

Travellers' TIMES

The only magazine for
Gypsies & Travellers

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Big Winner

**Celebrity Big Brother's
Paddy on top of
the world**

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AND PICTURE
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Dale Farm

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Above: Dale Farm after the evictions PHOTO: Elisabeth Blanchet Inset: Mr Egan and Candy Sheridan talk to the press

Dale Farm making history

The 10-year battle to stop the eviction of the unauthorised plots on Dale Farm in Essex entered a new phase on 20th October when residents and protestors ended the resistance to the police operation and walked out together through the barricades two days after riot police had stormed the site to clear the way for the bailiffs. *By Michael Doherty*

WITH MANY of the residents now looking for somewhere to call home and the supporters dispersed, Travellers' Times talked to Gypsy and Traveller rights campaigner Marc Willers and Gypsy Council representative Candy Sheridan about what Dale Farm means for the future.

"The Dale Farm campaign is making history," said Candy Sheridan. "What happened there – Travellers fighting for their homes and their right to be treated with dignity and humanity – has empowered the people involved. The McCarthy sisters especially captured the nation's heart with the way they dealt with the media and for what they said. It is wonderful to see Traveller women have their voices heard and listened to."

Candy Sheridan also explained how the legal fight has been misrepresented by the national and local papers and TV. "We have not 'lost' as many seem to claim," she said. "We

were awarded a third of our costs by the judge which is a first for a Traveller planning appeal. This will sharpen the minds of every council in England and they will think long and hard before taking this confrontational stance again."

Marc Willers, who acted as the legal representative for the Dale Farm residents for the recent appeals after Candy and Mary Sheridan won a dramatic last-minute injunction that postponed the eviction, explained that the legal battle is not over yet. "The particular court case that was lost at the High Court in early October was the last bite of the cherry for the site as a whole as far as the English legal system goes, but now we are planning to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights," he said.

"We will be basing our appeal on proportionality – or whether Basildon Council was right to use such drastic measures to enforce a green belt planning infringement. We

will argue that Basildon used a sledgehammer to crack a nut and that making the elderly and infirm as well as all those children homeless, the council acted disproportionately. We will also argue that Basildon Council should have offered another site rather than hostels or flats and houses as alternative accommodation to the residents," said Mr Willers.

Yet the legal fight is not over in English law either, as Candy Sheridan – who is on site every day amidst the bailiffs and council workmen, the noise and the machinery explained: "This happens to my community every month, every week, every day. The media have now gone but the fight continues. There are families living in the middle of all this. They have nowhere else to go. The court order allows for a small site to remain here and we will go through the courts to make sure that happens and that the residents can live here with dignity and in peace."

Meriden appeal thrown out

ERIC PICKLES, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, has undermined Warwickshire's Gypsy community by rejecting their appeal to stay on their own land at Eaves Green Lane in Meriden.

The planning inspector's decision against the Burton family was upheld by Mr Pickles,

who said that the Gypsies' private site "would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area".

Seeking planning permission retrospectively is currently legal in the United Kingdom, but this may change under the coalition's new planning guidance.

TT has a new editor

DAMIAN LE BAS has been appointed as Editor of Travellers' Times so make sure you shake his hand when you next see him.

Damian has been writing for TT, both the website and the magazine, for the past few years and is well known to most of you. Damian pipped a strong selection of Traveller applicants to the post.



Paddy power!

Paddy Doherty turned out to be the nation's favourite Irish Traveller when he won *Celebrity Big Brother* by a landslide margin.

"NOT IN A MILLION YEARS did I reckon on being in [the house] for longer than a week," Paddy said. So confident was he in this that when 'Big Brother' told him that he hadn't been voted off in week one he asked to speak with wife, Margaret.

"Travellers have been getting such a hard time that I thought to be on the show would do something for the cause, show people that we are just normal like them," Paddy said. His dream is to earn a couple of hundred thousand out of his success, get a yard, get Travellers on it and own his own site.

A dream that must feel within reach in the 12 weeks since the show ended and Paddy was shot into the limelight. So how is this former bare-knuckle fighter finding the world of red-carpet premieres and posh parties?

"I am not a celebrity, I'm me, I'm Paddy Doherty," he said. "To live in the celebrity world is like plastic, they live in a bubble and I'm not entering that bubble."

But he is loving his stint in the public eye, and 'woman' – "wife, lover, sister, mother" Margaret is loving it as well.

He did make some good friends in the house, although he found it boring that the contestants wouldn't be themselves and sought to gain public favour by acting like 'sausages' (Paddy's term for idiots).

He'll be back on your TV screen alongside housemate Sally Berrow for Channel 5's *When Paddy Met Sally*, although as he said, "her world will never be my world and mine will never be hers."

Exiting the house as winner to chants of "Paddy, Paddy" goes down as one of the highlights of Paddy's life to date. "I'd never seen anything like it in my life," he said. "As soon I as realised Margaret was in the crowd I was happy."

And proud-of-his-roots Paddy used his 15 minutes of fame to speak out for the folk on Dale Farm. "You only get one bite of the apple," Paddy said, "so I was going to say how I felt about them. People were saying 'they should go back to Ireland' so I was saying 'and that includes me then, because I'm Irish too'."

He's keen to thank all the English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh Travellers who voted for him 'from the bottom of his heart', which for this winner is a deep place.

"I don't want to be called the King of the Gypsies," he said. "There are many Gypsies and no King among them. I hope to God I made every Traveller half proud of me and I thank my God and my Jesus that my cards all came out trumps."



Above: Paddy being interviewed after his win
PHOTO: Channel 5 Celebrity Big Brother. COVER PHOTO: Flynet

news in brief

SARAH AUSTIN has taken over as the chair of the Dorset Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Group, so anyone feeling like they should be represented by the Group can contact her at Sarah. Austin@ferndown.nhs.uk or on 01305 213569.

Ancestral roam

TRACEY EMIN, who shocked the art world when her bed was exhibited as a piece of art, has found that she is distantly related to a family of besom-makers who may have been Romany Gypsies.

The BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are?* took the 48-year-old artist back into her past where she found Gypsy relative Joseph Hodgkins, a Warwickshire woodsman and Traveller craftsman.

So where can you go to find out about your own family roots? Here are some ideas:

Websites

www.rtfhs.org.uk The Romany and Traveller Family History Society is one of the richest resources. **www.romanyroad.co.uk** Records and celebrates Romany Gypsies at home and abroad. **www.romanygenes.webeden.co.uk** Good on the New Forest families.

In person

Check out your County Records office. Their copies of the local census (they're free to look at) can often confirm pieces of research.

Remember those hard-working groups such as GATE, Leeds Gypsy Traveller Exchange

www.grtleeds.co.uk/information/GATE

and Derbyshire's Gypsy Liaison Group **www.dgllg.org** who might be able to help.

Go to college

There are some important collections at Liverpool University Library **http://sca.lib.liv.ac.uk/collections/collections/gypsy/index.html**. They have about 30 family packs listed by big names like Ayres, Birch, Buckley, Lock and Gaskins **www.hathitrust.org**. Then there's the Brotherton Collection at Leeds University **http://library.leeds.ac.uk/**, the National Fairground Archive at Sheffield University **www.nfa.dept.shf.ac.uk** and the Robert Dawson collection at the University of Reading's Museum of English Rural Life.

Books

My Ancestors were Gypsies, by Sharon Sillers Floate (Society of Genealogists, 1999).

Happy hunting!



Above: Artist Tracey Emin at the opening of the 'Do Not Abandon Me' exhibition.
PHOTO: John Stillwell/PA Wire

“I don’t want to live in a house. I want a free life”

When Suzie Holmes was in need of a hand, it was Herefordshire’s New Travellers who stretched out theirs.

When Suzie Holmes, 50, escaped from a violent relationship in France she headed for the North Herefordshire town of Leominster because she knew there was a Traveller population there.

“Many moons ago I was part of the hippy scene and my idea was to try and meet up with them again; although not the same people, they would have the same mentality and values.”

Luckily for Suzie it didn’t take long for her to find friends in the town.

“I’d been to the local police station and had reported my circumstances – penniless, jobless, and homeless – who had contacted Women’s Aid so that I could go to a refuge for battered and endangered women.

“I really did not want to go into a refuge, but had little money and no real choice. Anyway, after having told my story to the very friendly

crowd of people who were listening, a guy named Dave told me that he had a second unit and that I could stay there for as long as I needed.

“There was a good mixture of people on the site and I had no hassles, the people were respectful, kind and helpful. I couldn’t claim benefits because I had been abroad for so long but people lent me money. It was a very cold winter, -17C, and snow right through so I would have had no heating.

“Travellers aren’t trouble, they’re ordinary people. They’re just a community like anyone else.”

More than friendship, Suzie found love on the site and has now moved to Portsmouth to start a new life with partner, Ad. The couple hopes to buy a houseboat and travel around the UK.

“I don’t want to live in a house,” Suzie said. “I want a free life.”



Travellers' Times New Online Classified Ads



Buying? Selling? Look no further than Travellers' Times Online. Categories include land, property, horses, dogs, furniture, trailers, trucks, clothing, prams and pushchairs. **To place an ad call Shanterlena on 01432 344039. A fast inexpensive way of reaching the community.**



PHOTO: Paul Faith/PA Wire

Homeless on release

Dear Lena,
I'm an Irish Traveller and am currently in Brixton Prison.

I'm looking for help with housing for when I am released; if not, I will end up back out onto the road.

I have no help on the outside or inside the settled community.

It would be very helpful of you if you could send me some information to help me.

Thank you.

LEAN ON LENA

Help and useful advice

Dear reader,

This is a topic that a lot of prisoners in your situation will be concerned about.

Where do they go when they leave? What help is available to them?

Fortunately help is at hand! The Irish Chaplaincy in Britain is an organisation that runs programmes for Irish Travellers in prison and they can help you find somewhere to live.

Their address is:
Irish Chaplaincy in Britain
50-52 Camden Square
London
NW1 9XB

Phone: 020 7482 5528



Shanterlena Knowles
PHOTO: Alison Chapman

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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000430

Meaningful pictures

THESE IMAGES ARE the result of a week-long project working with young women from the Irish Traveller community in Brent.

During the summer London's Tricycle Theatre delivered the project that engaged the group in exploring identity through drama and photography. Participants were encouraged to explore notions of self and community through photography – the subject matter being objects and locations that held a personal value.

The Tricycle has been delivering arts projects with the community over the past two years and 'In Our Hands' is the third in a series that the theatre has produced in an effort to engage with Travellers. The first involved a group of young women who created a short play; the second was a short film produced by a group of young men. For more information check the website at www.tricycle.co.uk



Sky Akai! New Gypsy show hits Sky TV

TALENTED INDIVIDUALS from across the Romany Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities are putting a bit of sparkle in the winter this year as they hit the nation's screens in *A Gypsy Life For Me*.

The 8-part series showcases the highs and sighs of a summer spent with Gypsy and Traveller people as they go about the bittersweet mixture of fairs, dares and eviction scares that are all part of Gypsy life, while some of them compete to be crowned Britain's most talented Traveller in the glitz and cheer of *Travellers Got Talent*.

***A Gypsy Life For Me* is on Sky Bio at 9pm on Tuesdays. The first programme was broadcast on the 15th November.**



TV STARS! Róisín and Jentina appear in the show
PHOTO: Damian Le Bas

Write to learn

Travelling Voices, the bespoke journalism course created by Travellers' Times, is helping Gypsies, Roma and Travellers across Britain to hit back. If you want to be able to represent yourself in the media, then sign up to learn new skills now!



TT's Damian Le Bas gives the course a go at Matlock in Derbyshire.

Travelling Voices is a crash course in the basics of journalism, from dealing with journalists asking awkward questions, to basic interviewing for news stories, all the way to making radio programmes and films.

The courses are free and the trainers are able to travel to your area – maybe even your site – to deliver the two-day module. Travel costs are refundable so you will not be out of pocket.

What makes the course unique is that it's tailor-made by and for

Gypsy and Traveller people and taught by Travellers. Best of all, it doesn't cost a penny to join.

Our latest courses have run in Devon and Leicester and updates and material from the courses can be seen online at www.travellerstimes.org.uk

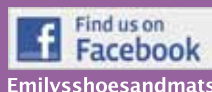
With the outcome of Dale Farm (see page 2 for report), the debate has opened for Travellers and the tide is turning against anti-Gypsy and Traveller racism. The more of us that make our voices heard, the faster it will turn.

To find out when there's a Travelling Voices course happening in your area, or to request a course (minimum 4 participants), contact Shanterlena Knowles at Travellers' Times. Email Shanterlenak@ruralmedia.co.uk or call The Rural Media Company on 01432 344039.



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000432



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000425

FOCUS ON

Esther's funeral

Seven years ago I met Babe King and her parents, down in South Bermondsey, on the site where they lived. They warmly invited me into their chalet and I started taking pictures of the family. They are all Romani Gypsies. Most of them don't travel anymore and live on council-owned sites or land they have bought. Last July, I had the chance to photograph one of Babe's great-nieces, Sarah and more recently her mother's funeral. Esther was 85 when she passed away last September, leaving 50 grandchildren, so many great-grandchildren Babe couldn't tell me how many they were, and even two newborn great-great-grandchildren ...

*Words and images by
Elisabeth Blanchet*





Openly celebrating their love

Gay Travellers cement bond in civil partnership



HOMOSEXUALITY is not something talked openly about within the Traveller community but this couple are hoping to change all that.

Henry and Shahadat Hossen celebrated their civil partnership earlier this year with 90 friends and both are openly gay Travellers.

"Times are changing and lives are changing, you don't have to hide away anymore," Henry said. "Just be who you are and not what other people want you to be."

Henry, 47, and Shahadat, 26, met at London's Gay Astoria two years ago when it was "love at first sight".

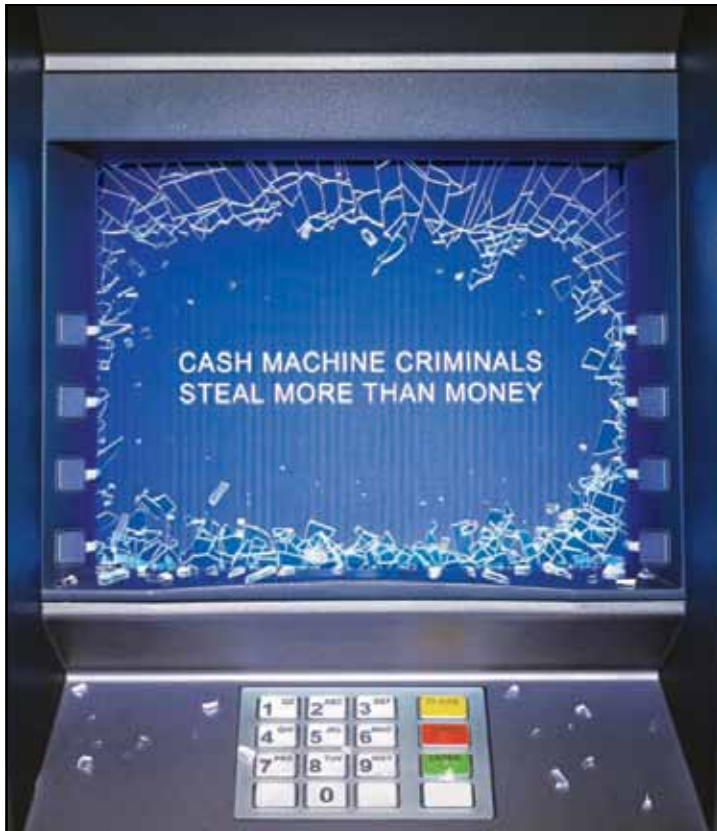
Henry's experience has been really positive and aside from the odd comment the couple have seen little evidence of the suggested prejudice against gay men within their community.

"Growing up I had hassle (for being a Traveller) but you learn to grow with it and overcome it," Henry said. "As the years went on I managed to talk to some friends and 95 per cent of my friends are still my friends."

"If your parents have always been there for you then do open up to your family."

As for what Henry makes of Mikey Walsh's bestseller, *Gypsy Boy*, he dismisses it as "fairy tale". "It's not as bad as what he states," he said.

Readers who want further information about 'coming out' or support groups available should contact Stonewall – the lesbian, gay, and bisexual charity on 0800 0502020.



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000444

YOUNG TIMES

First-class first aider!

Big congratulations to Katie O'Brien from Trowbridge, Cardiff who has been awarded a Save a Life Certificate for completing her First Aid Course.

This is only one in a list of certificates that she's collected as she hopes to gain a place on a Catering Course in 2012, to fulfil her dreams of being a chef.

Young Times wishes Katie the best of luck!



From left to right: Laura Gregory, Gypsy and Traveller Youth Engagement Officer; Claire Greenhouse, Red Cross Trainer; Mary O'Brien (Katie's sister), Irish Traveller, age 15, from Trowbridge, Cardiff (housed Traveller); Katie O'Brien, Irish Traveller, age 16, from Trowbridge, Cardiff (housed Traveller)

Capturing the important things in life ...

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month was celebrated by Bracknell Forest Homes and Early Years as they gave the children and young people cameras to capture the important things in their life.

These then took pride of place in the Council's

foyer after being decorated and displayed in individual photo albums. The celebrations came to a close as the children and young people were presented with certificates from Debbie Evans and Linda Wells.



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



NEET idea!

A project called NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) is being set up which can help young Gypsies and Travellers in Cardiff who want to get into education, find a job or training.

They are setting up training activities and workshops for those that attend and are looking into running a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) theory class, which will allow participants to practise the test before taking it.

If you're interested and want to find out more, then contact Laura Gregory on **07901 007790**.



Sure Start Children's Centres

STAFF FROM THREE Kent Children's Centres will be bringing the Gravesham Sure Start van onto three Traveller sites in Gravesham, Dartford and Sevenoaks this Christmas.

Families will have the opportunity to meet some of the staff, play with the toys and pick up some freebies.

Sure Start Children's Centres offer help and support to families with children under 5. For more information ring 01474 814500/700620.



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000426

A Showdown with Nottingham Council for the Showmen of the Goose Fair

It's not just Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Roma that are worried by the cuts to Traveller education, but Showmen as well. *Traveller's Times'* Mike Doherty visited Nottingham's annual Goose Fair to investigate.

AS THE FAMOUS Nottingham Goose Fair swung into action and the fairground Showmen were busy setting up and running the hundreds of different rides, trainee teachers from Nottingham Trent University were helping to run a temporary Goose Fair School.

In previous years the Goose Fair School had been organised by Nottingham City Council. But this year, like many other specialist Traveller education services, the council funding has been stopped and without the work of the volunteers, the children of the Goose Fair's Showmen families – like Dion Stokes, aged 12 – would have had no school at all.

"It's such a shame that it might not happen again"

Fourth-year trainee teacher Jess Purseglove was one of the Nottingham Trent University students who gave up their time. "I worked at last year's Goose Fair School and it was a life-changing event. It helped so much with my confidence and training and it's such a shame that it might not happen again," she said. Ms Purseglove was visiting the Stokes' caravan – or Showman's Wagon – at the Goose Fair to help Dion with her algebra, science and French.

The Stokes' Showman's Wagon is a massive American-built trailer that is pulled by an HGV. It is the family home and during the fairground season it is moved from site to site



Pharell Winterbottom being tutored by Becky Dale, a trainee teacher from Nottingham Trent University

along with the family's funfair ride. During the off-season in winter the wagon is parked at the family's base in Telford.

"I didn't have a great education for myself and I want a good education for my children"

Dion's mum, Lee Stokes, was busy peeling potatoes as Ms Purseglove sat down with Dion and began to look over her schoolwork. "My children have to travel with me as we move around the country working during the season," said Mrs Stokes. "They are on authorised absence from their base school and they get work-packs to complete and take back with them so they don't fall behind," she said. "I didn't have a great education for myself and I want a good education for my children, but with the best will in the world I can't always help them when they get stuck and the help from the university students is really important for us."

"I organised the Goose Fair School in the past when it was funded by the council," said Helen Blow. "This year I started to get Showmen parents ringing me to ask what was happening and I had to say that the school was not going to go ahead. Then I just thought 'hang on' and started to put some of the student teachers from last year's school in touch with the Showmen. Unfortunately this isn't sustainable so this could be the last Goose Fair School," she said.

Fiona Hunter, a senior lecturer in the teacher training department at Nottingham Trent University, explained how the University has been involved in the past: "Trainee teachers have been volunteering at the Goose Fair School as part of their special placement for many years and the number of students volunteering has increased over the years," she said.

"Many students keep in touch with the children and families they work with"

Ms Hunter confirmed the benefits that the Goose Fair School has brought to her students in previous years: "The students say how the

placement has had a massive impact on them and their studies and many students keep in touch with the children and families they work with after they have finished tutoring. A recent OFSTED report commended us for this placement in particular, and I'm sure our students would love to continue to support any future Goose Fair School," she said.

The loss of the Goose Fair School alongside the slashing of other special education projects around the country for Travelling people are raising concerns for the Showmen's Guild, the centuries-old association that represents and regulates the Fairground community.

"We don't want to leave our kids behind while we travel and it's important that they get the experience of running fairs and the chance to socialise with other kids from the community," said Michaela Derry, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Education Liaison Officer for the Showmen's Guild. "The way the Goose Fair School was run with the classroom portakabins on site was really important for both us and the children. We knew they were safe while we worked hard to set up the fair, and it was really important for their schoolwork," she said.

"We want something better for our children"

"When I was at school the teachers used to stick us at the back with a book and leave us to it," said Charles Merrin, West Midlands Education Officer for the Guild.

"We approached the council and offered to provide portakabins and toilets and any other facilities at our own expense but they said no," said Ms Derry. "The students can do the teaching so all that is needed is a bit of co-ordination from senior teachers and we would even be prepared to put our hands in our pockets and help pay for that," she said.

"We pay anyway for the education of our children through our taxes," added Mr Merrin. "We also pay the council for our pitches and the Goose Fair brings a lot of revenue and fun into the city," he said. "It's not much to ask that we get some help with the kids' schooling."



Images of Goose Fairs, past and present PHOTO CREDITS: Left and right above courtesy of the David Braithwaite Collection, National Fairground Archive, University of Sheffield. Below courtesy of the National Fairground Archive, University of Sheffield Library



Family Album

Snapshots of your life

Here are a few pictures of my Romany family.

I didn't know my great-granny Liza Smith (nee Watton); she died in 1963 aged 95

They all lived in my Granny Render's yard in Leominster. My dad, Alf, always took her some tobacco for her clay pipe.

When Liza died they burnt her wagon and my Granny Render moved out of wagons and into trailers. They lived in them until they all died.

My dad's family lived in bender tents and then lived in wagons; my dad was born under a flat cart in the middle of winter.

Tony Coleman, Worcestershire



Alf and Nunis (Mum and Dad)



Mum Nunis with her brother Isaiah Smith



Granny's sister Louise Price (nee Smith)



Granny Render



*Great-granny Liza Smith
(nee Watton)*



*Granny's brother Ezzie Smith
with his daughter Rona Smith*

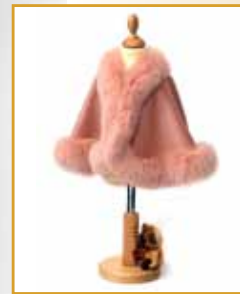


Granny's sister Angelina Shevlin (nee Smith)

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

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Victims of domestic abuse urged to get help during special awareness week



PHOTO: Hilary Smallwood

A Traveller has spoken out about her experiences of the abuse she suffered and is now urging other victims to seek help.

ANN O'DONNELL was the victim of domestic abuse for several years but managed to break free and end the physical and mental attacks she was suffering.

She has now taken part in a video that has been placed on YouTube, encouraging other Traveller victims to get help, either from the police or from independent specialist services.

In the video, which can be viewed on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4X79Woaawj4>, Ann says: "I wanted to have a life and I wanted to be free. I would contact the police ... I would go to the [police Gypsy/Traveller] liaison officer. There is help out there and it's about knowing about how to get it. Know that the police won't be judgemental, they have vast experience of dealing with this issue in all communities, and you will get help. Where you think there is no turning point, where there is no way forward, you will be surprised at the help and support that you will receive."

As part of Domestic Abuse Awareness Week, the 'Bringing victims out of the darkness' campaign was launched by the County Community Safety Unit (CCSU), a joint unit between Hertfordshire Constabulary and Hertfordshire County Council. It aimed to highlight the specialist services and support available for victims, especially those who are in communities where the reporting of domestic abuse is uncommon because it is a taboo subject.

Domestic abuse can involve a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour and can include verbal, physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse.

Victims can access independent specialist services via the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline on 08 088 088 088 (Monday to Friday 10am to 10pm) or by visiting the Herts Sunflower website www.hertssunflower.org for tailored information, advice and support. The helpline is free to call from landlines and will not show up on any telephone bill. If there is an immediate danger, always dial 999.

Sarah Taylor, Programme Manager for Domestic Violence in the CCSU, said: "We truly understand that domestic abuse isn't a topic that is freely talked about or even recognised in the Travelling community and victims don't think they're able to get help. However, in Hertfordshire this isn't the case. There are so many ways that you can get help and end the abuse that you may be suffering. We are there to help any victim

from any community, regardless of their background and culture. We will take you seriously and you will be believed.

"If you're a victim, please don't stay hidden. Come out of the darkness and get the help that is available for you."





A life less ordinary

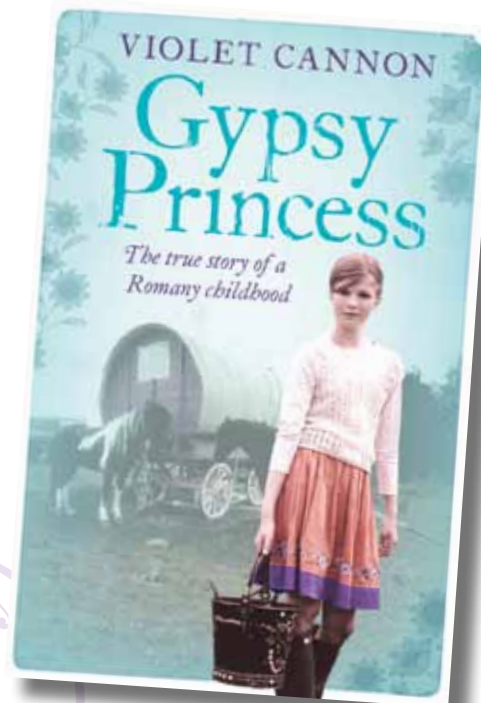
Gypsy memoirs may be all over the bestseller charts, but they don't all paint the same picture of Gypsy life. Romany woman Violet Cannon wrote her book *Gypsy Princess* because she wanted to show "my version of what a normal Gypsy is", she told *Damian Le Bas*.

VIOLET CANNON may be young, but she's got enough memories to fill a book. So this year, she decided to put pen to paper and write one. Unlike other recent books on Gypsy life, though, it's not all violence and misery, as Violet explained.

"I think there's enough negativity about us in the media as it is," she said. "I miss what I remember, just nice, peaceful, lovely, happy times. We were sat on camps in the middle of nowhere, a nice lake at the side of us or a river, you know, a rope swing, all my cousins around me. So obviously, I'm almost jealous of my childhood, because the memory I have is beautiful. I didn't realise how lucky and blessed I was as a child. I had a mam and dad that seriously loved us.

"But when I listen to my mam and dad talking about them times, you know, when we were getting pulled off camps by muskras, the police, obviously that's not an easy life, it's never been an easy life. I've got an Auntie who still goes out hawking lace, and I think, that's lovely and romantic. But she's banging on doors, that life is hard.

"A lot of us watch telly and read books, and we go 'Yeah but they're not proper Gypsies, are they?' And if we just sit back and say that, what right have we got to complain when people judge us by that media? This was my way of going 'Okay, I'm going to show my version of what a normal Gypsy is'. I'm just saying 'This is me'.



"As a kid, when somebody called me a Gypsy at school, that was an insult, because it was used as an insult. So we were taught as kids, 'You're a Traveller'. I think when the legislation came out around New Travellers and around raves, that's about the time I was told, 'You're a Gypsy'. Because the New Travellers called themselves 'Travellers' and that's not who we were, so we went back to using that title and reclaiming that ethnicity.

"In other people's minds, a Gypsy has dark skin and speaks pure Romanes. We speak broken Romanes and I've got pale skin, but I'm a Romany Gypsy, that's what I am. I'm very proud of that.

"The publishers did say, 'Can we use more of the language, and have a glossary?' And I just said no, it's not what I want to do, it's not what this is about. The language is how we know who other Gypsies are. If we catch someone using a bit of Romanes, you think 'Oh yeah, they're Traveller people'. So my Mam's very keen on keeping that safe, keeping it among ourselves. In her mind it was passed down from mother to daughter, and that's how it should stay."

Violet worked hard at school: "I did think to myself, I could just wing this, but my ethic was, if I'm going to be here, I'm going to learn," she said. But she also encountered prejudice, and not just from other children.

"I mention in the book when a little Asian kid kept calling me 'gyppo, gyppo' all the time. I went to the teacher, but the minute I retaliated back, which was the only option I had left, I was come down on like a ton of bricks. And at that young age I suddenly thought, hang on a minute, it's okay to be prejudiced against me."

Violet also saw the ugliest side of harassment, and the book tells of the time she was threatened by a non-Gypsy boy with a knife. "Nobody walked over, nobody came to help. I would have been about thirteen year old," she said.

Faced with this kind of prejudice, many Gypsy and Traveller people see our secrecy as our strength, but Violet hopes they'll understand the value of what she's done.

"I understand people are going to get upset that I've written a book. But since local authority camps, and being forced to stop on one place for the rest of our life, there is no sitting round the fireside sharing stories. We're going to have to start using the media that's available to us."

***Gypsy Princess* by Violet Cannon is available in all good bookshops, RRP £6.99**

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000420

Hope you are well and everything is good at TT. Just a quicky - the other day i was asked, why is the Romany flag not on the TT issues, I thought it was a good point.

Kind regards
Adele



TT would like to hear what you think about this - should we show solidarity with one group of Travellers over another?

IN TOUCH your letters and emails

Remembering John

"I am writing about your story of John Cunningham VC in Issue 45 of Travellers' Times.

"I am a great niece of John Cunningham. Although we think the poem by Joe Wilson was good I would like to point out that when JC died he was buried with his parents, and has always had a headstone on the grave. He is buried in Western Cemetery in Hull.

"There is a plaque in his memory near the War Memorial in the centre of Hull. Before he died he returned his VC to the Yorkshire Regiment in which he served, and the medal is on display in the Regimental Museum in York. A very brave man from a good Travelling family."

Looking for competition winners-can you help?

NATT (National Association of Teachers of Travellers) is searching for two Travellers who were winners in the GRTHM competition and have prizes to claim but are no longer at the schools they attended when they entered the competition.

Jimmy Ross was at a Brighton school when he entered the competition. He won 2nd prize in the Y3/4 category.

Jerard Casey was at Carden Primary School, County Oak Avenue, Brighton. He won 3rd prize in the Y3/4 category. The school said he has moved and thinks he may be in the Birmingham area.

If you know the whereabouts of either of the boys, could you let them know that they are winners and get their family to contact Jill Lloyd (Jill.Lloyd@wokingham.gov.uk) so she can send them their prizes.

If you've got views and news to air and share then drop us a line at travellerstimes@ruralmedia.co.uk or write to us at **Travellers' Times, Sullivan House, 72-80 Widemarsh Street, Hereford HR4 9HG**

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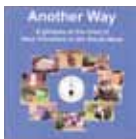


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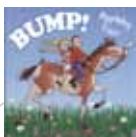
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RESOURCES

celebrate our culture



A new CD, *Another Way*, is available about the lives of New Travellers in the South West funded by Grassroots Grants and created in association with South West Alliance of Nomads (SWAN). A workshop version with chapters is available on request. For copies, visit www.gypsytravellerhelp.org



Bump! Appleby Fair is a fun, fictitious guide to the most loved of Travellers' fairs with colourful tales of a day in the life on Fair Hill. Designed to appeal to young readers and introduce them to an event which is bound to capture their imagination, it's a perfect stocking filler!

Published by Handsome Prints. ISBN 978-0-9547922-7-5. Copies available at www.natt.org.uk and from karentaylor43205@aol.com



Little Gypsy: A life of freedom, a time of secrets by Roxy Freeman is a frank insider's story of growing up in a traditional Traveller community in the 1980s and 90s.

Born in 1979, Roxy Freeman grew up travelling around Ireland and England in a horse-drawn wagon with her mother and father and six siblings. Life was harsh but it was a childhood of freedom spent in harmony with nature. Roxy didn't know her times-tables but she could milk a goat, ride a horse and cook dinner on an open fire before she was ten.

But when the family came to England, they faced prejudice and hostility and Roxy started receiving unwelcome attentions of a family friend, which she endured in secret for many years. Despite all of her difficulties, Roxy developed a passion for music and her dancing skills took her around the world.

Published by Simon and Schuster. ISBN 978-1-84983-344-8

Clear advice from Clearwater

THE CLEARWATER GYPSIES have designed a new guide to help Gypsy and Traveller people navigate the planning system. It's called *Planning Made Plain* and if you'd like a copy, Greg Yates is the man you need to contact.

"It's the most up-to-date information we can supply," says Greg. "Gypsies and Travellers need to look out because there will be massive changes in the new year with the government's Localism Bill. The guide comes with an audio section on CD for those who don't read too well, and if you get in touch we can post you a pack. You can also download the whole thing from our website, www.clearwatergypsies.com."



Greg Yates

PLANNING MADE PLAIN

A guide for Gypsies and Travellers to navigate the planning system



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ARTISTS Delaine and Damian Le Bas Sr have an existing collection of artworks and handmade objects that they have collected over the years which they are currently archiving.

As part of their ongoing collection they are in the process of making a digital archive of handmade works such as pegs, baskets, bird cages, wagons and other artworks including

photography and film works, traditional or contemporary, by artists from the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community.

If you think this description matches the work you do, or if you consider what you do as art or craft, then email a few images and a brief description of who you are and what you do, including contact details, to Delaine at lebasandlebas@gmail.com



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Great online resource to promote your heritage

A NEW ONLINE directory, the Friends of Roma Routes, is offering Traveller artists, musicians, performers and organisations the chance to join this exciting Council of Europe initiative and build a new network to celebrate and promote Gypsy, Roma and Traveller arts, culture and heritage across Europe.

Please add your contact details and a photograph here: **www.romaroutes.eu/friends**. Or email your details to Alison Chapman: alisonc@ruralmedia.co.uk

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