

Travellers' TIMES

The only magazine for
Gypsies & Travellers

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Dale Farm eviction day announced **Full report from the front line** PAGE 2

Dale Farm eviction notices served

Eviction notices have been served on up to 400 people living on unauthorised plots on Britain's biggest Travellers' site at Dale Farm in Essex, giving the families until September 19th to leave or face an £18 million eviction operation. Days after the notices were served *Travellers' Times* went to the site to see how the frightened residents were feeling. *By Jake Bowers*



PHOTO: Elisabeth Blanchet

JOHN SHERIDAN, 60, said: "The council have to find us somewhere to go, or every car park around here will be filled up." The terror of an imminent eviction was etched into the face of Cathleen Flynn. At 70 she's at that time in life when she should be remembering her hardest years, not preparing for them.

"They will not get through that gate," Cathleen tells me with a steely eye. Her 58-year-old neighbour Nora says, "We're not rats, we have to go somewhere." Neither a council flat away from each other nor a life at the side of the road is something they will consider for themselves or their grandchildren. "Whatever few years we have left in our life, we simply want to live in peace," says Cathleen.

Mary Sheridan, 28, says she is terrified that

her children will be forced to leave the local primary school they love. The eviction, when it comes, will be an act of pure racism in her eyes. "If the council did this to any other ethnic group, it would seem for the act of racism that it is."

Residents and campaigners set up a human rights monitoring camp to help resist the eviction on August 27 called Camp Constant, named after the notorious bailiff firm Constant and Co which will carry out the eviction.

"Camp Constant is a base for human rights monitors and those who will engage in civil disobedience to stop the bulldozing," says campaigner Grattan Puxon. Local Bishops, Jewish Rabbis, Amnesty International and the United Nations have all asked the government to stop the eviction on human rights grounds.

Tony Ball, Basildon Council leader, has urged families to leave by choice before the evictions to avoid the misery and the up to £18 million cost it will bring. He said the families were being ill-advised by campaigners who want them to stay and try to resist the operation.

Residents have appealed for as many supporters as possible to join them before the eviction day on September 19th, setting a date for the biggest confrontation between Gypsy and Traveller rights activists and the government Britain has ever seen.

For more information on how you can help the residents, see:
<http://dalefarm.wordpress.com/>

Tyson Fury becomes British Champion

British Gypsy boxer Tyson Fury defeated Dereck Chisora on points to become the new British and Commonwealth heavyweight champion after a brutal fight at Wembley Arena in July.

CHISORA ROCKED FURY in the second round but it was the only time the champion looked like he might win the fight. Fury, however, bounced back and picked his opponent off at ease to earn a wide unanimous decision. Two judges scored the fight 117-112 with the other scoring it 118-111.

"This is a dream come true and it means the world to me," said Fury.

Manchester's Fury, who has proudly spoken of his Gypsy identity, started the fight on the front foot and looked in better form than 27-year-old Chisora, whose pre-fight weight was the highest in his career. Fury's weight was the

lowest it had ever been in the ring.

The previously unbeaten Chisora rocked Fury in the second and had his man in trouble in the third and fourth but the challenger cleared his head and dominated from there on in.

Chisora was constantly worn down by Fury's physical dominance and relentless work rate. Victory for the unbeaten Fury – the 15th of his professional career – could now open the door to a potential world title shot against either of the world champion Klitschko brothers.

Wladimir Klitschko, WBO, IBF and WBA champion, openly discussed the prospect of

facing the winner in the build-up to the Wembley Arena showdown, and now Fury can dream of a shot at the big time. But Fury says he plans a steady climb to the top.

"I just want to do it nice and steady. I'm going to go for the Irish title next followed by a defence of the British. Then maybe I can go for [Alexander] Dimitrenko who's got the European title."

Fury is eligible to box for the vacant Irish crown thanks to his Romany family heritage and is eyeing a clash with the veteran Belfast brawler Martin Rogan.

Apology and clarification

Page 2 in Issue 46 of *Travellers' Times* carried an article called No Place Like Home about new government policies on Travellers' sites. The article featured a picture of some dirty abandoned wasteland at Dale Farm, which does not represent the vast majority of well-kept plots at the site. We unreservedly apologise for the offence this picture may unintentionally have caused.

Traveller Education Services laid waste by government cuts

An exclusive investigation by *Travellers' Times* can reveal that the schooling of the children of England's 300,000 Gypsies and Irish Travellers – who are the most educationally vulnerable children in the UK – is being put at risk by the cuts to council funding. Freedom of Information request responses from 127 Local Authorities have shown that nearly half have either abolished their Traveller Education Service completely or drastically reduced the number of front-line staff. *By Mike Doherty*

THE SHOCKING RESULTS have also formed part of detailed research on how Britain is treating its Gypsy and Traveller community being given to a UN committee on discrimination.

Of 127 authorities that responded, 24 planned to scrap their Traveller education support team while a further 34 were cutting more than a third of staff. The situation may be even worse next year, with 20 councils refusing to reveal projected staffing levels as they were "under review", "undecided", "unknown" or being "restructured".

Concerns were raised by Baroness Whitaker, Vice-President of the Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT) in the House of Lords in May. But schools minister Lord Hill said £201m in ethnic minority achievement grants had gone to individual schools as part of a drive to shift power away from councils.

The scale of cuts has shocked the National Association of Teachers of Travellers. "I'm gobsmacked by the speed at which it has happened," joint president Linda Lewins said. "I'm watching 20 years of hard work being pulled apart."

Baroness Whitaker says: "The government

should pay attention to the decline in the Travellers' education service provision because it seems to be the only measure with any clear success in supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in getting to school."

The Department of Education said: "This is not about removing support. We have de-ring-fenced a number of grants to give heads more flexibility and control over their budgets because they know best how to support their pupils."

The *Travellers' Times* investigation has revealed that the following Traveller Education Services have either been closed or are to be closed completely:

- **Barking and Dagenham**
- **Barnet**
- **Barnsley**
- **Bedford**
- **Calderdale**
- **Camden**
- **Cheshire East**
- **Hillingdon**
- **Kingston upon Thames**
- **Lambeth**
- **Lewisham**
- **Medway**
- **Newcastle upon Tyne**
- **Newham**
- **Rotherham**
- **Rutland**
- **Sandwell**
- **Slough**
- **Solihull**
- **Southampton**
- **Southwark**
- **Stoke-on-Trent**
- **Tower Hamlets**

news in brief

THE NEW ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) lead for Traveller and Gypsy issues, ACC Janette McCormick says:

"Proper provision of accommodation is paramount if we are to address all the fundamental issues facing Gypsies and Travellers today.

"I believe an effective planning framework which can deliver the accommodation needed will continue to require monitoring and direction from central government and sufficient political will to ensure that the Travelling community are treated in a fair and equitable way. ACPO and the police service are ready to play their part in that work."



Janette McCormick

No Mad Laws petition

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER campaigners have set up an online petition against the legal aid bill currently making its way through parliament because it will remove the right to legal aid for all Gypsies and Travellers living on unauthorised sites – an estimated 25% of the population.

Chris Johnson of the Travellers Advice Team says: "Some 25% of the Gypsy and Traveller population who live in caravans in England and Wales are either on unauthorised encampments or unauthorised developments and, therefore, many of those people will be directly affected by these proposals. At CLP we estimate that at least 75% of our 'accommodation cases' for our Gypsy and Traveller clients would no longer be within scope."

Diary Dates

Big thanks to Jim's Videos for providing the fair dates.
Contact Jim on 07538 684204

17th Sep Kirkby Stevens
Cowper Day Horse Fair
17th Sep Latter Lee Fair
25th Sep Kenilworth
28th Sep Bridgwater

30th Sep - 1st Oct Khanceska – Celebrate
Romany, Traveller people
& culture
3rd Oct Ballinasloe Horse Fair
5th Oct Wibsey Bradford

9th Oct Wisbech Peterborough
20th Oct Stow Fair
23rd Oct Langley Horse Fair
26th Nov Kirkby Stevens Horse Fair
10th Dec Carlisle Horse Fair

Travellers'
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Travellers' Times is looking for a new editor - see the ad on page 22 or www.ruralmedia.co.uk/opportunities/

Deep rooted

It's the year 2011 and not much has changed over 600 years for our community. *By Dee Cooper*

WE ARE STILL treated by society as the lesser breed, with little say in wider community life, even though over time people from our community have stood up and been counted as part of an ethnic minority, are we treated as such?

Under the Race Relations Act (1976) the Gypsy and Traveller community have ethnic minority status, but are we recognised as this to the wider community? Fact is an overall majority for the population would say 'no'! With only a small minority of people working in the fields of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups and in organisations where their aims are to enforce the rights for single ethnic groups or all BME groups.

So what does it all mean? It means that for Romany Gypsy/Traveller people we do have rights! And the more we execute these rights the more chance we have of being heard.

People just like you and I fight hard every day to make sure we are not treated as the lesser breed. And that our rights, our culture, our history are recognised just like any other. Many, even in today's society, would love nothing more than for us to just simply disappear, and let's face it, there are those out there that in their flocks are still trying to make it happen.

Are we going to let that happen? I don't think so. Our community is known for one thing probably more than any other and that is our family values, our passion and of love for our way of life, with over 600 years of family passion installed in us over the years. Will we lay down to what is a form of bullying in 2011? I know in my heart that this would not even be a consideration for us.

From 2007 to 2009 I personally went through the worst time with my daughter being bullied

for who she was, nothing more. She's a loving, helpful girl, and one that is so proud of her culture and background and would stand alone for her culture if she had too. Bullies in school called her "pikey", "dirty Gypsy" and when reported nothing was done. Things got worse and violence was also used on her. It took me three years to fight through the right channels, and I'm not going to lie to you, it was the worst three years of our lives. No one listened. No one recognised the Race Relations Act then or our rights. People may say, "Why did I keep her in school?" Fact is I would have taken her out probably in a heartbeat, and for a while I did. But she had worked hard to get in the school of her choice and she wanted to have an education so that one day she would have the skills to help others that had been through things that she had. So we stood together and we fought not with hands but with words, with passion, with love.

Just over six weeks ago my son, who is at the same school, got called a "pikey" and "Gypo". I made one call to that school and they didn't even try to argue back – they just found out what had happened and sent the child who had called the names on a discrimination course.

People might say, big deal! But from tiny acorns grows a big oak.

Our aim: Not to have one of us be treated with the respect and rights we deserve but for our whole community to be treated with the human and ethnic rights we are entitled to. Stand proud, be counted, take nothing lying down, be that small acorn that helps that tree grow.

*Love & light
Dee*

"People just like you and I fight hard every day to make sure we are not treated as the lesser breed. And that our rights, our culture, our history are recognised just like any other."



Dee's daughter Tayla-Jaye (left) with her cousin Connie Gal

"WHEN I FIRST joined Aunty Dee's dance company, I was very nervous because I have been bullied at Primary and High School so I had no confidence, but my first day was amazing! "Now it's a year on and we've achieved and improved so much, we have done lots of shows and competitions. I am now confident and stick up for myself in the right ways and for the first time in my life. I feel wanted, loved and respected for being a Romany Gypsy."

Connie Gal, age 15

LEAN ON LENA

Help and useful advice

Dear Lena,

I need some advice on how to deal with racial abuse that my children and I have been getting from one neighbour on our estate.

This has been going on for ten years and came to a head on May 23rd when my son hit the son of the family. He was standing outside my kitchen window when my son was inside and they were calling him a "dirty Gypo that shouldn't live in houses".

The police and council are not interested in my family's complaints, only that of the other family. The case went to court with my son and he got fined.

The racial abuse to my children, me, family and visitors is still going on and no one will listen to the 'Gypsy family'.

Thank you,
Lesley



Shanterlena Knowles
PHOTO: Alison Chapman

Dear Lesley,

I'm sorry to hear of the pain and misery you have been suffering over the past ten years. I am sure a lot of other families will be able to relate to your problem as racism within the Gypsy community is still very much at large.

There is an organisation called Friends, Families & Travellers (telephone: 01273 234777 www.gypsy-traveller.org) and they specialise in helping Gypsies and Travellers who are being racially abused.

It is important to log everything that is happening, and although it's easy to retaliate (especially when you know you're in the right) try not to. You don't want to give the bully any legs to stand on.

I hope that this situation is soon resolved and that justice is served for you and your family.

Have you got something you'd like to get off your chest or need help with? Then write to Shanterlena c/o Travellers' Times, Sullivan House, 72-80 Widemarsh Street, Hereford HR4 9HG



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A breed apart?

A Leicestershire couple has started a new heritage group celebrating the culture of all Romany people

ENGLISH ROMANIES and Roma may see themselves as distantly related, but time has made us strangers to one another, making it easy to concentrate on the differences that separate us rather than the similarities that unite us. But for one couple, uniting the differences between Roma and Romanichal culture has turned into their greatest life project of all – their family and marriage.

Now living on a private site in Leicestershire, Clarice (from the Romanichal Boswell family) and Roma man Steve Evon have created a family that is neither Roma nor Romanichal, but both. Having learnt how to reconcile the differences between their two cultures, they have now started an organisation that intends to preserve and celebrate the culture of all Romany people.

But how exactly did a Roma man and Romanichal woman come to get married in the first place?

"We met in Cardiff at the Top Rank dance on Sunday nights," says Clarice. "We got chatting. He asked me out for two months before I finally agreed," she says.

"I was 11 when we went into trailers and travelled. My brothers would go hawking and go up and down with the Travellers," recalls Steve. "From then on we always mingled off and on."

Steve's family are Keneshti Roma originally from Russia and Greece that travelled the world from Africa to Canada, but he was in Cardiff wrapping up the family's business before going to Canada. "Eventually, we got married," says Clarice, "and he never did follow on!"

"What Steve's family used to do was have two years in Canada and two years over here," she says. "His grandfather used to go all over, and he used to pitch a tent on a ship and go over to Canada and Africa." But Clarice preferred to travel the roads of Britain than the continents of the world.

"His mum and dad wanted him to go over to Canada, but I never had the bottle," she says. "So we compromised, got married and stayed here. When we got married the women in his family all wore long dresses and looked



Clarice's relations, the Boswell and Hart family in their rod tent, Douglas Head, Isle of Man – 1920s

at me as if I was something out of a public house. But his dad was the nicest old man and he respected me for what I was, a Romanichal, and I respected him for what he was. With the younger ones, though, they looked at me and treated me like a gorgor because I couldn't speak Romanes like them. But I thought my Romani words were the proper ones!"

"Over the years we've had riots and murders over the differences," she laughs.

Having spent decades now exploring the differences between their two communities, they've become passionate about preserving ALL Romany culture.

"Amongst the Travellers, they think the Rom are all the same, but there are different breeds," says Steve. "But not all Rom are Kalderash, I'm Keneshti for example. But now there are a lot of people that are losing the language and I want to keep the language and customs alive. The food that we cook, the delicacies. The entire whole history."

To do just that they've started Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Heritage but admit they need help to

The ties that bind: Steve Evon, at his sister's wedding tying traditional Roma scarves around his Aunt Lenka's neck. November 1970, London.



bring what they've learnt to the wider world. "I've gone just about as far as this uneducated Gypsy brain will take me," says Clarice before heading off to get some photos scanned for her website. "We need practical help and funding to spread what we've learnt further."

To get in touch with Steve and Clarice Evon and Gypsy, Roma Traveller Heritage
tel: 07780 853019
www.gypsyromatravellerheritage.com



Clarice's Uncle Bernie Robinson and Aunt Florrie Boswell, Isle of Man, 1920s

European reps

Factfile: The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) started its work in 2005. The establishment of the ERTF provides a unified voice and democratic platform of co-operation for all Roma, Sinti, Kále, Travellers and other related groups in Europe.

TOM McCREADY and Muzelley McCready are elected representatives for the European Roma and Travellers Forum. We wish them all the best in their endeavours to do their best for their community.



Tom McCready



Muzelley McCready

Muzelley has recently spent three days in Brussels with the members of NFGLG (National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups) including Peter Mercer, MBE, in the European Parliament. Zelli will continue important work around health issues and issues surrounding accommodation and education.

Tom gave an excellent speech at the GRTHM (Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month) launch in London 2010 and he visited Auschwitz Concentration Camp with Zelli and members of DGLG (Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group) in August of last year. [The final liquidation of Gypsy people in Auschwitz happened on August 1st/2nd.] A poem written by Tom and photos taken were used in Derby City's Holocaust Memorial Day, January 27th 2011.

Modern-day issues are important but so is the preservation of culture and heritage.

Get Regal

Roma communities gather in Peterborough for the UK's first-ever election of a Gypsy King



PHOTO: Simon Barber

25TH JUNE WAS an historic day for Roma people in Britain as 19 candidates from across the country gathered at Peterborough Town Hall to stand for election as King of the Roma.

The eventual winner was 53-year-old Ladislav Stojka, who lives in Peterborough. On winning the election he was presented with a crown and the ceremonial 'gold sticks' wielded by Roma kings in Eastern Europe, where elections like this one are a regular occurrence.

Roman Cicko, a Slovakian Rom who has lived in Peterborough for over 10 years, was the organiser for the Gypsy King election.

"You have to have a crown because this is a Gypsy tradition," said Cicko.

In a country where claiming to be the King of the Gypsies might get you into a royal bit of trouble, Cicko explains that this election wasn't about finding the hardest man for the job.

Instead, the Roma want a representative who can speak up for them to councils and promote education.

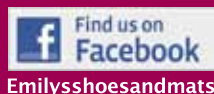
"Maybe 50 years ago they used to fight for the title. Whoever is the strongest is the king, but not now. Now it's a democracy.

"The new king must be a respectable man and will encourage education," said Cicko.

Voters in the election were largely drawn from the Czech and Slovak Roma communities, who number up to 4,000 in the Peterborough area.

Mr Stojka was crowned by 17-year-old Maria Kalinacoba from Chatham, Kent, otherwise known as Miss Roma 2011. After the ceremony the new king began his royal duties in style, departing the town hall in a stretch limousine.

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The Gypsies have landed

Britain's talent contest for the Gypsy and Traveller community has packed out the Royal Festival Hall



ALL PHOTOS: Dale Sutton

ON AUGUST 20TH, the Gypsy and Traveller community's own unique talent contest arrived at the Royal Festival Hall where 18 acts competed to win Travellers Got Talent 2011. For three hours 18 hopefuls drawn from across Britain, danced and sang to a packed 800-strong audience. But in the end it was Irish Traveller singer Patrick Cassidy who won the £1,000 first prize, followed by Romany tap dancer Riley Smith in 2nd place and Romany singer Georgina Chapman in 3rd place.

Having already gone through five regional finals, Travellers Got Talent mentors and judges Sam Lee, Marek Czureja, Jentina Chapman, Damian Le Bas and Roisin Mullins had travelled the country to select the 18 best performers from Britain's 300,000-strong Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community to perform at Britain's biggest cultural venue. The performance was the central show at the Southbank Centre's Land Weekend and celebrated the long-established contribution Gypsies and Travellers have always made to Britain.

But the show was not just a Gypsy X Factor, working closely with professional mentors from the entertainment industry, the finalists

breathed new life into traditional Gypsy, Traveller and British music and dance to create original performances fit for the 21st century. If you missed it, the entire event and those that led up to it, as well as the personal stories of many of the finalists, have been turned into a series to be broadcast on Sky's Bio channel called *A Gypsy Life for Me*.

Travellers Got Talent promoter Jake Bowers said: "The Gypsy and Traveller community is considered to be guilty of many things but capable of nothing, so this contest has revealed a community rich in talent that has survived by entertaining others for well over a thousand years.

"By throwing open the doors on the Gypsy and Travellers' own annual talent contest and turning it into a TV series that is to be shown across the world we have proved that Travellers indeed got talent. But we couldn't have done it without our sponsors, alphaTALK and *Travellers' Times*."

***A Gypsy Life for Me* will be broadcast on Sky's Bio Channel (Sky 156/Virgin 242) for 8 weeks from November 17th 2011. To see more pictures from the final see centre pages.**

Recognising Romani art



The gallery was opened with the exhibition "Camarón" of the Catalan painter Lita Cabellut
PHOTO: Jan Frieze

THE ROMANI PEOPLE are famed for their artistic genius. It has roared its way from Rajasthan to Rome and Wallachia to Wales for the last thousand years.

Yet while the Hungarian Romani violinist, the Andalusian guitarist and the hop country step-dancer are an easily recognisable picture of Gypsy artistes, the Romani painter, sculptor or embroiderer has been a much less talked-about figure in the history of Roma culture.

Moritz Pankok is a man on a mission to turn this tendency around. That's why this year, Moritz has opened the world's first ever major fine art gallery dedicated to exhibiting Romani art.

Moritz's great-uncle, the German artist Otto Pankok, is famed for the evocative and sympathetic woodcut portraits of German Sinti which he made before and after the war. Otto Pankok also went out of his way to help Romani people, and is still fondly remembered by many Sinti to this day.

Like his great-uncle, Moritz Pankok has no time for the tired Gypsy stereotypes that are still so carelessly repeated in the arts, generally by people who have no direct experience of Romani culture. Instead, his new gallery, Kai Dikhas, offers a purpose-built environment for the cream of Romani art to help open the eyes of present-day Europe.

Hundreds say farewell to "gentleman" Jim



Floral tributes for Jimmy



HUNDREDS OF GYPSIES, Travellers and Showmen followed young Jimmy Cook on his final journey to Chichester Cemetery on June 30th. A funeral cortege consisting of many cars as well as Jimmy's F150 pickup, an old J-type and TK lorry, all laden with flowers, slowly made its way across Hampshire from his Fareham home. But the police escort through Hampshire wasn't met by an escort in Sussex, forcing the Travellers present to use their own vehicles to close off roundabouts to allow the funeral cortege to pass.

"Jimmy was a young man who was passionate about carrying on Traveller traditions. He valued respect very highly and I think he would have done the same thing in allowing the line of cars to pass," says Bill Wilson. "The hundreds of flowers, followers and tributes show just how loved Jimmy was. He truly was a gentleman. I'm proud that he was my first cousin and my best friend."

Bill says: "I think Jimmy will be remembered not just as a signwriter but as man who loved a good time, as well as fishing and driving his horses. He loved the simple things in life. Sadly Jimmy was only 32 when he died after a long battle against cancer. His parents Ethel and Jim would like to thank the many family and close friends without which they could not have made it through this hard time."

James Nathan Cook, born May 15th 1979, died June 18th 2011.

Mary May & Bridey's Fashions

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Talking with a talented Traveller

Young Times Editor *Shanterlena Knowles* had the chance to interview the talented **Nancy Petulengro** at this summer's Travellers Got Talent ... Here Nancy reveals who has been her real inspiration and what her future plans are

PHOTO: Alison Chapman



Nancy with her Granddad

So, tell me about yourself, how old were you when you first started to learn to play the accordion?

"I was five when I first started to learn how to play."

What made you want to learn so young?

"All my family does it really; it's throughout my family for hundreds of years. My mother does it, my Dad's Mother, and my Mother's Dad as well. So to play it just comes natural."

Do you go to school or are you home educated?

"I don't go to school I'm home educated. I have a private school tutor who comes to my house every week to teach me."

Do you feel that it is important for Gypsies and Travellers to have an education?

"I don't feel that it is that important, it's just something I wanted to have. I would rather have a good education than not have one."

Do you play any other instruments?

"I play the guitar and sing as well, so the guitar, accordion and vocals."

Do you write your own music or do you like to do cover songs?

"My music teacher that teaches me the accordion we sometimes get together to write songs, but she mainly writes songs for me."

Who has been your musical inspiration?

"My inspiration has got to be my Granddad because he played

the accordion as well and when we used to get together, we'd make a stick fire and cook some meat and he used to get his accordion out and play to us. Everybody used to love it, so definitely my Granddad."

I've read that you have competed in numerous competitions around the world; tell me a bit more about what you've done.

"I was seven when I entered my first competition which was the UK Championships. Ever since then I've been winning it every year and I'm 15 now."

"Recently I have won the UK Accordion Championships for the electronic accordion, but it's a Roland Competition. Therefore it's a lot different compared to the ones I've done since I was seven because they're just the UK Championships where you can select your own songs and you can play what you're comfortable with, whereas this one was the Roland Electronic Accordion Championships and although you could select your own songs you had to play on their accordion, and adjust all the sounds and settings. And whoever wins it, they then win the accordion that they played on."

"I won the contest and won an electronic Roland accordion which is worth £3000."

Do you feel that there was more pressure on you because you had to play to their requirements unlike any other competition?

"Yes there was a lot of a pressure because playing on an electric accordion is very different to a normal accordion. The bellows etc aren't the same, but you just have to get used to it if you can play the accordion then you just have to adapt yourself."

Have you played with any well-known people?

"Well I've been on shows with Jeremy Kyle, Joe Longthorne, Cannon and Ball, Paul O'Grady, Brian Connolly, Camilla Parker Bowles and The Wanted."

Do you have any big shows lined up for the near future?

"One of the acts from Britain's Got Talent, Marawa, she has a show coming up called Exotica in the Jackson Lane Theatre in London. She has asked me if I will come and play the accordion and sing for her. I met her at an event I do every year called Showzam in Blackpool."

Where would you like to see yourself in ten years?

"In ten years' time I'd like to see myself performing in the Hot Ice Show in Blackpool. I'd like to play accordion tango to live music for the ice skaters that perform there."

TELL US ABOUT IT

YT editor Shanterlena Knowles says: "Keep those stories coming in!" Call Shanterlena on 01432 344039 or email shanterlenak@ruralmedia.co.uk



Well done ...



PHOTO: Jim Jackson

... Betty and Skye who were awarded for taking part in the Attendance Reward Scheme – a new Leicestershire initiative to work with Travelling families and encourage school attendance.

Anybody interested in the new leaflet, Guidance for Travelling Families, or the scheme can call EMTAS (Ethnic Minority, Traveller Achievement Service) on 0116 305 3151.

Top model!

17-YEAR-OLD Aaron Bannister has worked on this 1/4 scale model of a traditional wagon every day over the past 16 months and saw his efforts rewarded at this year's Hartlebury Museum event to celebrate Traveller History Month. Aaron has had to use his metalwork and carpentry skills together with his knowledge of traditional Traveller life inspired by his grandparents. See TT Online for more on this story ...



PHOTO: Daniel Cruickshanks

MISSING PERSON



Police are seeking for information to trace missing 27-year-old **Scott Fletcher** from Hartlepool who was last seen on **Wednesday May 11th**.

Scott has many friends within the travelling community and his family are desperate to hear from him.

Any information please call Cleveland Police on 01642 326326 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

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Superstars!



The TGT Finalists

The talent on display at this year's TGT was simply stunning – and it's a shame there had to be one winner. But, to EVERYONE that took part, from auditions to the final, we salute you all.

All photos by Dale Sutton



TGT Winner Patrick Cassidy



Runner-up was Riley Smith



Third place went to Georgina Chapman



The Doyle Brothers



The Doyle Sisters



Tony Gorniak



Josie Docherty



Crystal Cooper



Cindy Czureja



Johnny Connors



Kamala Frankham

Family Album

Snapshots of your life

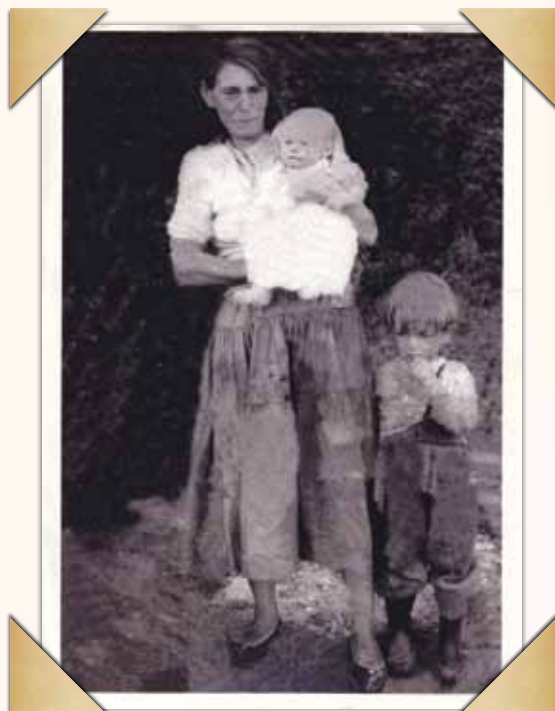
Here are a few pictures of my family; Clara was my Granny and my best friend

Ruby was also my Granny and we lost her in June this year, my two Grannies were sisters and one couldn't live without the other.

So when me Granny Clara died we knew me Granny Ruby wouldn't last long without her.

So June this year me Granny Clara came down from heaven and took Granny Ruby with her to live and be out of pain.

Emma Johnson, Herefordshire



Clara holding Sukie with Jack (standing)



Bedford lorry next to Clara's trailer, Herefordshire. Emma's Dad, Sukie, lived in this trailer with his mum, which was later his first marital home.



Clara and Timmy with two girls

Snakey, June, Clara, Caroline, William, and Chrissie



Great Uncle Tommy with sister, Evelyn



Clara with
three eldest
grandsons,
Chrissie, Stuart
and William



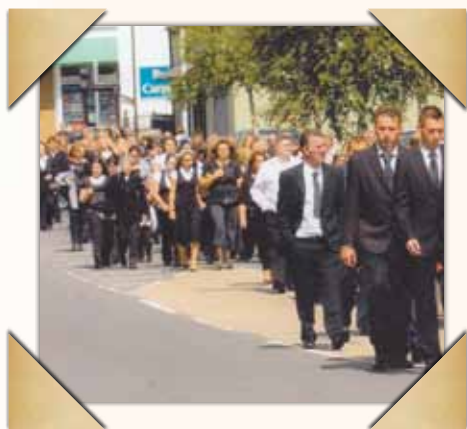
Ruby with
Stuart



Ruby with Emma and Auntie Kelly



Ruby with Clara – last photo taken together



Funeral of Clara



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



PHOTOS: Daisy Beck Productions



Field of faith

A spiritual and community revival has led to one of the biggest Gypsy and Traveller Christian conventions for many years. *Jake Bowers* meets some of those who made their way to Essex for the annual Light and Life Convention

PASTOR JACKIE BOYD doesn't need to leave a message on his answerphone, he simply leaves a postcode. His flock have sat naps, and it's enough to turn a farmer's field into a Gypsy and Traveller town overnight. When I get to CM3 8RJ, he's right there. The farmer is happy for the rent, Jackie is happy at the attendance, but the women from Chelmsford Borough Council are getting very twitchy. "Do you have a site licence under the terms of the 1960 Caravan Site and Control of Development Act?" they snap. "A what?" he replies calmly.

It's all in a week's work for Jackie. Having just returned from establishing a new church in Russia, where millions of Gypsies live, this is the highlight of his year. "I've been a Christian for 25 years," explains Jackie, "and it's totally transformed my life. Because the Gypsy community is still on the margins, it's been getting left too far behind. I know that without God the Gypsy community is on the road to destruction." Nowadays, perhaps a quarter to a third of Britain's Gypsy and Traveller community passionately agrees with him.

The big top he is standing in proudly proclaims that "God is Love" from its roof. When the Light and Life mission he is a lead pastor in bought it, it had two main poles. As the congregation has expanded, so has the tent. Last night 3,000 people squeezed between the ten poles it now needs to keep it upright.

Bobby Price, 42, from Wakefield describes why he has made the journey to Essex. "I was a complete and utter fool before I came to church," he says. "I'd lie and cheat. There wasn't

much I didn't do. But now I'm very different. I don't smoke or drink and I feel so much cleaner." All across the field perhaps 600 trailers are home to thousands of similar stories. Charlotte Hilden has discovered she's stopped next to Tracey Nedic who she last saw as a child. "We're all brothers and sisters in God now," explains Tracey as she hugs her old friend.

"There used to be a big emptiness inside me that I used to try and fill with money and things," says Mark Hughes from Leatherhead. "But since giving my heart to Jesus there is a peace within me that no money could buy. Who wouldn't want to tell everyone about that?" he asks.

For Violet Cannon, 31, who has travelled 260 miles from Selby, trying to explain the existence of God to a non-believer comes easily. "You can't see or touch gravity but you know it's there don't you?" she says. "Well the existence of God is just as obvious to me. When I look back on the difficult times in my life, I can see that he's been beside me all the way." She's been to Appleby Horse Fair every year in her life, but for her the Convention is different. And it's not just the lack of horses, drinking or fighting she means.

"Horse fairs nowadays are too much about money and things. This is about spirituality, but it's also about peace and finding a sense of community in a world where Gypsy people are always an unwanted minority." For four days the minority became a majority and the women from the council just had to go back to the office and accept it.

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Grave concern

FOLLOWING ON FROM last issue's coverage of gravestone battles TT contacted Mrs Millis's local priest, Father Paul, who said he couldn't really comment on Mrs Millis's case because her petition is with the Chancellor. He expressed a wish that Travellers would understand the limitations on churches to incorporate the gravestones of their choice for loved ones.

"You really want to think about where that person can be buried with greatest flexibility," he said. "It is tradition that graves should be in harmony with the church building itself and I encourage that. Travellers need to be aware of the difference between a public cemetery and a churchyard."

Mrs Millis's nearest public cemetery is in Durrington, Wiltshire.

Dear editor

I am writing to TT for help and information, from any of your readers concerning any problems they might have had with the laying to rest of their loved ones, in a church yard but not a cemetery, the problem we have is that the Vicar won't allow us the grave stone we would like for our late father he tells us he has certain rules that are set down ie- the shape the colour and even what is written on the head stone and including edging stones, id like to ask the readers if anyone has had the same problem but ended with the result they wanted ie- winning the day and getting the head stone they wanted, any form of paper work or clues on how to deal with this problem would be of great help

Tina Millis's original letter to TT.

Good luck, Matt



CAGE FIGHTER Matt Howard, 29, from Darlington holds the current British Middleweight title and is on a 100 per cent winning streak.

Matt, who has been boxing for 14 years, fights out of the Rough House Gym in Nottingham, where he moved to train with some of the best fighters in Europe.

Cheer Matt on when he defends his title next month.



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SALLY PACKMAN met husband, Danny, while selling strawberries on the roadside in the West Country. They married in Hamilton in Scotland before selling up and

moving to Australia where they travelled all around before returning to the West Country. She has always liked singing and when young used to perform on any make-do stage with cousins, Anita and Betty.

Fans of the Phil MacK show on Sky TV may well have spotted bonny TT reader, Sally Packman. Encouraged by son Danny, Sally had sent a CD of herself singing her favourite songs in to Phil who liked her voice and asked her onto the show. "I sang two songs when I got there," Jenny said. "He interviewed me and I told him I was a Romany and a bit about myself. I appeared on his show singing 'Silver Haired Daddy' and I will be coming on again in a few weeks singing 'Okie from Muskogee'."

What a nice ending to a lifetime's love with song!

The country show airs every Monday on Showcase 201. See Sally's website for more information: sallypackman.com

The Holocaust

I'd like to have an answer
Maybe you would too
Why did these people hate us?
The pain they put us through

It wasn't for our money
Riches we had none
Why did they try to destroy us?
Our memory to be gone

Husbands, wives and children
Living from day to day
Why did they want to hurt us?
We were not in their way

The Jews get recognition
For what these people done
Gypsies don't get mentioned
Not husband, wife or son

They took our lovely children
Was it the colour of their skin?
Thousands in gas chambers
I just can't take it in

I'd love an explanation
Maybe you would too
The atrocities that happened
Just Gypsies like me and you

Diane Nicholson



Nora gets to grips with Gypsy omission

ACTRESS NORA FINNEY was so incensed when she saw Jason Bartlett's play, *Holocaust*, which totally omitted mention of the number of Gypsies killed in camps during the Second World War, that she contacted the director to champion her people's suffering.

"It bugged me that mention of the Holocaust before didn't include Gypsies," Nora said.

The play has been running for years and different scenes are added every time so when the play went out at Bradford's Playhouse theatre this summer it was Nora herself who played the part of one of the Gypsies in the camp.

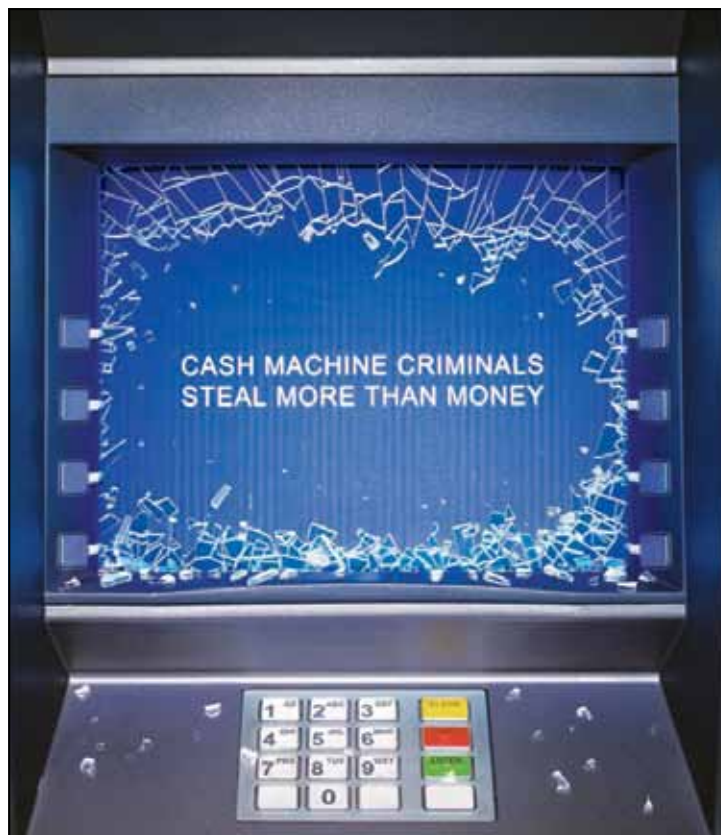
"I had one scene talking to the other girls which involved lots of crying," Nora said. "Sometimes I couldn't get the words out."

Originally the director wasn't going to cast Nora but she pulled it off and impressed him during rehearsal.

"It's not just me standing on the stage; it's the millions and millions of Gypsies I was representing. I wasn't on my own," Nora said.

Nora, who grew up on sites in Doncaster and Cheshire left school at ten but went back to college recently in order to get qualifications in Maths and English.

"I am a rep for Nestlé," Nora said, "and I was determined to get my qualifications in order to get on."



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RESOURCES

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Tales from a Scottish Traveller

Jack and the Devils' Purse: Scottish Traveller Tales

Duncan Williamson

ISBN: 978 1841589 510

Published by Birlinn, Edinburgh

£8.99, paperback (eBook also available)



NOBODY CAN DISPUTE the incredible canon of stories left behind by Scottish Traveller master storyteller Duncan Williamson who passed away in 2007. Storytelling was a way of life for Duncan, believing they weren't just a good 'crack' or cosy fireside entertainment but that they provided a subtle insight into how to live in this world as "natural human beings".

Which is where *Jack and the Devils' Purse* comes in. A remarkable collection of twenty stories edited by Linda Williamson that lures the reader into a torrid world of temptation: the realm of the Prince of Darkness, no less, who repeatedly challenges and exposes human vanity, frailty and vulnerability. Until, that is, he meets Jack, the inveterate hero of Traveller tales and most cherished character in Duncan's repertoire.

Now, although Jack is omnipresent throughout the collection he isn't one particular person. He's a piece of everyman: almost always a young man on the cusp of manhood, sometimes a little foolish, often erring towards laziness, always brave and honourable.

Whatever that mysterious, tall, dark, stranger ominously dressed in a long black cloak hurls at our hero, Jack not only takes it on the chin but he deals the Devil a fateful blow that clearly demonstrates that good always prevails over evil.

Ros Green

Rustic rollercoaster

Language of Thieves

Elizabeth Jackson

ISBN: 978 0709092 247

Hardback, 223 pages, £18.99



LANGUAGE OF THIEVES is a novel set largely in Cumbria at the end of the 1940s. It follows the story of young Daisy Latimer, a spirited Travelling girl. Her widower father, Samboy, does his best to protect Daisy from the two men who love her, local squire Tobias Flint and bad boy Gypsy Roulson Adams. The main action takes place around Appleby, during and after the fair. Elizabeth Jackson has a gift for conjuring up very English places, whether it's the country manors and villages we're used to hearing about, or the horse fairs that we're not.

Language of Thieves is a vivid, sweeping novel, a fine book for the fireside when the winter wind is up outside. Jackson transports you from the politics of the present to a rural past that many of us can't help longing for, whether we're Travellers or not. You can really breathe in the atmosphere, from the straw Samboy sleeps on under his wagon to the hops and 'baccar' of the old pubs when they still served proper beer.

The characters are largely wholesome and likeable, but there are a few bad apples: especially the young, wild and dark-eyed Gypsy Roulson. When Daisy's heart is stolen by the dashing landowner Tobias, Roulson goes off the rails in his quest for revenge against the rich Gorja who stole the best-looking girl at the fair.

Language of Thieves is a rustic rollercoaster tale with scary scenes and a few steamy ones as well so this one's for the grown-ups. It's definitely worth a read.

Damian Le Bas

Khančeske
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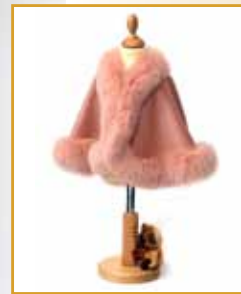
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EUROPE and the world



GRUBB Gypsy Roma Urban Balkan Beat

“because we are not the gypsies you think we are”

IN JUNE we went to see GRUBB, the show at indigO2 in The O2, London. GRUBB are a group of young Roma (14–18 year olds) and international artists. The show tells the story of the myths and stereotypical view of Gypsies that is still prevalent in Europe and was easily transferred into the same view happening here in the UK. There was great singing with some exceptional vocalists in hip-hop style and some more traditional, street dance routines, and funny sketches. The message was very clear, sung in Romanes with some of the lyrics written in English on a backdrop. The negative issues that the kids sing and dance about are very relevant to what is still very real here in the UK. It was a fantastic show, with audience participation and ended as a congo-like procession that led out of the indigO2 into the foyer of The O2 itself, still singing and dancing. If GRUBB comes back to the UK I would recommend it to anyone to go and see and the children that we had with us, although all under ten, loved it.

For all these reasons ...

Because education is the shortest route to emancipation
Because those who have no voice should be able to sing
Because art is a homeland for those who have none
Because there should be a dialogue between the Romany people and the rest of the world
Because it is high time that Romanies under 20 had the opportunity to tell us what they are and what they aren't
Because indifference kills more people than all the bombs in the world
Because it is no longer acceptable to act as if the segregation of Romanies does not exist
Because it is no longer acceptable to act as if they do not exist
Because it is important to go beyond clichés and trite generalisations
Because we are not always the Gypsies you would like us to be
Because we have something to say to you and we invite you to hear it

GRUBB has grown from music workshops created by RPOINT (an NGO working to give young Roma access to education) led by Serge Denoncourt. It is the first performance of its kind, performed by its creators, a group whose voices have never before been heard. The show features 25 performers including a brass band, rappers, dancers and singers. Their world is brought to life on stage through set, video and lighting created by internationally renowned artists.

RPOINT is a non-profit organisation, founded and registered in the UK in 2006. We mainly work in Serbia with the Roma children and young people, by designing and implementing educational and artistic programmes. Our vision is that the young Roma further their education so that they get better access to mainstream jobs. By giving a voice to the Roma, RPOINT shows commitment to presenting a positive image of Roma youth today. www.rpoint.org.uk

There is a link to the music: www.audiogram.com/fr/player/index/index/album_id/215/track_id/3812
These links give you an idea of the show:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GBNGVEHzzdI
www.youtube.com/watch?v=cltFKaEvRyA
www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0bfj1zrQNA

Ann Wilson

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