

Travellers' TIMES

The only magazine for Gypsies and Travellers

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What's in a name?

New petition seeks to clarify what "Gypsy" means in law

A NEW PETITION created by Siobhan Spencer MBE of Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group has asked the government to review the definition of 'gypsy status' with a view to obtaining cultural hereditary rights for Gypsy Traveller people.

"Gypsy people are an ethnic minority group protected under the Equality Act 2010," says Siobhan. "However the contentious issue of 'gypsy status' for the purposes of planning law undermines their protection as a minority.

"'Gypsy status' in relation to land use is not defined by an ethnicity, but is determined by work patterns at the time of the application for planning permission."

This means that Gypsies have to show evidence of certain habits of life in order to be considered Gypsies for the purposes of planning law. 'Gypsy status' can therefore be lost or gained, which blurs its relation to ethnicity.

"The argument for a review is not a racial one," says Siobhan, who suggests the government should look at the Canadian government's approach to Métis people, who like Britain's Gypsies are a rural ethnic minority who have struggled for their rights.

"The requirement that a Romani Gypsy or Irish Traveller has to show that s/he is living a nomadic habit of life does not cater for those ethnic Gypsies and Travellers who have taken up settled employment and ceased travelling for that reason but wish to continue living in accordance with their traditional way of life," says Marc Willers of Community Law Partnership.

You can find the petition online at <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/29158>

Read detailed assessment of the need to review "gypsy status", by Siobhan Spencer and Marc Willers, at www.travellerstimes.org.uk

Caravan Sites Bill returns



Private Member's Bill "to secure the establishment of caravan sites by local authorities in England for the use of Gypsies and Travellers"

A NEW House of Lords Bill has been launched by Gypsy rights champion, Lord Avebury.

Lord Avebury, whose 1968 Caravan Sites Act led to the establishment of our existing local authority sites, has included six points in the Bill to make site provision a clear and enforceable duty for local councils.

If the Bill becomes law, every local authority in England would need to "facilitate the provision of adequate caravan site accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers residing in or resorting to their area." This duty would "be enforceable, on the application of the Minister, by court order."



Lord Avebury
PHOTO: Hilary Smallwood

You can read the new Caravan Sites Bill in full online at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2010-2012/0115/2012115.pdf>

A "Joe Grey" a day keeps the doctor away!

GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS love our home-cooked food, from rabbits and roasts to traditional "Joe Grey" soup. But eating together is about caring as well as calories. Sharing a meal can mean sharing a helping hand.

Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group's new project, Health for Life, launched this January, uses traditional Romany food as a way into looking at how we can help support each other in our daily lives.

Health for Life will run bi-monthly sessions over the next two years and aims – among other things – to support carers and those who have lost their dependants as well as those suffering with mental wellbeing with one-to-one support on offer.

The launch included the draw from a survey across the East Midlands into children's access to medicine by the University of Nottingham, with a piece of Crown Derby for the winner.



PHOTO: Alison Chapman

Diary Dates

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 4th March | Smithfield Ireland |
| 11th March | Langley Horse Fair London |
| 8th April | English King of the Road near York |
| 14th & 15th April | Dick Smith Show |
| 29th April | Kenilworth Horse Fair |
| 5th & 6th May | Scottish King of the Road |
| 10th May | Stow |
| 12th & 13th May | Wisbech Horse Fair |
| 7th June | Appleby Trots |

OFSTED: Parents, make your voices heard

Parents who are concerned about their children's schooling can contact the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. OFSTED is tasked with making sure that schools do their job properly, and this includes fulfilling their duty of care for ethnic minority pupils like Gypsies and Travellers.

"Give the school a chance to deal with the issue and respond to you before you take your concern further. The school will need to have enough time to investigate thoroughly," OFSTED say on their website.

Parents who aren't satisfied with their school's response can contact the school's governing body, but if the problem persists you can get in touch with OFSTED directly by telephoning 0300 123 4666.

Issues OFSTED deals with include:

- admission procedures
- excluding individual pupils
- providing education for individual pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
- religious education or the religious character of a school, or
- temporary changes to the curriculum.

For further information visit <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools> and click on the orange box marked "Parents and carers". Here you can find information about how to raise your concerns.

Register to vote by April 18th



THE NEXT LOCAL elections in the UK are due to take place on 3 May. Gypsies and Travellers have as much right to vote as anyone else, but in the past we haven't always done so.

If you intend to vote and you aren't already registered, you need to register by April 18th or you won't be able to vote in local elections.

There are quite a few myths out there about voter registration, and Travellers' Times can dispel some of these. Here are a few facts about registering to vote (source: aboutmyvote.co.uk):

- You don't have to have been born in the UK to register. EU and qualifying Commonwealth citizens resident in the UK can register to vote in UK elections, although EU citizens cannot vote in UK Parliamentary (general) elections.
- Paying council tax doesn't automatically put you on the voter register. You still have to register in order to vote.
- Even if you're at work on the day of an election, most polling stations are open from 7 in the morning until 10 at night, so you should still have time to vote.
- Even though general elections usually happen every 4–5 years, local elections which affect YOU and your community happen much more often. YOU can affect whether anti-Traveller councillors get elected.

Atching Tan rules the waves

ATCHING TAN BY DAN ALLUM – a play about a young Traveller girl "struggling to fit her dreams of an acting career around her culture's expectations – was short-listed for the Imison Award for Best Radio Drama Script by a new writer at the BBC Audio Drama Awards.

Candis Nergaard, who played the lead female in the play was also nominated for Best Actress in an audio drama.

Candis Nergaard and Damian Le Bas in *Atching Tan*



Holocaust film reminds us not to forget

THE NAZI GENOCIDE of Romani people is referred to in the Romani language as *O Porrajmos* (The Devouring). It is estimated that between a quarter and a third of all Europe's Romanies were murdered by the Nazis and occupied governments during World War II.

Yet what makes this indescribable injustice even more horrific is the way *O Porrajmos* has been treated by governments and historians ever since.

No Romanies were called to give evidence at the Nuremberg trials. The Berlin memorial to Romani victims of the Holocaust remains unfinished and left as a fenced-off building site. The concentration camp at Lety in the Czech Republic, where Romani people were sent in droves, is now the site of a pig farm: the memorial to the camp's victims stands away from the site in nearby woodland. The German government did not acknowledge that there had been an official, racially motivated policy to exterminate Romanies until 1982.

But wherever there are Romanies, there are people fighting to make sure the story of the Romani Holocaust can never be forgotten. This is why Plymouth & Devon Racial Equality Council launched their new film *Porrajmos: The Untold Story of the Gypsy Holocaust* on Thursday 26th January 2012 on the eve of Holocaust Memorial Day. Romany Gypsy women Elizabeth Isaacs and Sally Tucker-Woodbury were among the filmmakers.

"The film follows the journey of one Romani woman who goes to Auschwitz to find out what happened to Gypsy/Roma people during the Second World War. The film also looks at the language of hatred used about Gypsies in Nazi Germany and draws attention to the language used about Gypsies in Britain today," says PDREC's Penny Dane.

The 16-minute film will be released this month, and is relevant to a number of secondary school subjects including, History, Citizenship and RE.

If any schools would like to use this resource, they can contact **Penny Dane, Community Development Worker, Plymouth & Devon Racial Equality Council, 14 York Rd, Exeter EX4 6BA, or email: penny@devonrec.org Tel: 07979 838138**

“Who am I?”



PHOTO: Liz MacAulay/Riser/Getty Images

I WAS BORN in the eighties to a family of Romany Gypsies. My roots go back hundreds of years and I have family all over the country and beyond. My Traveller family could not keep me so I was put into care and fostered. I was sent to a really nice family who took great care of me until I was adopted as a toddler. I was adopted into a non-Romany Gypsy family who till this day have always been there for me. I have however always known I was of Romany Gypsy blood, both my mother, father and grandparents etc are all from Romany roots.

I had a good upbringing with my adopted mother but always was very curious about finding my biological parents. I first tried to find them when I was 16 years of age but was told I was too young to do so. I did not think about it again until I had children of my own. I put an advert/post on Genes Reunited to find my biological parents and all my brothers and sisters. I have been very happy with my adopted family but have always felt like there was something missing and a part of my past that I was longing to know more about.

I was lucky enough to have a reply and I first made contact with them on a social networking site. I was delighted and could not wait to meet them. I did not however think of the consequences such as my feelings and how it could affect me and my family. I went and met them not long after speaking to them on the phone and via email. I am sad to say that it did not work out for me. I am glad to say I have however been reunited with some of my brothers and sisters. I am now getting to know my family and my Romany roots. I have built up a close bond with a few of them and am learning more and more about myself and my roots every time I speak to them. I would like to go to Stow Fair next year and see more of my culture. I do feel I have missed out on so much in not being brought up with my brothers and sisters but we are making up for it now.

In concluding I would like to say the care system should really think about where they place Romany Gypsy children in care. I had no contact with my culture until I met a friend at the age of 11 who was from a Romany Gypsy family. They explained a lot of the values and customs of my heritage which helped a little. It is hard for people like me who are only discovering their culture now. I am proud to be of Romany blood and will continue now and in the future to learn more about my biological family and my roots.

“I am glad to say I have been reunited with some of my brothers and sisters. I am now getting to know my family and my Romany roots.”

Hello. I would just like to say I love Travellers' Times and I am always on it with my family. Just a quick question—is there anything on the internet that I can go on because I was bullied at work for my ethnicity as my boss didn't like me and horrible things was said. I had a meeting with the store because my family rang up and my boss denied it all and they said it's one word against another which I know they're sticking up for her. I was just wondering if you know what I can do because I'm going to appeal against it. I'm in the right and she's in the wrong. Thank you for reading my message.



Dear Reader

Considering we're in the 21st century and everything has developed dramatically over the years, wouldn't you think that people's perceptions of Gypsies and Travellers would be somewhat different to those faced by our mothers, fathers and grandparents in the past?

Sadly this isn't the case. Yes, more people are learning about our culture and showing us the respect we deserve, but still too many Gypsies and Travellers are facing prejudice on a daily basis, and we need to make a stand against it.

In this case I would advise you firstly to speak to your manager and see if you can sort the situation out informally as your employer has a duty of care to deal with bullying at work. Also you should keep a diary of everything that happens, meetings and incidences etc.

But if that does not solve the problem then you need to make a formal complaint under the laws covering discrimination and harassment.

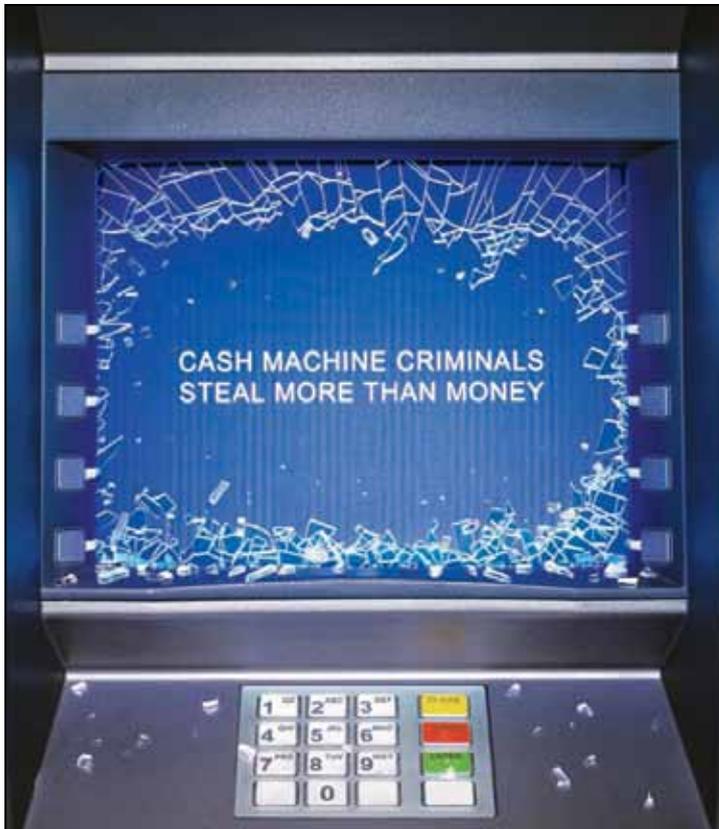
In order for you to make a complaint you need to follow your employer's grievance procedure which is:

- Writing a letter to your employer explaining the details of your grievance
- A meeting with your employer to discuss the issue
- The ability to appeal your employer's decision

In your case, as you have stated that it is your boss who is bullying you then you need to follow these steps if you want to take legal action further on.

For more information on this and the next steps to follow, visit: www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/ResolvingWorkplaceDisputes/Grievanceprocedures

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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Remembering those who fought for us

On 13 November 2011, a contingent from the Romany and Traveller Family History Society (RTFHS) took part in the March Past at the Cenotaph in London. Invited to join them were representatives from the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group and the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups. Organised and led by Janet Keet-Black, this is the first time that Romany people had taken part.

"We were there to remember all who have taken part in conflicts in the defence of this country, regardless of origin," Janet said. "My father served in India in the mid-1930s and during the War saw service in North Africa and Europe, as did hundreds of other Gypsies. He thankfully survived."



Members of the Romany & Traveller Family History Society, Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group and the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups



"Siobhan Spencer MBE, who recently received her LLB degree in law, with NFGLG Chair Peter Mercer MBE



Muzelley McCready, right, of Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group, with daughter Muzelley



On the wreath was written: "Romany and non-Romany fought together, died together, remembered together."



MBE for Janie

JANIE CODONA of Cambridgeshire's One Voice 4 Travellers recently graduated with a degree in community development, but this New Year put the icing on the cake when she received an MBE in the Queen's 2012 Honours List.

"One of the things I'm really pleased about is that someone cares enough to put me forward for this," says Janie. "It means a lot, not just being highly regarded as an individual but for the work I do for Gypsies and Travellers.

"I don't know who put me forward but it means there's somebody out there who truly appreciates the work I do. I've had awards before but I never thought I'd receive one from royalty! I'm pleased and I'm proud."

Janie Codona receiving one of her qualifications from Professor Derek Godfrey, Vice Chancellor at Buckinghamshire New University

Fantastic prizes to be won: your community needs YOU!



CONGRATULATIONS to Johanna Lee (pictured receiving her prize from TT Editor Damian Le Bas), a star graduate of our Travelling Voices media course and recipient of an Edirol voice recorder in acknowledgement of her hard work.

Travelling Voices is our crash course in the basics of journalism, and Travellers' Times is now launching its storytelling competition for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers of all backgrounds.

Tell us a story in any way that suits you: it could be written down, recorded on a dictaphone, or told as a series of photographs. For the really ambitious, you could even tell it as a short film.

The best stories will be published by Travellers' Times and/or Travellers' Times online, and winners will receive prizes ranging from iPads to professional recording equipment.



Your community needs YOU to tell it like it is!

If you've got a story you think we need to hear, then get reporting and get in touch! You can contact Travellers' Times by post at Travellers' Times, The Rural Media Company, Sullivan House, 72-80 Widemarsh St, Hereford, Herefordshire HR4 9HG. Or email us at travellerstimes@ruralmedia.co.uk Good luck!

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Northern Calling – Gypsies and Travellers of the North East

AN EXHIBITION of photographs by Linda Taylor will open in the Media Centre, within The Arts Centre, Vane Terrace, Darlington on Saturday, March 24th – April 24th.

Linda's collection of up to 25 large images is a result of her working closely with the Gypsy community in the North East over the past two years and documenting their horse fairs and drives with a passion.

For more details of the event contact Linda at Letaylor@btopenworld.com



Billiejo sings for her sister

"I've been singing since I was about 4 or 5," says Billiejo Bowers, who lives on Tadley site in Berkshire. "My first song was 'My Boy Lollipop'. I like singing because when I sing everyone seems happy. I make my family proud when I sing, everyone's there to back me up and they always give me the courage to go forward.

"I'm just waiting for my letter to come back from Britain's Got Talent. The judge said I had one of the best voices he'd heard for a 14 year old, and I want to be known for having a good voice!"

Why does singing mean so much to Gypsy people? "It's family ways," says Billiejo. "Singing gets passed down, me granny can sing, me mum can sing." (Billiejo's mum is Travellers Got Talent national finalist Kamala Frankham.) "Mum wants me to train as a beautician too, as a back-up for the singing."

Billiejo has her own very special reason for wanting to make it

as a singer. "If I made a good lot of money, I'd help my sister to walk. I'd love to see her walking."

Billiejo's little sister, also called Kamala, is 9 years old. She was diagnosed at 16 months with cerebral palsy which affects both her legs and her left arm, and means she has to use a wheelchair.

"She can't stand, she can't walk, but physio and injections do help," says mum Kamala. "It costs £2300 for a special physio session with Footprint." The NHS will not cover treatment.

"We're trying to set up a website so people can donate to help Kamala," she says.

The family are in this together, says Billiejo. "Fame wouldn't change me but I could get my mum what she wanted, it'd be perfect wouldn't it?"



Billiejo on her horse PHOTO: Damian Le Bas



Billiejo's younger sister, Kamala

Life on the ocean wave has more meaning than most for Gypsy Danny Hilding

BROUGHT UP in Biddenden, Kent, Danny was encouraged to 'catch up' at school by his headteacher, Mr Adams, who saw he had potential. Dyslexia had meant that Danny was constantly lagging behind at both primary and secondary school, although with help he could read and write.

He worked hard and got 6 GCSEs which helped him into employment.

Three years ago Danny's father-in-law encouraged him to join the voluntary lifeboat crew at Dungeness, and although the only Gypsy on board Danny said he has been taken in as their own.

"I like helping people out at sea, saving lives and stuff," he said.

"My brothers say they wouldn't do it for free but I say, imagine it was two little kids out there and you saved them. I like doing all that voluntary stuff, I've got a good heart."

Only full-time employees of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) such as the coxswain and mechanic get a salary; the rest of the crew, including Danny who is a trainee shore crew tractor driver, train twice a month, go on call-outs and are voluntary.

"All kinds of people sign up from policemen to solicitors, a real cross section," Danny said.

A highlight for Danny was meeting multi-millionaire and daring record-breaker, Richard Branson who was attempting to windsurf across the English Channel.



Danny meets Richard Branson

Danny in Lifeboat gear

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GARY HEARNE from Reigate in Surrey has been boxing at Earlsfield ABC for the past two and a half years, winning eight out of eleven fights.

"My gym is one of the best in London," Gary said. "I train 12 hours a day, four-five days a week. I want to be one of the best champions, like many of our champions ... Richard Williams IBF, Bradley Skeete, Kirk Garvey, Ricky Boylan, Aaron Khan.

"I'm a Romany Gypsy and proud to be."

Gary represented London in the quarterfinals of the Nationals in February and is now through to the semifinals of the ABAs.



JOHN COLE

Well done to John Cole from Nine Mile Ride School, for writing a fantastic piece about being a German Spy for his school project. If you want to see the full story then go to the Travellers' Times website. "He's a fantastic lad and he is so keen to learn all he can at school," says his GRT teacher, and here you can see John sporting his boxing outfit as he takes to the ring.

Maybe he can give Tyson Fury a run for his money some day!



BERNADETTE CAFFREY

Hello. My name is Bernadette Caffrey. I am 7 years of age from St Mary's Catholic Primary School. I am an exciting girl. I am happy I am a girl and a Traveller because I love living on the site with my friends Dolly, Nicola, Sharmine, Nann and Lisa. I love my school and my family. Their names are Leanne, Roseanne, Katie, Cute, Bernadette, Michael, Tommy. I am in year three. I have to tell the truth - I love year three.



Wokingham competition winners

PHOTO: Alex Harvey-Brown www.savannahphotographic.com

Proud winners

THREE YOUNG PEOPLE from Wokingham's Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community were among 38 competition winners who celebrated at an awards ceremony.

For the past four years the National Association of Teachers of Travellers and Other Professionals (NATT+) has run a national competition during Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month.

Last year the children were invited to create a piece of work - a story, poem, painting, photograph or piece of music - that captures a moment in GRT culture or history.

Out of 1,000 entries, three were from the Wokingham Borough; one from The Coombes CE Primary School in Aborfield, and two from All Saints CE Primary School in Wokingham town.

The award ceremony, hosted by Wokingham Children's Services Traveller Education team was held at the Oakwood Centre in Woodley where certificates were presented by one of the judges, Richard O'Neill - a popular storyteller from the Traveller community.

Keeping the Traveller flame alive by Mike Doherty

IRISH TRAVELLER Bridy Purcell, 15, is an inspiration to all young Traveller women. The first Traveller child to attend St Ursula's Convent School in Greenwich, she has managed to pick up a fistful of awards and has done all this whilst living on an unofficial site in Greenwich, London, for most of her life.

Bridy's mum, Tina Purcell, 35, says how much Bridy has achieved: "Bridy has played Annie in a West End theatre, won the Greenwich Jack Petchey award for community work in 2009, she is a Youth Leader for London Young Citizen and she has been to Lourdes to help disabled people for the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust," says Tina.

Bridy has even recently met the European Commissioner for Human Rights and told him about the need for more sites for Travellers in England.

Bridy explains: "If you only think about yourself then it's not fair, we have so much to eat here but in many places - like in Africa - children are starving."

True to her word, Bridy recently raised over £600 for the Children in Need campaign. "I stayed up and baked batch after batch of cakes in that tiny oven there. I could only fit in two trays at a time and it took all night - but then we sold them for charity."

Yet far from being big-headed, Bridy makes it clear that none of this would have happened without the support of her "family and mum and gran." "Everything I ever done, my family has stood by me."

And Bridy's family is special as well. Her brothers, Tommy, eleven, and Johnny, fourteen, are keen boxers, whilst her sisters, Kathleen, nine and Tina (junior) six, are Irish dancers.

When asked what she thinks would be the most important thing that the government could do to help Travellers, Bridy says: "They should pass laws to make sure that we are treated with respect." "They could also do something about there not being enough decent sites," says Tina.

Tina's last statement hangs in the air, as outside in the cold night just a few feet from the warm and comfy family trailer, the noise of a lorry can be heard as it thunders past on its way to the nearby council depot.



Bridy Purcell
PHOTO: Elisabeth Blanchet

Climb a dozen!

What does 2012 mean to young Travellers?

Next issue we'll be hearing from 12 young Gypsies and Travellers who are rising stars in their fields, from boxers and bakers to linguists and lawyers. In the year the Olympics comes to Britain, they'll be telling Travellers' Times what 2012 means to them, and what their dreams are for the future. Watch this space.

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DO YOU WANT TO BE ON TV?

'A GYPSY LIFE FOR ME' one of the most talked about TV series of last year is back!

The series became the most popular show on Bio (Sky 156 & Virgin 242) in its history and is returning to your screens later this year!

Daisybeck, the show's Producers are looking for more Gypsies and Travellers to take part in the new series.

For a chance to enter an exciting new competition with a cash prize contact:

Liza at Daisybeck: 0113 284 9185 OR Facebook.com/agypsilifeforme

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The Irish Travellers of Gypsy Corner

Gypsy Corner, the West London road junction in Ealing, has always been a traditional stopping place for Travellers going to and fro to the West of England, Wales and beyond and the Irish Travellers who live there today are proud of their heritage. *By Mike Doherty*

THOMAS MCCARTHY, a traditional Traveller singer, has lived around West London for twenty years and talks about the “stifling and choking” racism: “The signs would say no Irish, no dogs and no Blacks. We weren’t even on the list,” laughs Mr McCarthy – “yet we should have been because Travellers are not welcome in most places – and it’s still the same today despite all the anti-racism laws.”

Thomas learnt his songs from his Travelling family from Birr, County

Ofally in Eire – songs about the Travelling life that have been passed down for generations. “The first written records in 432 record Travelling people going about their business. Back then the settled people of Ireland had a clan system of chieftains who fought each other over plots of land. Travellers moved around from kingdom to kingdom taking their trades and their music with them.”

With the help of Ealing’s Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Service

(GRTAS), Mr McCarthy was able to record and release an album of his songs and has been busy performing his music at festivals.

“It’s an education centre but we also see it as a community hub,” says Mr McCarthy. “It’s a vital link for the Irish Travellers in this area. It’s where people go for help with their school application forms. Now that most of us are split up and living in houses – it’s also a place where you can meet and talk to other Irish Travellers.”



Thomas McCarthy singing

PHOTO: Peter Laban

The GRTAS building sits on the edge of Southall Common. It is one storey high, painted white and built out of breeze blocks and plasterboard and has a corrugated iron roof.

A white Transit van barrels down the narrow access road that links the centre to Spikes Bridge Road and the Southall housing estates beyond. The van stops in the dusty car park and Jason McCarthy steps out.

Jason, who has a young son and is a football coach for the West London football team Queen's Park Rangers, has been using the building for "most of his life".

When he left school, Jason helped to set up a youth football team. "There are Black lads, Asian lads, some white British lads and five are Travellers like me," says Jason. Mr George spotted Jason's football and leadership talents and helped Jason to get involved with QPR's community project for Travellers and with studying for his FA coaching certificates.

Inside the building, Cindy McDonagh is talking to Miranda, a project worker. They are going through Mrs McDonagh's application forms to get her children into the local schools.

Mrs McDonagh is a trained beauty therapist and runs small workshops for young Traveller women. "I ran the courses to encourage young Traveller women to learn. They are popular because the young girls love make-up and fashion," she says.

"Travellers moved around from kingdom to kingdom taking their trades and their music with them"

"I have travelled around and seen a lot of Traveller services – but none like this one," says Mrs McDonagh. "Even the young Traveller men – who wouldn't come near this place at first – now come to get help with their forms for their training and to take part in the football. There are other outside agencies that could help – but they don't understand Travellers."

Mrs McDonagh describes another important centre for the Ealing Traveller community. "It's a shame you haven't met Margaret who runs the Rosary meeting. She is a lovely person and sticks up for our rights. The Rosary is mainly for the Traveller women and we meet and pray and chat and then eat together. It used to be run here in the centre but the meeting got too big and Jake George helped to find a nearby hall to hold it in. The Rosary is a powerful prayer for Catholics and it helps to relieve us of the stress and the worries of life," she says.



Jason McCarthy receiving an award for being the first Irish Traveller to achieve Level 1 Certificate in Football Coaching, (he has since gone on to achieve levels 2 and 3). The award was presented by footballers Mikele Leigertwood and Clive Wilson

PHOTO: Chiara Contrino



Cindy McDonagh taking part in the workshop with the Royal Albert Hall, rewriting the story of Carmen PHOTO: Sheila Burnett

Family Album

SNAPSHOTS OF YOUR LIFE

Frank's Appleby memories



Frank Chambers-Lee and wife, Rose at Appleby Fair in 1981

"We spent 19 years of our married life in this Jubilee Butterfly Special, a lovely trailer – total luxury – I wish we had it now. Many trailers since. We have been rommerd 46 years now and met 49 years ago. We left Appleby that year and travelled 2,000 miles in 5 weeks."



Frank with Dave Peacock (as in Chas and Dave) and the Arbour family at Appleby Fair in 1992

"I have met Dave many times at Stow and Appleby and also at St James Park, London Harness Parade. He told me he was brought up with Travellers at Walthamstow and a lot of his schoolmates were Travellers."



Frank Chambers-Lee and Charlie Smith at Appleby Fair in 1995

"The late Charles Smith was Chairman of the Gypsy Council and the Mayor of Castle Point, Hadleigh [Essex] – the only Romany Mayor in England (as far as we know). Bless him – a great friend."



Frank with Hannah Hauxwell at Appleby Fair in 1993

"I will never forget Hannah, what a sweet woman," wrote Frank. "Keep your eye open for her books in charity shops – *Innocent Abroad*, *Seasons of My Life*, *Daughter of the Dales* (all number 1 bestsellers) – they are great reading."

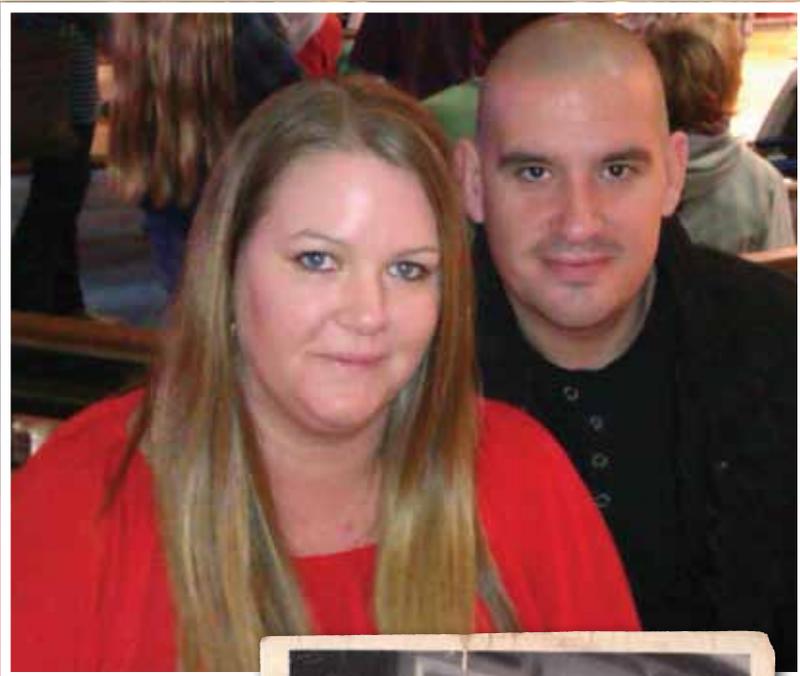


In Touch, Gaskin

This photo, taken at Appleby by Frank Chambers-Lee in 1981, is of the late Henry Gaskin from Doncaster
"It had been heavy rain for a week. Me and Henry waited for the hill to dry out to get off – we were the last two left on the hill. The mud was horrendous, loads of trailers got stuck trying to get off."

Neil's pride

"I'm very proud of my Gypsy roots. My Nan Edi came from Norwegian Roma clan called Welche and changed their last name to Welch when they arrived in Hull. My Nan married into the Lanes family then unfortunately my granddad Roy passed away in 1963 and my Nan married a Gorger and her family broke all ties with her which was the way back then! We have still to this day been brought up as Gypsies and been made aware of our plight! I'm very, very, very proud of my Roma blood and what my ancestors have been and continue to go through. kushti bok, Neil (Kneale)"



Neil and Louie



Roa, 4, and Riley, 5



Great Nan Thora



Edi

Have you anything to share from your Family Album? Get in touch with us on **01432 344039** or visit **www.travellerstimes.org.uk**

“There is no shame to admit that sometimes it’s hard to cope”

Annie Crocker describes how she got her life back together after suffering a nervous breakdown

ONE IN FOUR people suffer from mental health issues. Some people are suffering with stress, depression, bad nerves, and don’t recognise that these things are mental health.

I’m a Romany Gypsy and I always thought that if someone was mental then it meant crazy, doolally, asylum, gone off their head and that they stay that way and that they was locked away and had treatment done on their brain. Well it’s not. It means you’ve had a breakdown of communication, you’ve got low in yourself, you ain’t thinking straight, you’ve built up all your feelings whether it be anger, sorrow or guilt. Or maybe you have something to say to someone that’s upset or hurt your feelings and you can’t bring yourself to tell them but it’s all going around in your head ’til you feel it’s going to explode and the thoughts you get are distorted and frightening.

There are many reasons people feel like this. Money worries, overloaded with too much on your mind, family problems, alcohol, drugs, domestic violence, illness in the family, bereavement, separation, harassment, discrimination, being bullied etc. These pent-up feelings can lead to panic attacks and you feel you are going to die. You can start to detach from everything and go into a world of your own. You think you are hearing voices and can’t shut it off. You isolate yourself and want to be on your own and don’t want to talk to anyone. You can’t sleep or eat and can lose loads of weight and become frightened of everyone and everything.

If there are any of you that have or are experiencing these feelings, don’t suffer in silence, tell a family member or friend and go to the GP. There is help out there to overcome mental health problems from medication, counselling sessions, anger management or exercise classes or rehab.



Annie Crocker

Just having someone to listen to your problems is a big help because you are actually expressing your feelings out rather than holding them in, going around in your head. I had a nervous breakdown when I was 37. I didn’t know what was happening to me and it was very frightening. I was already under the doctor for depression and was crying all the time and had no energy. The doctor told me that I was doing too much and that I was stressed out all the time with too much worry. But it got worse and I ended up going to a mental hospital. It took me a while to get better, but I took all the help and support that was offered to me, including day therapy classes, counselling and medication.

Slowly I got my life back on track by getting peace and quiet and doing things that I wanted to do, rather than someone taking control of my life. I never thought I would get so ill as I was always a strong independent person but you can only take on board so much stress and worry. I also started going to church and turned to God for help and guidance and this got me back on the road to recovery. There is no shame to admit that sometimes it’s hard to cope. We think we have to cope with everything life throws at us but we are only human, not machines. Prevention is better than cure, so if you feel that life is getting you down and you get some of the symptoms I’ve mentioned, don’t forget to get help straight away, you will get better and feel normal again and you can help other Travellers that feel like this, through having your own experience of mental health.

MIND association, crisis teams and MH day rehabilitation in Somerset helped me, but you can find these orgs all over the country, and the Samaritans National helpline was very useful in times of crisis.

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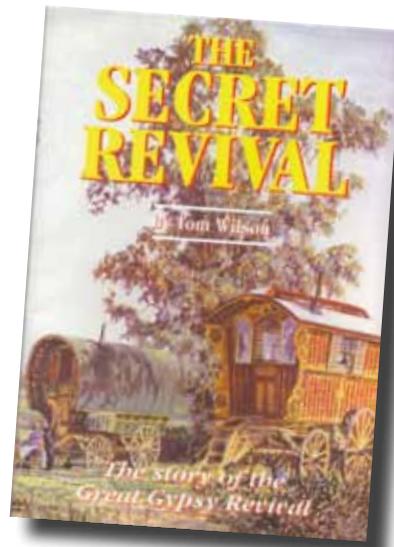


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Born again

by Tommy Wilson

THERE ARE NOW 20% of Gypsies saved and 'born again'. I feel it's good to let other Gypsies and Travellers know what is going on amongst the Christian Gypsies throughout the world and especially in Britain.

The gospel, which means 'the good news', is now being preached in over 50 countries where there are Gypsy people and there is great revival in all of them.

In England, Scotland and Wales there are now over 20 Gypsy churches with their own Gypsy pastors. All of these churches are evangelical and preach the word of God and a full gospel. Also, because we are in full revival,

new churches are springing up all the time. Scotland has 6 churches from Fort William in the North to Larkhall in the South. England has 14 from Darlington down to Canterbury. There are also churches in Wales and Northern Ireland.

This brings me to what is happening right now, especially among the Irish Travellers. I went to a Christmas meeting at Chertsey and was astonished at the number of Irish Travellers there. I have been saved 25 years, but I have never seen so many Irish Travellers at a Christian meeting, it was fantastic.

In a hall meant to hold 300, there must have

been 500 people, mostly Irish, and over 100 standing outside who couldn't get in. Now is definitely the time for the Irish.

Last year's convention in Essex was full every night - 3,000 people - many were saved over the week, including quite a few Irish.

There is no doubt God is moving and saving Irish Travellers in these last days. Soon Jesus will return, the question is, "Are you ready?"

If anyone wants a book they can order one from Salvation Place, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 9BS, price £3 incl p&p



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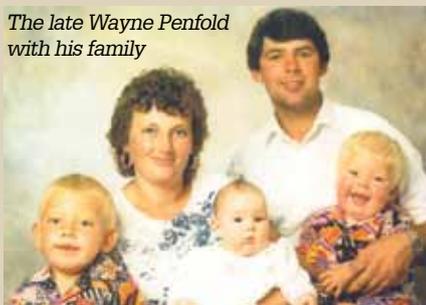
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The late Wayne Penfold with his family



RIP Wayne

Wayne Penfold passed away on 1st November, 2011 aged 45.

Wayne's death was a massive shock to his family and everyone that knew him.

His funeral took place on 14th November at St Andrews Church in Congresbury, close by Moorland Park site. About a 1,000 people attended and it was a walking funeral with a horse-drawn hearse – a first-class send-off.

Wayne was married to wife Shirley for 25 years and the couple had three lovely children; Andrew, Jimmy and Diane. He was a devoted husband and father in the greatest respect and didn't let his family want for anything.

His saying was, "Me, you, the boys and gal, all one team Shirley."

Wayne always had a laugh and smile for everyone, and also enjoyed keeping horses.

RIP John

TT has heard that John Pettyfer, who featured on TT Issue 43's cover, sadly passed away on July 25th 2011. Six weeks after that cover-shot John was diagnosed with the most aggressive type of brain tumour which caused his death 11½ months later. He made Appleby 2011, albeit very sick, and will no doubt be remembered by all those who knew him at this year's fair.

RIP Douglas



PHOTO: Martin Cavaney

The funeral of Mr Douglas Boswell of Monkton, who died aged 82, bought Pembroke to a standstill last month. He is survived by 10 children, 37 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren and was very highly regarded in the town both by the settled and the Traveller community.

RIP Blondie

**Joe 90's Memorial Drive
Sunday 19th August
Bishop Auckland, County Durham**

**Blondie's Memorial Drive
Sunday 7th October 2012
Stockton-on-Tees, Teeside, Cleveland**

Blondie sadly passed away in October 2010 leaving his wife, Nancy, and family who live in Stockton-on-Tees. Blondie originally moved into the area from Leeds, and he was well respected by the Teeside community.

The annual October drive honours his memory.



Blondie's wife, Nancy at Yarm Fair 2011
PHOTO: Linda Taylor



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Kiwi Traveller

My Grandmother was a Traveller from County Cork, her Mum was a Douerty.

I live in New Zealand, we don't have Travellers here. I always felt misplaced but realise now it was Gran's way, I was not allowed out unless with a group of girls, I was not encouraged to mix with others, I could break in a pony by the time I was seven, and still haven't met a horse or dog I can't walk up to immediately.

I would love a Gypsy cob.

Been married twice and haven't found a real man yet, can't stand one I can walk all over. Wish we had Travelling men here. Also I move around a lot which I can't help.

Lyn

Tell it how it is

"... the Gypsy life is ever-changing, and coming from a caravan into a house has its ups and downs. I'd like to see how other Travellers are coping with the changes, as I some times find it difficult ... It's a completely different society. We are brought up with traditions and morals, which makes it even harder for us to settle with people that actually don't have a clue about our way of life. I'm not saying that in a bad way but this magazine should be given out to all walks of life so that they can learn a thing or two about us. I've had so many people come up to me and say that since *Big Fat Gypsy Weddings* they see us in a whole new light – we were stereotyped and portrayed in a very bad way. I was also wondering how settled people would cope if they got torn away from the only life they knew and how they would actually cope with being thrown in to a whole new dimension."

Sarah from Surrey

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**

Break down barriers

Hello I'm a Traveller from Kent, and I'd just like to get my point across that Travellers and Gorga can live together side by side in life! I met my partner 2 years ago on Facebook, within 4 months I ran off to Ireland to be with him and we now have a 7-month-old-daughter together and I can honestly say that I have never been happier. I understand that it is vital that old Traveller traditions are kept but think that Travellers should realise that times are changing! How can Travellers expect Gorgas to understand our lifestyle and traditions if we keep putting a barrier up? I hope you can see my point of view and help with these issues. **Thank you. Samantha Friend x**

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Europe expects: Inclusion of Romanies and Travellers

For Europe's Romanies and ethnic Travellers, hills and valleys of all shapes and sizes have been par for the course through centuries of life across this continent.

In the 21st century, though, there's one big mountain that Gypsies and Travelling people have to climb: the one that separates us from full equality in the countries in which we live.

Following research by the Council of Europe, the European Commission expects every member state of the EU to explain what's being done in their country to help Romani and Traveller people to gain equality.

In January this year, the European Commission received a letter from the UK outlining what's being done here to help Gypsies and Travellers to achieve equal opportunities and integration in society.

Writing to the EC on 11th January, Miriam Bennett Houlton, the Second Secretary for Employment and Social Affairs, drew attention to four developments in the UK which are supposed to help with inclusion.

Among these is the scrapping of the Regional Spatial Strategies Needs Assessments for Traveller accommodation, which would hardly be seen by most people as a positive step.

The letter did also mention the fact that £60 million of funding for developing new sites and refurbishing old ones has been allocated. No mention was made of how few pitches this amount is going to fund compared to the outstanding national need.



PHOTO: Alison Chapman

Bennett Houlton also made reference to the Welsh Government's Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action, which looks at "new ways in which we can enable Gypsy and Traveller communities to access resources not always available to them by ensuring our services are flexible enough to respond to their needs".

The devolved governments of Scotland and Northern Ireland have been "invited ... to provide information on details of their policies to promote Gypsy and Traveller inclusion", according to Houlton.

No mention was made in the letter of the difference in community needs of the UK's Eastern European Roma communities, who live almost entirely in bricks and mortar accommodation, compared to Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, many of whom continue to live in mobile homes.

Anti-Roma violence: Is it on the rise?

THE EUROPEAN ROMA Rights Centre monitors attacks against Romani people, their families and property across Europe.

In the Czech Republic alone, ERRC has reported on an alarming rise in violence against Romanies since 2008.

Attacks in Czech lands have left at least nineteen people, including three minors, with injuries, two of which were life-threatening. There have been at least ten firebomb attacks against Roma and one use of a tear gas grenade. Four Romani people, including a minor, have died in these attacks, most recently this January when a Romani woman was murdered in Prague, allegedly by neo-Nazis.

These attacks do not even show the whole picture: they are just

the incidents that are reported on by the mainstream media.

The Czech Republic is not the only place where hatred and violence against Romanies, who are often in no position to properly protect themselves, is allowed to fester. In August 2010 a Slovakian gunman murdered six members of a Roma family in Bratislava before turning his gun on himself.

To find out more about the sickening violence which many Romani people have to face in today's Europe, visit www.errc.org

(sources: Romea.cz/reports from www.errc.org, retrieved 8th February 2012)

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