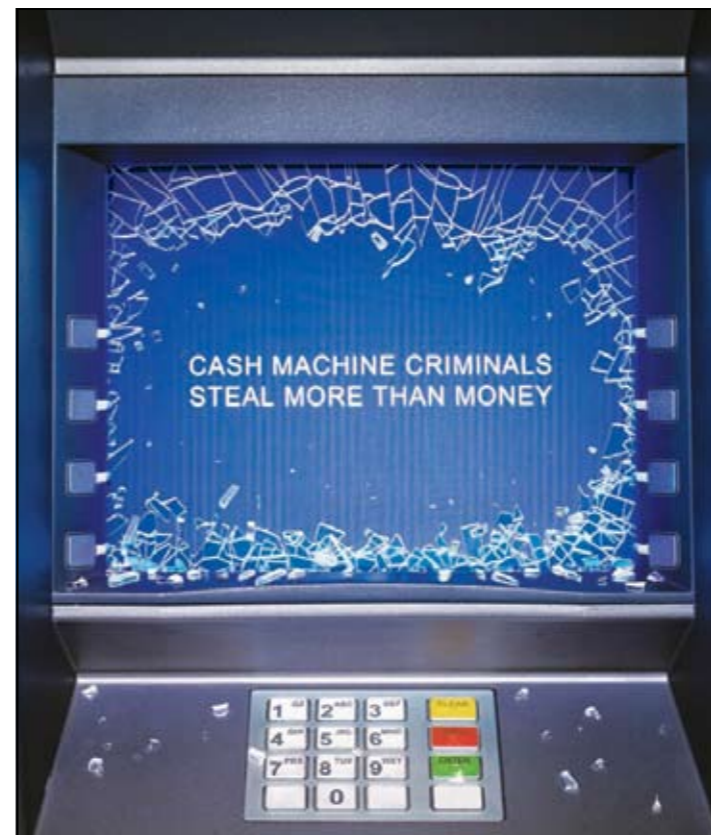
She put her first business on hold after second son Alexander came along.

Now she's up and running again. As Jo says: "It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from – you can be an inspiration to yourself."



Inspirational: Jo with some of her web products.

PHOTO: Ian Paterson



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Winning hearts and minds

Too often Travellers and Gypsies find themselves at odds with the settled communities. But the people of Brigg and Winterbourne show how, in times of trouble, communities can pull together.

“When we grieved they grieved with us”

A tragic accident in August last year pulled the Traveller and settled community of Winterbourne closer together.

WHEN 17-year-old Traveller James Tyrer died in a car crash alongside driver Patrick O'Donoghue, the whole community was shocked.

Described as “one of life's characters” by his former headmaster, Jimmy Tyrer had been a student at the Bristol Construction Academy. Fellow students at the Academy presented the family with a memorial, and schools and the boxing club closed as a mark of respect, while over 300 mourners attended Jimmy's funeral.

“There were as many people from the settled community there as from the Travelling community,” recalls Jimmy's mother Ellen. Earlier this year Ellen's daughter Mandy married. Again the local community came

out in force. “They have been as good as gold around here,” says Ellen.

Ellen, husband David, son Steven and daughters, Mandy, Samantha, Lisa and Katie, were based on the site at Winterbourne and now live in bricks and mortar.

Ellen strives to educate others about the culture of Travelling people. (“My mother used to say I never kissed the Blarney stone – I swallowed it.”) “When we came here first the local pub had signs saying: ‘No Travellers’. But since the funeral and Mandy's wedding, local people have stuck together. They've helped us out. When we grieved they grieved with us.”

It's not easy: Ellen spoke recently to a group of trainee police who had left their flip

chart open from an earlier session. Trainees had written their first thoughts about the community. The chart read: ‘dirty stinking gypsy’.



Above 17-year-old Jimmy and left, Mandy and husband Joseph Smith at their wedding in February.

“We only want to live in peace and mind our own business”

Scenes of conflict: Jane on site at Meriden where Noah Burton and his family have applied for retrospective planning permission. Listen to Noah Burton tell his side of the story at www.travellerstimes.org.uk



Sam Smith (right) with local councillors. “Every other sector of the community aspires to a better quality of life: why should Gypsies and Travellers be any different?” Mike Doherty, former mayor of Brigg. PHOTO: David Lee Photography

“We don't have three heads”

Brigg hosts one of the nation's oldest horse fairs. But it's no easier to find a place to live here than anywhere else, as Gypsy Sam Smith found out.

THREE YEARS AGO Sam and other family members moved on to their land and set up home before applying for planning permission. Planners slapped an injunction on them and Sam appealed and won a temporary reprieve until this October.

Their plans were met with a barrage of objections: the site would fill with scrap (Sam runs an international flooring business). Local house prices would plunge by 50%.

Former mayor Mike Doherty takes up the story. “Some locals reacted with prejudice, but most objections were based on a fear of

the unknown. After I discovered these were local families compelled to move because of overcrowding, the town council held public meetings for local residents and the Travellers to meet and talk.”

Multilingual Sam Smith, who declares himself “just a Gypsy lad” told TT: “We don't have three heads: we just prefer to live in caravans. All the children here go to schools, my boys played football and boxed for the local clubs. We are a part of the local community.”

As he waits for news on his planning bid, Sam told TT: “It's time for us all to work together.”

Chrissy Melady is an Irish Traveller and educationalist: “Brigg could have become a serious problem for local Gypsy and Travelling people. Instead it has become a great example to the rest of the country.”

Footnote

Sam Smith (07977 41 16 41) is part of the new Gypsy and Traveller Community Cohesion Team, offering advice and training to local councils.

Corin Redgrave

The recent death of actor Corin Redgrave, star of *Four Weddings And A Funeral*, has saddened many members of the community.

Leading activist Richard Sheridan remembered the actor speaking out over Basildon Council's threatened eviction of Dale Farm in 2005.

“We were in a pub on the night before the meeting when a young Travelling girl, asking for a glass of pop, was refused service. Corin Redgrave was appalled.”

Speaking out against the planned eviction the following day, Redgrave suffered a heart attack. “He was a good friend,” Richard told TT.

Dale Farm residents are still fighting Basildon Council's eviction plans.



Oakmeeds' young Travellers – setting a great example



A great group: Oakmeeds Travellers group includes Ben Beck-Slenn, Fay Bond, Kate Boyd, Lena Boyd, Bill Boyd, Susie Brazil, Jasmine Frost, May Harris, Nathan King, Ollie King, Kate Sargent, Lena Sargent, Kim Smith, Leon Smith, Alfie Thompson and Albie Smith.

They've done it again!

Worcestershire's young Travellers have taken a prize at the Malvern Garden Show. Last year it was the turn of young Travellers from Malvern and Upton; this year it was Evesham's turn. They received a commendation from the gardening judges for their garden 10 Green Bottles Might Just Build A Wall. Congratulations to Brandon, pictured here.



OAKMEEDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE in Burgess Hill, West Sussex has started their own young Travellers group (left). "We're trying to tell pupils a little bit about our culture so they know what we're about," explains Ollie King. "If everyone knows a bit more about how we live then they will understand us better and be more respectful." Albie Smith says the meetings help all the Travellers at school. "We're making displays and wagons and we're all going on a woodland skills trip organised just for Travellers."

Kate and Lena Sargent feel better about telling others just what their culture is all about. "So we can talk about what we do at the weekend if we go to a horse show."

The teachers like it too: "All the students have really grown in confidence. They're proud of their heritage," says assistant head, Paul Boxhall. This is a great example for other schools, reckons Katie Brown from West Sussex Traveller Education Support Team.



Cambridge calling: Aline Johnson, 12, from Thorney Hill, Cambridge talking to a radio station in Brazil. Aline (call sign M6AVJ) passed her Amateur Radio Foundation licence last year. She wants to know: are there any other Traveller radio enthusiasts out there?



Haiti's tragedy

The thundering, rumbling and horror has stopped

All that's left is mountains of hope and rubble

Death lingers round every corner, like a stray dog

Trapped beneath the hand of nature's mighty wrath

Children calling out for their mother, if only they knew what had happened

Someone save us

Faces filled with terror pass me by

The helpless lie in the shade praying, hoping

Waiting for a miracle

The dying lie in the road where the living walk

The dead are merely covered with a cloth, no time for a funeral

The world turns its back in Haiti's hour of need

If only it wasn't us.

Minutes turn to hours, hours to days, days to a week

The streets fill with silence then the rumbling starts again.

Someone help us.

Poet and Traveller Kimberley Johnstone is from Norfolk. Her poem earned her the post of Poet Laureate at her school. Well done Kimberley!

How can I help my child at school?

Sentabell Mabbott offers sound advice

GO TO PARENTS' EVENINGS and other events like school fairs and trips; volunteer to help on trips or to hear children read; make sure your child has good attendance; help the school represent your culture, for example, offer your knowledge and support during June's Gypsy, Roma Traveller History Month.

It's all about community cohesion. What does that mean? It means working towards a society in which

there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.



An English Gypsy, Sentabell Mabbott, is an inclusion support worker in Leeds. "I started school when I was about eight, and went to middle and high schools. I trained as a nursery nurse, which I enjoyed, but felt I needed to give something back to my community. So I went to work for Leeds Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Achievement Service. I've been with them for about 14 years.



National grades? What are they? Who needs them? Read Sentabell's breakdown of the Key Stages at www.travellerstimes.org.uk

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'All children should be helped to get to know each other'

Two of the Traveller boys at a nursery in Newham, London having fun with their friends. Photos by Elisabeth Blanchet.

The under 5s need more help than ever before says Chrissy Meleady, Chief Executive of Early Years Equality. Recently she told an Early Years Conference in Birmingham: "The Education Inspection Act has tended to neglect Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in terms of citizenship, yet all children, from inside and outside the community, should be helped to get to know each other."



FAMILY ALBUM

snapshots of your life

Travellers' TIMES
ONLINE

www.travellerstimes.org.uk



Sixteen-year-old Spencer Boy Smith from Kedington in Suffolk wanted to mark the anniversary of his Grandfather Spencer's death with these photos from the family album. Far left is Spencer with his black mare near Linton, Cambridgeshire in the early 1960s. Here (left) is Spencer with his two sons, Wayne and Spencer, selling cars and trucks in the 1950s. And, just to wish Spencer Boy's Dad, Wayne, a happy birthday, here's Wayne and his brother (middle) in the 1960s breaking a young filly at their yard.



The New Forest was always home to the Gypsy and Traveller community. Now the Forest Bus is working with local families on Traveller family history. Edith Smith from Bury Brickfields loaned Forest Bus one of her own family photos. Can you help Forest Bus? Call Jane Peacock on 023 8066 3866 (charity@forestbus.co.uk).

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

Read it

A Minority and the State: Travellers in Britain in the 21st Century, Becky Taylor (Manchester University Press, 2008, ISBN 9780719075674 £50.00, available from Manchester University Press, Blackwells Bookshops and Amazon)

Don't be put off by this book's dull cover. It's a treasure trove of information. Author Becky Taylor has put a decade of research into this book and if you want to understand how the law and the state relate to Gypsies and Travellers you should read it. There are quotes in here from Travellers all over the UK, prised from newspapers, censuses, and archives. You'd have a job to find such a range of historical quotes anywhere else. Becky Taylor doesn't try to tell us who we are, or decide who's 'real' or not. She recognises we're real people with a genuine history and explains why there's been a lot of friction along the way.

Reviewer: Damian le Bas



"This wagon, by H. Jones, wagon builders of Hereford, is over a hundred years old," says owner 'Brighton Billy'. "Last time I saw a family pull into a field in one of these was around 1953/54."

Travellers had started changing from horsepower to engines a few years earlier and the Travelling man's favourite was the Austin half-ton pick up or the Bedford J-Type lorry.

"A Bedford was the best motor in those days: they were all lined out and there'd be gold chains on the rack behind the cab," recalls Billy.

Here, by coincidence, is a Jones family photo from a new book, *Romany Relics*. Written by John Barker from Buckinghamshire and wagon restorer Peter Ingram from Hampshire, *Romany Relics* costs £85 including postage from John at 2 Ponds House, Rawlings Lane, See Green, Beaconsfield HP9 2RQ jbaker700@btinternet.com.

footnote

During the winter of 1955/56 Lydia Lee (pictured in our last issue) wrote to the Queen pleading for her to stop the eviction of her family from waste ground on Leckwith Common. Her pleas were ignored and Cardiff Council evicted the family.



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IN TOUCH your letters and emails

Not for the gorjas

TT is a good magazine, but it should be for Travelling people and not householders. You want to have more photos of Gypsy people and not of gorjas. I also think TT should use the term Irish Traveller and not Irish Gypsy.

Gypsy lady from the North East

What do you think? Go to www.travellerstimes.org.uk and give us your ideas. Or drop us a line at Traveller's Times.

Romany pride

I was born a Gypsy I am proud to say,
And I will admit to being a Gypsy until my dying day.
You gorjas may have big posh words and letters after your name:
Even though I don't have one, don't mean I carry shame.
God chose me to be Romany because he knew I could cope,
He gave me a strong will and in my heart he gave me hope.
Sometimes it's been hard and tough but I have kept on going.
They say God works in mysterious ways:
I think this is true because I have had some testing days.
He sends the sun and he sends the rain,
But I don't yet understand why he sends people pain.
I will keep on going because God is by my side,
And I will stand up as a Gypsy carrying my Romany Pride.

Jane Ranger/Baker has written many poems for the Bromley Gypsy Traveller project in Orpington, Kent.

We need leaders

Hilda Brazil offers Wannabe Mariapolly Anderson (see Issue 41) some advice

Aim for the sky: that way you always hit the trees!
Working upwards is fine, but young people have the time, opportunity and ability to do more. Many councils have their own agenda and ways of working – and not always for the good of our community. This is not to say that liaison officers don't and can't do a great job. But ask yourself: why hasn't it worked before? Understanding your fellow man is not enough. Night school law is where you are needed; voting and encouraging others to know what they can do, then applying it to your community. Education is an area where you could plant the seeds for the next generation, because we need leaders and teachers who can reach our community.

Hilda Brazil

Mariapolly Anderson:
'I want to be Traveller Liaison Officer.'



Spring wedding: Susie Lee and Jimmy Cole were married at Wallington Catholic Church, Surrey in March. PHOTO: Jo McGuire

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Making music

PHOTO: Chris Preece



Street performers: the Birmingham-based Dinamic, featuring Roberto, Sergio, Katalin and George from Piatra Neamt in Romania, busk all round the West Midlands.



To celebrate GRT History month, *Shanterlena Knowles* samples Gypsy music from Spain to Romania.

Gypsies throughout the world have always had a passion for music. Spanish, Romanian and Turkish Gypsies especially have stayed true to their roots and brought us some mind-blowing and remarkable music.



Spanish Gypsies

As soon as anyone thinks of Spanish Gypsies, they associate them with Flamenco. That's because Flamenco is the traditional style of song and dance belonging to Gypsies in Southern Spain.

I say 'song and dance' because that's what Gypsies love to do. While half play their instruments (the musicians are all self-taught) the rest sing or dance. Just like English, Irish and Scottish Gypsies, they too find it hard to be accepted into society by non-Gypsies.

Two sisters, Toni and Encarna Salazar who perform as Azúcar Moreno, have become world famous since their Flamenco music made the Spanish pop charts.

Romanian Gypsies

Romanian Gypsies express their passion, not through dancing, but singing. The music they write is full of meaning and emotion, the lyrics reflecting how they feel about life and the difficulties they face being Gypsies. Romanian Gypsies often live as an extended family and perform in big bands on the edge of town along the Strada Lautari or 'Musicians Street'.

One of the best known, and a pioneer of jazz in Romania is Johnny Raducanu, a Romanian Gypsy and founder of the Romanian jazz school.

Turkish Gypsies

Turkish Gypsies are famous for belly dancing. Belly dancing originated with Turkish Gypsies and has spread across the world. Turkish Gypsies dance to fasil music, a nightclub version of classical Turkish music and earn money dancing in nightclubs, restaurants and even in the street.

Don't miss it!

Gyula Horvath and the Sentimento Gypsy Paganini www.womad.org/artists/sentimento-gypsy-paganini are a bunch of extremely talented Gypsy musicians. Their exciting and captivating music is found nowhere else in the world except for the Carpathian Basin in central Europe. Catch up with Sentimento at this year's Womad Festival. www.womad.org

Passed away

Born in Yugoslavia, Ljiljana Buttler was a Gypsy soul singer who like other Gypsy musicians developed her talents by watching her mother perform in various bars and restaurants.

Called 'the mother of Gypsy soul' she wowed audiences with her powerful voice as she belted out songs that told how hard her life had been. In April Ljiljana lost her life to cancer, but she leaves behind a legacy that will inspire many Gypsy musicians. To listen to Ljiljana's songs and watch her live performances go to www.travellerstimes.org.uk

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"Everyone has the right to live without fear and violence"

COMBATING THE CURSE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ann's Story

Ann* moved into a house to escape a violent relationship. "Because of my partner, I felt anxious all the time. I've always lived in a caravan, but I felt isolated.

"I decided to leave. **One Voice 4 Travellers** helped me rent accommodation. It was a huge change, but it meant my daughter could get an education. Moving wasn't easy. I felt lonely; I'd keep my daughter at home; I was drinking a little too much. But now, with support, I'm looking after myself and my daughter. And I'm looking forward to a future that's healthy, free from violence and more stable."

* Not her real name

Footnote Between 61% and 81% of Gypsy or Traveller women are thought to have experienced direct domestic abuse (Equalities and Human Rights Commission).

What the police say

"Everyone, regardless of background or social circumstances, has the right to live without fear of violence.

"Many women endure domestic abuse because they're worried about leaving the protection of the extended family, or of prejudice from settled people. Women who've rarely travelled alone or handled the household money are more vulnerable: they may fear losing their children or living in a house and they may worry about going outside their community for help.

"We can work to help women develop a safety plan and explain how they can access the help they need."

Chief Superintendent Mark Nottage chairs the Kent Gypsy and Traveller Action Group. The group is hosting a conference on domestic abuse in June.



Lifelines for help

Is your life in danger? Call 999

National Domestic Violence: 0808 2000247

Solace Women's Aid Service: 0808 802 5565
(Solace's Solas Anois runs the UK's only refuge for Irish Travellers)

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre:
0808 802 9999

Men's Advice: 0808 801 0327

Respect: 0845 122 8609

Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk

National Centre for Domestic Violence:

08709 220704 or www.ncdv.org.uk

Readers' Problems

Eviction threat

"A resident cannot be evicted at the whim of the owner"

We've been over 30 years on this private site and always sent our rent off. But a new owner sent someone round to say we've got to be out in six months. The site's run down. It floods and the fire service says it's unsafe. Some have already moved because they're scared. What can we do?

(Names withheld)

Problem? Call or write to TT

"Without knowing the facts, you're almost certainly protected by the Mobile Homes Act 1983. Under the Act, you can't be evicted unless the owner proves grounds of possession (e.g. rent arrears or causing a nuisance) to the court's satisfaction and the court thinks it reasonable to grant a possession order. A resident cannot be evicted at the whim of the owner. The Act provides excellent security of tenure for site residents. (The last government failed to ensure local authority sites came under the Act before the General Election). Residents should seek legal advice now.

Chris Johnson, Travellers Advice Team at Community Law Partnership: 0121 685 8595

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Canada: more relaxed with Roma

"People over here are more open about the Roma people, not as easy to pass judgement." So reckons Rammona Price (Rafferty) who grew up in Britain before coming to Canada and marrying a gorja.

"Britain was very hard, being called names, always being the odd one out. I only went to junior school and I hated it. When you look back it's disgusting what happened to so many of our people."



Rammona shares some memorable photos from the family album.



Quilting: Camilla and Samantha, students at the Roma school in Uzhgorod, have been making quilts with arts worker Yancy Jensen. Read Yancy's blog about her time in Uzhgorod: yancyinukraine.blogspot.com



PHOTO: Catalina Berescu

Romanian women from the village of Veresti, taken from *Mapping the Invisible*, edited by Lucy Orta and published by Black Dog Publishing (ISBN 978 1 906155 91 9) £24.95. For a review go to Books and Materials, www.travellerstimes.org.uk



Final thought

"I don't choose to live like I do: I was born to live like this. I've lived in Meriden, Solihull for 24 years. Everyone round here knows Noah. But as soon as we pulled on our land and put in for planning, the masks were off: Gypsies! And who wants a Gypsy living next door?"

The settled people need to put things in perspective. Solihull Council needs 28 new pitches and this site has the capacity for 14 of them. If some of the objectors could live with us for a week then they'd soon know we are decent, human beings."

Noah Burton



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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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