

# Travellers' TIMES

The only magazine for Gypsies and Travellers

SUMMER 2013 | Issue 54 | £3.50

## Stow good

Images from this  
May's Stow Fair

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## The Green Gypsy Church

A visit to a special  
place of worship

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## Crown Derby Competition

Win a beautiful dinner  
service worth £1,935

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

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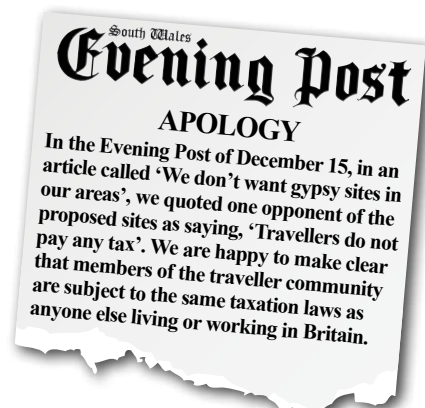
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chicken at Stow Fair. Photo: Alison Chapman

# Press watchdog upholds complaint about Traveller tax slander

- 'Travellers do not pay any tax', said quote in South Wales Evening Post
- Press Complaints Commission gets paper to publish correction  
By Mike Doherty



THE PRESS COMPLAINTS Commission has resolved a complaint from a member of the public who was furious that a local paper had printed a quote claiming Gypsies and Travellers do not pay tax.

Mr Cozens contacted the Press Complaints Commission after reading an article in the South Wales Evening Post that ran under the headline; 'We don't want gypsy sites in our area'. The article, about proposed new Gypsy and Traveller sites in Swansea, included a quote from someone opposed to the proposals who claimed that: 'Travellers do not pay any tax'.

After talking to the PCC investigation team, Mr Cozens lodged a formal complaint about the article saying that it was inaccurate, misleading and in breach of the accuracy clause of the Editor's Code of Practice.

The accuracy clause says that: "The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures" and "must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact."

The complaint was resolved when the PCC negotiated with the South Wales Evening Post who then published a correction.

When contacted by Travellers' Times, A spokesperson for the PCC said: "This complaint is a good example of how the PCC is able to negotiate meaningful corrections, clarifications and apologies on behalf of concerned readers.

"Accuracy lies right at the heart of the Editors' Code, and the PCC has dealt with a number of complaints about Gypsy and Traveller issues in recent years, many of which have been successfully resolved. We urge anyone with a concern to contact our staff at any time for an informal, confidential discussion about how we can help them, and how the complaints process works in practice."

The recent PCC resolution on the South Wales Evening Post article is the first Traveller-related complaint resolved since the long-running Leveson Inquiry ended late last year. The Inquiry was called by the Government after last year's phone hacking and bribery scandals rocked the newspaper industry.

As part of the Inquiry, the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain submitted a report on how Gypsies and Travellers were covered in the press. This was used by Lord Leveson in his final report which described the "tendency for some titles to adopt a sensationalist mode of reporting intended to support a world-view rather than to report a story." Later, representatives from the ITMB were invited to the Press Complaints Commission to discuss how the code could be used more effectively in the future.

Josie O'Driscoll, chair of Herts Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment, was part of the ITMB delegation and answered questions about Travellers and the tax system. "I was impressed by how eager the team was to know the facts about Gypsies and Travellers," said Josie. "I understand that the press code they work to enforce places an emphasis on accuracy and I would urge Gypsies and Travellers who are unhappy with anything that they read to get in touch with the PCC and talk to them to see if they can take a complaint forward.

"If we don't complain to the PCC when we read something we don't like, then we can't really complain if nothing changes."

**The Press Complaints Commission deals with complaints about articles and pictures appearing in newspapers and magazines. To speak to the complaints team call 020 7831 0022/0845 600 2757 or visit their website at [www.pcc.org.uk](http://www.pcc.org.uk).**



# West is best for Gypsy and Traveller health

OVER 100 PEOPLE attended a conference aimed at improving access to healthcare for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers as part of a new partnership across Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

A free health drop-in was also set up to do cholesterol, diabetes and blood pressure checks. Gypsies and Travellers are at high risk of developing problems with all of these.

"We try to make sure that there are good services in place, in terms of having specialist health visitor provision, education liaison and community support and involvement,"

says Annie Crocker of Bristol's Gypsy and Traveller Team.

"We also make sure that Gypsy and Traveller needs are addressed in local authority and NHS plans," says Annie.

Look out for events during Gypsy Roma Traveller history month this June, put on by the West of England Strategic Partnership for Traveller Health.

**If you've got concerns about your health or about health services in the area, email [Annie.Crocker@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:Annie.Crocker@bristol.gov.uk).**



Annie Crocker

PHOTO: BILL LAWS



## "Our way of life is being taken away"

AS THE LAST trailers pulled off the field at Eaves Green Lane, Meriden in April, the owner of the land, Romany Gypsy Noah Burton (pictured left), gave his thoughts to BBC Birmingham:

"I genuinely think we're like an endangered species because our way of life is being taken away.

"We wanted a permanent site because it's now illegal to pull into lay-bys, park on village greens or even on the side of the road, so we're getting squeezed.

"This hasn't been about trying to be tricky or playing the system, it's about trying to find somewhere to live and you can't crucify me for trying."

## Government considers next move on school attendance law

THE DEPARTMENT FOR Education has been sent responses to its plans to axe section 444 (6) of the Education Act 1996.

Now, the government will decide whether to get rid of the law, which states that families, who are travelling for the purpose of work, have a legal defence if their child misses some school but has attended at least 200 "sessions" of school during the school year. If repealed, a massive blow would be dealt to the travelling way of life.

The Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers said: "The repeal of s444 (6) would add another nail to the coffin, and remove another element of the flexibility that all research has shown

to be the key to improving the outcomes of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children."

The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain also said the law shouldn't be scrapped.

The government plans were "not based on robust evidence," failed to "address the wider issues impacting on poor attendance and achievement," and "would be discriminatory towards sections of the Gypsy and Traveller communities," said ITMB.

The National Association of Teachers of Travellers "strongly opposed" the plans.

Scrapping the law would "not increase attendance but is likely to result in an increase in numbers of children not registered in schools at all," said NATT+.

## DIARY DATES

For more info visit the Travellers' Times website and click on the "Events" tab

<b>Appleby</b>	<b>6th – 10th June</b>
<b>Cambridge</b>	<b>19th – 23rd June</b>
<b>Langley</b>	
<b>Horse Fair</b>	<b>23rd June</b>
<b>Seamer Fair</b>	<b>11th – 15th July</b>
<b>Kenilworth</b>	<b>21st July</b>
<b>Eddie's</b>	
<b>Fair &amp; Drive</b>	<b>22nd – 25th August</b>
<b>Lee Gap fair</b>	<b>24th August</b>
<b>Lee Gap Fair</b>	<b>17th September</b>
<b>Kenilworth</b>	<b>29th September</b>
<b>Stow Fair</b>	<b>24th Oct</b>



Thanks to Jim's Videos for providing fair dates. Contact Jim on 07538 684204

PHOTO: John Band

## Update on plans for new sites

### SCOTLAND

- Councillors and residents say they will object to a proposed site at West Garleton, north of Haddington, East Lothian. Locals fear it would "grow arms and legs" if approved, wrote Bryan Copland in the East Lothian Courier.

### NORTH

- Plans for a new site on the Rossfield Road industrial estate at Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, have been submitted by the council. The planned site will consist of 12 permanent pitches, each large enough for a static, a tourer and two vehicles. Several objections to the site have been received from locals. One said there was a lack of parking at nearby shops; another mentioned "troublesome kids from the gypsies".

### WALES

- Development should begin soon on a new 14-pitch site off the A470 at Brecon, mid-Wales, after Powys County Council won permission to compulsorily purchase the land. Rosemarie Harris is Powys cabinet member for housing, and Garry Banks is cabinet member for property. They said: "The county council has been working hard for some time to try and develop a permanent gypsy site in the Brecon area. "The decision is a significant step forward in that work," they added.



PHOTO: Damian Le Bas

### EAST

- Central Bedfordshire Council has approved three existing sites at Tingrith, Caddington and Pulloxhill. The Council has also given the green light to new sites at Biggleswade, Pottton, Stotfold and Faldon Road, west of Barton-Le-Clay. Around 200 people turned up to protest at the council meeting when the sites were approved.

### SOUTH

- The Secretary of State for Communities, Eric Pickles, has ruled that a site at River Lane, Leatherhead, Surrey must be vacated. The site has been home to five families for the past ten years. Local shop owner Jenny Moore said of the Travellers: "They are valued friends and a valued part of the community."
- Also in Surrey, Guildford Borough Council has granted £50,000 to add five new pitches to the Ash Bridge site in Ash. The site had been overcrowded, with 18 caravans squeezed onto just 13 pitches.



Heather Mundy

## New liaison officer for Bristol

BRISTOL'S NEWLY APPOINTED Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Education Liaison Officer says:

"Hello, my name is Heather Mundy and I am pleased to be Bristol City Council's new Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Education Liaison Officer.

"Please feel free to contact me (see contact details below). My working hours are Monday to Wednesday from 9am to 5pm."

Heather will be helping to support families with school age children and make sure schools get to know more about Gypsy and Traveller culture.

**You can email Heather at [heather.mundy@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:heather.mundy@bristol.gov.uk) or give her a call on 0117 903 7745**

## Good Friday site seeks new permission

RESIDENTS HAVE SOUGHT new permission to stay at the 'Good Friday' site in Hinckley and Bosworth district, Leicestershire.

The site is named after the day residents first pulled on, in Easter 2009. The families were granted temporary permission in 2010 due to the council's failure to provide enough pitches in the area.

The site is under one mile from the nearby village of Bagworth, and less than two miles from the larger village of Barlestone.

Yet Leicestershire County Council's director of environment and transport still claims it's too far from amenities. "The site is remote from services and local centres," they said.

## A Haven for Travellers?

TT HAS RECEIVED word from two Traveller families who have had a less than pleasant experience when wanting to go on holiday at a Haven seaside holiday park. So we wrote to Haven and asked if they have any policies that discriminate against Travellers. Here's what they said:

"We [Haven] don't have a policy that discriminates against any families, Travellers or otherwise.

"In cases where we feel the family experience that Haven offers may be compromised we reserve the right to refuse entry on to our parks.

"We cannot comment specifically on the instances given but we are more than happy to speak to the families directly to look into their complaint."

**If you've had issues with Haven, they say you should email their Guest Relations team at [guest.relations@haven.com](mailto:guest.relations@haven.com) or write to Haven, 1 Park Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP2 4YL within seven days of the end of your holiday.**



# International Romani Day celebrated in UK

This year the celebration of 8th April as the date the first World Romani Congress began in 1971, and with it our civil rights movement, was marked in Britain more widely than at any time in the past decade.

*By Grattan Puxon*

HUNDREDS TURNED OUT for events in central London, Peterborough, Manchester and Basildon, Essex. Everywhere, in joy and in protest, the Romani flag flew on what was a rare day of sunshine after the bleakest winter.

Starting with a picnic in Kensington Gardens and prayers led by preacher Joe Lee, the London Roma Day rally brought together people from many countries.

American film-maker Jasmine Dellal and actor Kika Markham - widow of the late Travellers' rights advocate Corin Redgrave - were there, as was OSI children's programme manager Adrian Marsh.

The recently formed 8 April Movement was able to link these events with some 50 others in cities from Berlin to Buenos Aires. The anti-deportation group Alle Bleiben ("All remain") in Germany and Yag Bari in Spain helped with the organising, as did the ERGO youth network for young Romani people.

At all venues, including the Amnesty-sponsored camp and eviction enactment in front of the European Parliament in Brussels, blue, green and red balloons floated as a symbol of unity and common purpose.

The London get-together ended with demonstrations outside the embassies of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. A Nazi revival in these countries has led to scores of murders, including those of Romani civil rights activists.

"The bombing of the Euro-Roma Party in my country is one of the worst of the latest outrages," Romani journalist Toma Mladenov said outside the Bulgarian Embassy. "Our civil society activism is being mercilessly suppressed."

In Peterborough, home to some 4,000 Roma, a school hall decorated with flags and



8th April Movement activist Grattan Puxon at the London Roma Nation Day event

balloons was filled on 9th April for a concert of dancing and singing, said organizer Petr Torak. Stalls at this venue drew attention to local activities and the wider campaign to end apartheid against Roma.

Youth project members at Leigh Miners' Welfare Club in Manchester also set out to showcase Romani history and culture.

"Our identity is Roma," explained dancer Rene Horvath, aged 14. "But our home-town is Leigh."

New World Romani Congress president Florin Cioaba said hardship in countries of origin is the main cause of the large migrations witnessed since 1989 from Eastern to Western Europe.

"Roma must be admitted into the EU decision-making process," said Cioaba. "No real progress will take place until that happens."

As Minceir Whiden demonstrators in Dublin emphasised on 8th April, unless the EU gets serious with its strategies and shares decision-making with grass-roots communities the situation will continue to worsen.

"They might destroy one Dale Farm here," said one 8th April protestor in Basildon, Essex. "But in a single year another hundred spring up in other places around the continent. We're a nation on the move and we can only go forward."

One of the next events in the calendar is the Commemoration of the Roma Genocide, taking place at 12 noon on 2 August at the Hyde Park Holocaust Memorial, in London.

**For more information contact the 8th April Movement at [dale.farm@btinternet.com](mailto:dale.farm@btinternet.com)**



Radoslav Radev outside the Czech Embassy in London



Protesters outside the Bulgarian Embassy

## Europe "on trial" for treatment of Roma

A MOCK TRIAL at Luton's Roma church will "consider the way Europe has treated and still treats the Roma Gypsy people". The trial, which will include a judge and jury, will take place at Beech Hill Methodist Church, Dunstable Road, Saturday 29th June at 11am.

"Come and hear the arguments - and decide for yourself," say the organisers of the event.

**For further details, email Andrew Coleby on [acoleby@stalbins.org](mailto:acoleby@stalbins.org)**

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## Dear Violet...

I am currently in prison for a number of minor offences. I have well above average intelligence and have successfully represented myself in court on a number of charges.

I have been talking to a few people in education in here and a support worker. They all think I am wasting my intelligence and should try to make some more of my life. I would love to practice law. How realistic is this? Would my past offences have any bearing on that?

## Dear Rehabilitated in Reading...

To succeed as a solicitor you need to be very driven and highly motivated, just to get through the studying can take at least 6 years, if you are not a graduate. You will have to take many exams and fund your studies.

However, The Law Society - a representative body for solicitors in England and Wales - will support students at every stage and is committed to promoting diversity. They also have a Diversity Access Scheme, so your ethnicity may be of some assistance to you.

The scheme has two elements: sponsorship and mentoring, so it might be worth having a chat to them. Have a look at their website: [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)

As for your record, the character and suitability of all potential solicitors are assessed by the Solicitors Regulation Authority before they are admitted to the roll. So you would have to declare your convictions there. They are more concerned with offences that involve dishonesty as they need to have full confidence in your honesty and integrity. They do take rehabilitation into account, but also have to consider if your being admitted would diminish the public's confidence in solicitors.

Each applicant is assessed on a case-by-case basis, so it's impossible to say if it will stop you, but if you're passionate about this career path it's got to be worth a shot.

**If you need some advice, get in touch with Violet at: Cannon's Counsel, Travellers' Times, Sullivan House, 72-80 Widemarsh Street, Hereford HR4 9HG**



# Travellers' Times is on the move

DID YOU KNOW that the TT website had over 350,000 page views last year? And it has over 4,000 friends on Facebook and over one and half thousand people receive the TT e-newsletter!

The brilliant TT quarterly magazine now actually only reaches a small proportion of our readers, and with our current funding for TT coming to an end in June and more people than ever going on-line, we have been busy consulting our readers and partners on how to develop the next generation TT project.

It's time for Travellers' Times to put much greater emphasis into its online services: website, email, and social media.

## Welcome TT-TV!

We will not be saying goodbye to print entirely, and we aim to publish and distribute each year a number of TT 'specials'. TT-TV will continue to offer media skills training, and carry even more of your videos, photographs, stories, pictures and news items. This content will be catalogued and searchable making TT-TV the largest archive of Traveller digital content in the country and a vital resource for everyone with an interest in Traveller life and well-being.



We hope to be launching TT-TV early in 2014. In the meantime we will be continuing to keep the website and social media channels up to date, along with advertising and e-newsletters.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have sent their photographs, drawings and articles to Travellers' Times, and especially the core team, who have done a fantastic job in creating a truly national publication loved and respected by Travellers, and non-Travellers, right across Europe.

Please do keep sending us your stories, pictures, films, news, photographs and suggestions. We love receiving them, and do continue to check the current TT website and Facebook pages for the latest news about this exciting new venture for Travellers' Times.

Best wishes

Nic Millington  
Chief Executive  
The Rural Media Company

## Mediator training: the road between different worlds

What is a “mediator”? Well, if you’ve ever stuck up for your community out in the wider world then you’ve actually been a mediator yourself. ROMED Mediation for Roma is a new training scheme for Romanies and Travellers to act as mediators between their people and the institutions that can affect their lives. *Johanna Price* was one of those who did the ROMED training.



*Gypsies, Roma and Travellers from across the UK and Europe show their support for Travellers' Times during the ROMED mediator training*

GYPSIES, ROMA AND TRAVELLERS all want the same things, but we don't always work as one group. This is why the Council of Europe is funding training for us to become mediators for our communities.

We need workshops, we need leaflets, but this is just the start.

The mediator training started on the 5th December 2012 with three long days of hard studying. We put issues that we have been working with into the training, to teach each other. It made the training easier. Sometimes it was like a game and we were like a lot of kids!

We all had paperwork to take home with us. Then three months later, on the 25th March, we came back for the second session at Martin Luther King House, Manchester. This time there was even more paperwork.

Then we parted into groups, and our group chose me as a case study to explain how I'd used mediator training in my work. Each other group had to do the same about their issues.

We had a nice time one night: we were indoors, but we pretended to be outside around a camp fire, and we had to sing, tell a story or read a poem. It was very funny and

we had a great laugh.

Mediation between our people and the wider world is what we do in our own work but now we have the certificates to prove that we are qualified. Our certificates carry the media triangle. It's recognised in all other countries except the UK. We need to get it recognised here.

**There may be chances for more people to get ROMED mediator training in the future. For more information go online and visit [www.coe-romed.org](http://www.coe-romed.org)**

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# A small crowd but a warm welcome at the new Lincoln Travellers' market

By Johanna Price



"THE 10TH MARCH was a very cold Mothering Sunday in Lincolnshire. The nearer we got to Lincoln the colder it got, but when we arrived at the little indoor fair the atmosphere was warm and welcoming," says Johanna Price.

"It was only a small event: you couldn't really call it a fair, it was more of a market. There were plenty of quality goods for sale and lots to buy.

"The stallholders were trying to keep warm and stay cheerful but at times it looked like there were more stallholders than customers. It was a pity because it was at a good place inside a big unit with plenty of parking and easy access. It just didn't have the right advertising."

It may have been a thumbs down for the turnout this time, but if they can get more people there in future then Lincoln Travellers' market will get a thumbs up for quality.



PHOTOS: Johanna Price

**This photo shows Hawthorn Price at Kenilworth Fair, the grandson of the late Hawthorn Price. His other granddad is Tommy Price.**

Hawthorn comes from a long line of horse breeders, from his great-great-grandfathers to his own dad, still breeding horses very successfully to this day. Hawthorn's knowledge has been passed on to his daughter, who is only five years old but already has a great love for her own horse.



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# Gypsy and Traveller men: Don't delay, ring the doctor's today

"You take your motor for an MOT, and sometimes you've got to take yourself for an MOT as well," says Romany Gypsy Tom McCready.



PHOTO: Alison Chapman

A FORTHCOMING CD from Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group explains that if you feel something's not quite right, you must go and get checked up straight away.

On the CD, one Gypsy man explains what can happen if you leave it too late.

"The first beginning of it, we pulled in Bluebell Wood for a few days before Stow Fair.

"The latter part of the day as I'm going to the toilet, I'm going less and less and less, until in the end I'm busting to go and when I get there it's just a few little drips

"Then as I was walking back down to the bar, I just doubled up in pain. I couldn't level up, just doubled up.

"I went to the doctor's and they said I'd

got a urine infection and they discharged me. Anyway, after that I was in the pub and it was a similar thing again.

"I went down to the doctor's, told him about it, and they said, "we'll do a blood test", which is called a PSA test. They said come back a fortnight, three weeks later, so I went back and he done me an examination internally.

And then he just said, "You've got cancer".

"It was late. The doctor at the hospital said: "We aren't even going to wait for confirmation to see how far it's gone." She said, "we're going to start your treatment straight away."

"It was half way through the treatment when we got the PSA reading. It's normally about 20-25, mine was 58.

"If you've got a concern and you just think you're not passing water right, things aren't working as they should do, then you can ask for a PSA reading."

"Most Travelling men, if there's nothing wrong with them, they don't go," says Tom McCready. "But believe it or not, Travelling men live 10 years less than the rest of the population. It's because they don't have any preventative medicine. And the same as with a motor, you need to go and have it tested before it breaks."

**For a copy of the DGLG men's health CD, email [info@dglg.org](mailto:info@dglg.org) or call 01629 732744**

## COMPETITION



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**[www.surveymonkey.com/s/ttCrownDerbyDS](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ttCrownDerbyDS)**

### Terms and Conditions

- Only one entry per person – entry implies acceptance of these conditions.
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# A brand new GATE way to Gypsy and Traveller culture

- New learning centre at Leeds Gypsy & Traveller Exchange
- "Mountains" of books and archive material now open to the public
- Music from the Doyle family as MP Hilary Benn opens centre



*The Doyle Family played at the launch*

IT WAS ALL smiles in Cross Green, Leeds as the new Learning and Resource Centre was opened at the office of Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange.

A permanent, dedicated place for Gypsies and Travellers is a rare thing and spirits were high at the opening. Renowned Irish Traveller musicians Simon Doyle and his daughters Winnie-Marie, Bridget and Margaret provided the music as Hilary Benn, MP for Leeds Central, opened the centre.

Mr Benn said: "Training is a really important part of the work that Leeds GATE does and I hope that this initiative will enable a better mutual understanding of both Travelling and

settled communities."

"This is exactly the right place for the archive we have collected together for over thirty years to be held," said a statement from Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Achievement Service.

Helen Jones, Leeds GATE CEO, agreed. "This is a resource for all the communities of Leeds which presents an opportunity for us to learn together and to value our shared histories".

Over 60 people were present at the opening including representatives from NHS England, Leeds City Council, Article 12 from Scotland, National Federations of Gypsy Liaison Groups and NHS Leeds Community Healthcare Trust.

A MUSICAL TRIBUTE has been paid to Kathleen Lowther Morrison, who died in March 2012 aged just 33.

The song for Kathleen, who worked for Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange, was written by her sons John-William and Mandy.

The song, which has been viewed thousands of times online, includes the words: The wings of a dove lift you up above / We've written these lines for you to share our love."

Over 600 people attended Kathleen's funeral at St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Beeston, Leeds on 14th March 2012.

Colleagues said working with her was "like a magic carpet ride."

Watch 'One in a Million' here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaOgSp9Vaas](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaOgSp9Vaas)



*Young GATE members, Adam Lee and Dolcie Gaskin with the commemorative CD that the young people made in memory of Kathleen Lowther Morrison*

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# YOUNG TIMES

## Birmingham's a big deal for football brothers

*By Shanterlena Knowles*

TWO BROTHERS, Tom aged 13 and Freddy, 10, are hoping to join the next generation of premier league football stars as they start training with Birmingham City Football Club Academy.

Tom, who was scouted whilst playing for his local team West Ham, moved to Birmingham from Essex after signing a four-year contract with the City's football club.

With the dream of playing for Manchester United, Tom kick-started his career with a four day tournament in Berlin in May and younger brother Freddy is keen to follow in his footsteps and is currently on trials with the Academy too.

Tom and Freddy, who attend full time education also manage to squeeze in time to train with a local boxing club but with the ambition of being as good as Ronaldo and Van Persie the boys are certainly putting in the hard work for a promising future.

When YT asked what their advice would be for other young Gypsies and Travellers Tom said, "stay in school" and Freddy said, "stick to what you're good at".

Young Times wishes them both the best of luck!



Tom and Freddy Anderson PHOTOS: Alison Chapman

## Mural meets the eyes

*By Shanterlena Knowles*

THIRTY-FIVE CHILDREN aged from six to 13 have taken part in building a mural in their local playground in Lynton Close, London.

The Tricycle Theatre Company who organised the event with the local Travellers, used arts and crafts as a way of building up their confidence and developing their art skills.

Sharon O'Regan, who worked with the families said: "The children had some good ideas and displayed good teamwork, interacting well with each other and working towards developing a permanent mural in their playground which gave the children a sense of ownership and respect for their environment. When asked to choose from an array of murals one of their preferences was Keith Haring. So watch this space, we may have unearthed the next Banksy!"

We painted the Shamrocks because they stand for the Irish," said Cameron Corcoran. Ciara Corcoran said "It says peace and harmony on the mural because that's how we all want to live."



Some of the young people who participated in the creation of the Lynton Close Mural at the launch PHOTO: Mike Doherty



## “Chanel’s a miracle to us!”

A BIG ‘WELL DONE’ to Chanel Trella aged 7 from Darlington for doing so well at school.

Chanel, who was born with Down’s Syndrome, is proving doctors and teachers wrong as her parents were told she might never be able to read or write.

With extra support lessons in school she’s already writing her name, learning to read, knows all her shapes and colours and can even recite the alphabet!

Chanel is so eager to carry on learning that she even has home tutoring from her parents during the summer holidays so that she can carry on growing from strength to strength.

Her mother Michelle says: “It doesn’t matter if you have a child with a disability, if we can do it anybody can. We never dreamed that Chanel would be doing the things she is doing, she’s a miracle to us and we wouldn’t change her for the world.



Chanel Trella

PHOTO: Alison Chapman



## Good luck Katie!

TT wishes the best of luck to Katie Tyrer from Bristol, pictured here in her prom dress and now studying at college to be a hairdresser. Katie is excited to be the first Traveller girl to go to the end of year prom at her school.

You can read Katie’s comments on Traveller and Gypsy style in our special feature on Stow Fair, also in this issue of Travellers’ Times.

## Good luck Riah!

TT wishes all the best of luck with her GCSE exams to Riah May Knight, pictured here strutting her stuff on the catwalk. Riah is Head Girl at the Priory School in Lewes, East Sussex.



## Thomas Wilson can cut it with the cue

By Violet Cannon

IT WAS ONLY 14 months ago that Thomas Wilson first picked up a pool cue. By his own admission he wasn’t very good. But after a few months of playing in the pub where his dad drank, he was asked to join their team.

Encouraged to switch sports from football to pool by his sister Chick, who saw his raw talent from the first potted eight ball. The team won and he went on to win the singles of the same league.

Following this he was asked to play for his county, South Yorkshire. They’ve just finished the EBPF National County Championships in Selsey, which only the

best teams and players get to take part in.

Thomas’s team didn’t win, but Thomas came runner up in both the Youth and the Men’s singles tournaments.

Whilst at Selsey Thomas made a bold move to play for Nottingham as they had an under 18’s team, something Doncaster didn’t. Thomas was also asked to play for England. His talent was spotted and he wasn’t even required to take part in the usual trials.

Sadly England narrowly lost out to Scotland on points.

Thomas is turning both 13-years-old and professional in June and will be touring

Europe and England with the IPA.

From what we have seen in the past 14 months, it seems Thomas Wilson is the one to watch in pool.



Chantelle with her sister Jade, on their way to the wedding



## Chantelle's special day

CHANTELLE MORRISON, our pretty cover girl on issue number 49, was married on St Valentine's Day, February 14th 2013 in Durham, to Tommy Ward whom she has known since her childhood.

"All the family was there," said Chantelle. "It had snowed all the day before, but on Valentine's Day the sun came out."

Following their Valentine wedding, Chantelle and husband Tommy are now enjoying married life in their trailer. TT wishes them health, wealth and happiness and all the best for the future.



Happy couple: Tommy and Chantelle

PHOTOS: Linda Taylor Tel: 07740 485166

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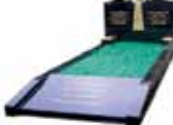
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## Circles Project

The British Red Cross Circles project provides floating housing related support and assistance to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities living in Birmingham. For more information contact

Tel: **0121 772 7340**

Email **vwilliams@redcross.org.uk**



**To advertise in Travellers' Times, call Jan on 01432 344039 or visit [www.travellerstimes.org.uk](http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk)**



# Macmillan gives some fair advice: get checked out!

THIS MAY WAS a first for Macmillan Cancer Support as they pulled on to Stow Fair to invite Travellers into their mobile information unit to learn about looking after their health.

The advice is, get yourself checked out, and that goes for the young as well as the old.

'The bad thing' is a word lots of Travellers won't even say, but not saying the word won't help your health.

Julie Price is an English Gypsy from Leicester. She works with Macmillan alongside Pauline Burton from Gypsy and Traveller Equality (GATE).

"It's okay, you can talk to people about cancer," says Julie.

"The young ladies think it will never happen to them, but it can happen to 'em. It happened to me and my daughter. If you've got married, had a baby, get to the doctor's and have a smear.

## The road to recovery

"One young girl said to me, 'I'm only 24' and I said I was only 25 when I got it. I was 32 when I got rid of it, and I'm lucky to be here. By me pushing I have saved my daughter as well.

"The old 'uns say once you've got it you can't get rid of it. But you can. I'm living proof of that."

Macmillan were also giving out information on the risks posed by sun beds.

"I know you can get problems with sunbeds," says Sherilee Roberts from Leicester.

"Some people use them every day and I know one young girl of 21 who was taking 'em 3 times a day for 2 months to get dark for her wedding, and she got the bad thing. I thought I had got it at one point but I got checked out by the doctor and I hadn't, thank God.

"I can't say don't use 'em, because I use them, but don't go on them too much. They do age you as well."

Helen Kennedy works for Macmillan and she says, "Sunbeds are high risk in terms of skin cancer.

"If a mole changes shape or colour or becomes itchy, you must go to the GP and get it checked.

"The girls say they don't like fake tans because of the chemicals, but as far as we know the risk from sunbeds is far, far higher.

"If you're worried about your health, there are walk-in centres and urgent care centres for anyone not registered with a GP.

Screening for cervical cancer and breast cancer is essential as you may not be able to notice the signs yourself. The same goes for testicular cancer with young men.

"We saw a mother here whose son was diagnosed at 23," said Helen. "The diagnosis was late and sadly he didn't survive longer than three weeks. He was told by other people it was a cyst and it was common. If you do notice anything you must get a check up as well."

**If you've got a concern then call Macmillan Cancer Support on 0808 808 0000 or visit [www.Macmillan.org.uk](http://www.Macmillan.org.uk) for more information. Macmillan should be back at Stow in October so if you want to know more, stop on by. They have a confidential interview room and you can remain completely anonymous.**

**WE ARE  
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*In the Macmillan mobile unit at Stow: Dave Ball, Helen Kennedy, Debbie Smith, Mary Brown and Maxine Astley-Pepper of Macmillan, with members of Leicester Gypsy and Traveller Equality Pauline Burton, and Julie Price with Phyllis, Shannon and Sherilee Roberts*  
PHOTO: Patricia Knight



*Don't miss the Macmillan Bus!*



*Ellen Tyrer interviews Julie Price*  
PHOTO: Alison Chapman





PHOTO: Patricia Knight



PHOTO: Alison Chapman

**Walter Smith, organiser of Stow Fair: a big thanks to Walter for letting TT pull on and bring you these pictures.**





PHOTO: Patricia Knight



PHOTO: Alison Chapman



PHOTO: Alison Chapman



PHOTO: Patricia Knight



PHOTO: Alison Chapman



## DIY lawsuit

*Chrissy Alleyn polls Stow Fairgoers about a new law protecting Travelling people from discrimination.*

THE GAVVERS AREN'T used to being served with legal papers, and the look of fear and confusion on the face of the policeman in the temporary cop shop at Stow Fair will sustain me for years to come.

In 2011 a new law from Europe was brought in for Britain which protects Gypsies and Travellers from racism by anyone who works for the council, police, fire, ambulance, railways, tax, health and benefits agencies, and a number of other organisations. The Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 says these agencies should "eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation",

"advance equality of opportunity" and says they should "foster good relations" between Travelling and settled folk.

In the old days you knew a complaint against one of the council would be hushed up by their mates, as it was a complaint against a person. But this law is different: it blames the organisation, so the workers are less likely to cover up. This law blames racism and harassment on poor training and education, and forces the organisation to publish what they are doing to address this yearly in the form of an action plan.



Chrissy Alleyn PHOTO: Alison Chapman

But if they don't know they're doing anything wrong they won't change. So here's what I do: I fill in the details in my Cut Out And Keep notice of intended prosecution and serve it on anyone who comes to my site with hate in their heart, knowing that'll usually stop them.

**For more information see "The essential guide to the public sector equality duty" on the Equality and Human Rights Commission website, [www.equalityhumanrights.com/](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/)**

## Road sense

*Ellen Tyrer talks to travelling boys at Stow about staying safe on the road*



Adam Wright, pictured above, says "I passed my test and found it easier than what I thought."

A TRAVELLING BOY passing his test for one makes him proud and for two it is vital for his livelihood.

As Jacky, a lady who has been doing Stow Fair for many years, says: "They can drive from a very early age, but when they get to 17 they need to be able to pass their test and have their towing licence."

One of Jacky's boys had been unable to get to Stow this year because he had failed his test. "It was the first Stow Fair he'd missed since he was a little baby," said Jacky.

But Joe (not his real name) did come to Stow Fair without a driving licence. He had to come because he needed to earn his living and felt he wasn't capable of passing because he is illiterate.

He wanted to know if there was help out there for him and other travelling boys.

There is help there for travelling boys to pass their theory. For example, if you tell the examiner you can't read or write you will be given extra time and shown an easier way of doing it. Also there are other projects out there.

As a mother myself who has lost a son in a road accident I know how important it is for mums to keep their boys safe on the road. One way of doing this is by making sure the boys pass their test. Then they won't have that fear of the police coming up behind them.

## The fun of our Fair

*Romani Patricia Knight returns to Stow Fair and warm welcome from her people, but not necessarily from the town*

IN THE EARLY May morning light, the honey-hued limestone of the Cotswolds glints, warm in the first rays of sun, welcoming our approach to the old Market Square of Stow-on-the-Wold, home to Stow Fair, beloved of Gypsies and Travellers for centuries.

But any sense of welcome soon fades as the town reveals itself as battened down, closed up, desolate.

The main road to the Fair no longer lined with traders, their wares safe from the spring rains and muddy fields. Now the first sight is of Police, trading standards, tanks checked for the colour of the diesel, stock confiscated, livelihoods left lifeless.

Talk at the Fair is of things being hard and costs being high, of much lost, left in the past, ripped from the present.

But all around still there is family; heritage; the gri; tradition; trade; a yog; a song; a bit of scan; old friends and new; the heart of things, our things; the fun of our Fair.



PHOTO: Patricia Knight



# Old styles, new fashions

Traveller hairdresser *Katie Tyrer* talks new and old fashioned style at Stow Fair

TRAVELLER AND GYPSY girls have many different views on hair styles, says Katie Tyrer. Everywhere they go they love to change the way they look and love to have lots of different styles.

I think many would like to get the old fashioned styles back, for example the styles of Amy Winehouse, Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor.

Many young Travellers today love to have highlights in their hair. For example, they have red hair lights because the young girls like to try make themselves look like Rhianna the singer.

But a lot of the younger Gypsy and Traveller girls like to put plain

treatments in. They like their hair natural and they leave it to grow down their backs.

I interviewed a young Traveller girl called Bridget Hegarty. She said:

“Travellers always have their hair up and curled for weddings and stuff.

“The older girls like red hair, blond streaks, and long hair.”

I’m training at college to be a hairdresser and once I’ve finished and qualified I’d like to do mobile hairdressing for the Travellers and Gypsy girls and boys.



*Katie (right) with her friend at Stow Fair*  
PHOTO: Patricia Knight

## “Cross my palm”: the art of Dukkering

Romany Gypsies are renowned fortune tellers, whether it’s reading tea leaves, palms, cards or crystal balls. *Laura Marshall* tells us a little bit about her family history and generations of successful fortune tellers and visits Rose Lee at Stow Fair

WHEN WE THINK of fortune telling many think of a magical, mysterious Gypsy woman. She has long captured the imagination and fascinated many across the globe, but on my travels I hear many ask if there’s really an element of truth to it all?

I have met many sceptics who believe that it all has to do with cold reading and selective confirmation but this is far from the truth for many a Gypsy fortune teller. Because this art has been guarded for so long, its secrets have remained hidden and misunderstood. I myself am from a matriarchal lineage of strong powerful

women who were able to see what others could not.

Dukkering is an ancient art and it is believed that we brought this art with us from the east as we travelled places such as India and Egypt. But is this art dying as the old ones leave us? Our women were leaders and successful breadwinners, but times have changed and nowadays it is not so easy to knock on doors.

I have heard plenty of tales of Gypsy fortune tellers giving predictions to visitors who later found that these predictions came true.

What people do not understand they fear or dismiss. There are many ways a Gypsy does divination: crystal gazing and other forms of scrying, cards, wax in water, tea leaves, palmistry, and reading auras. Usually they are very clairvoyant

and skilled at reading the energy field information of a client and are often very sensitive individuals. You have those who believe and those who do not and a lot of Gypsies themselves fear seers, or if they are religious see them as evil, but it is only because they do not understand it.

The gorjas in particular are fascinated by the mystery and skills of the Romany fortune teller.

I will often dance myself into an altered state of consciousness and chant in Romany. The ancient language comes from Sanskrit and the spells are very old and very powerful. These spells are used to help others and tune into the source and receive information for my client. Many think that it is fake but it is only possible to know the truth by being able to see yourself or through having a reading.

At Stow Fair I spoke briefly to Rose Lee, another successful fortune teller. I must say she was very good at the art and it was good to see it being kept alive. I have also noticed more men telling fortunes these days, which would not have happened in days gone by.

My aim is to preserve and carry our ways into the future so they will never be lost and show people the beauty and deepness of our culture.

**If you would like to learn the art of dukkering or more information email [lauramarshall8@live.co.uk](mailto:lauramarshall8@live.co.uk)**



PHOTO: Alison Chapman

# Family Album

## SNAPSHOTS OF YOUR LIFE

Travellers' Times would like to say a big thank you to Christine Saunders and Joyce Crutcher and their relations for sharing their wonderful family photographs with us and our readers.

Christine's husband, Ken, is related to Joyce through the Duckett line. Christine's album includes pictures dating back to 1915 and the old fruit farms of Bentley, Hampshire. Joyce's photographs go back to 1889 and the magnificent traction engine of Charley Matthews.

### Christine Saunders' Family Memories



Dean's 1st birthday party at Park Copse 1972



William Hughes-Duckett and his wife Alice (nee Buckland) fruit picking about 1915, Bentley, Hants



Maud and Alfie Saunders 1947, with their sons Ken (left) & Derek. (Maud is the daughter of Bill & Alice Hughes-Duckett)



Johnny learning to ride Pedro at Park Copse Site 1971



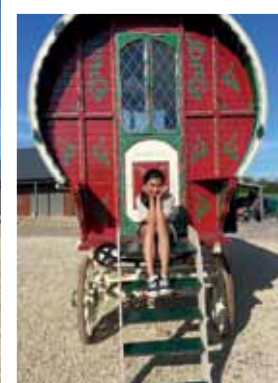
Alice's nephew Abe Smith, son of her sister Cinnamenti, about 1935, Lydiard, Wilts



Christine and Ken Saunders on their wedding day March 1963



Kenny and Johnny in the scrapped bus, Park Copse Site 1969



Jackie's daughter Banita, on one of her brother Johnny's wagons



# Joyce Crutcher's Family Memories



*Step brothers Walter Dane Matthews left and Walter Henry Jeff'*



*Isaac Crutcher and baby Joyce*



*Macey Edith Crutcher nee Jeff about 1940*



*Nancy Crutcher*



*Great Grandad Chorley Matthews leaning on one of his swing boats*



*Great Aunt Eliza White, nee Crutcher*



*Amberline Duckett with sons Sam and Amberline junior - who married Mum's cousin Eliza Warren*



*Great Uncle Charley Matthews, son of Chorley Matthews with his traction engine*

Have you any photos to share from your Family Album? Get in touch with us on **01432 344039**



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# “Maybe they did make good money but we all have to live!”

Dear editor

I have been a subscriber of your magazine for some years now and was rather shocked by the article on page 27 of Travellers' Times 53, "Paint your wagon and I'll paint you".

In it art curator Angela Kingston thinks Travellers should be worried! I think not.

In the past there have been some very famous artists that have portrayed the Gypsy in a very good light, as a beautiful, unusual, colourful race of people. Maybe the artists did sell their paintings for good money but we all have to live!

Travellers portray themselves in the same way: dukkering, hawking and buying and selling things to make a living. Too many of the trades these days are done under cover, only at fairs do Travellers show themselves off.

I have been myself involved with Travellers most of my life. I have painted pictures of Travellers, mainly in the past, but I am well known as a painter and restorer of Gypsy wagons and have a great knowledge of the subject. Maybe Angela Kingston might think I am taking advantage of Travellers!

Two main painters come to mind: Sir Alfred Munnings and Dame Laura Knight. Yes one of Knight's paintings was titled "the Gyppos" but I am sure she did not know Travellers don't like to be called that. She got on well with her subjects as she did so many paintings of them. Look out for 'Gypsy Splendour' and 'Ascot Finery'.

Also I was interested in the picture of Bill Chapman standing by his wagon in "The Wagon" by Cindy Upton (page 14). I owned this wagon in the early 1960s and restored it. I bought it in the garden of a village near Guildford in Surrey. I wonder where it is now!

Best wishes

**John Pockett**

## Crowning our winner!

CONGRATULATIONS to the winner of our Crown Derby competition in TT53. Nicky Russell is pictured here with her prize.

"I'm really pleased with it, and I do collect Crown Derby as well so that'll take pride of place!" says Nicky, who is a big fan of TT Online.



PHOTO: Damian Le Bas



*Gypsy and Girl by Dame Laura Knight.*

PHOTO: The Bowerman Charitable Trust



PHOTO: Still from GRAI Upneet Kaun-Nagpal

## “Romany Rest”

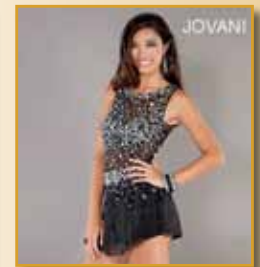
BY DEE COOPER

There's a big old trailer in the sky  
Where you go when it's time to fly.  
Where lavender and barley grows  
And scents of roses pass by the nose.  
There's a field of dreams and common ground  
Where only Gypsies can be found,  
A secret life for all to share,  
And when it's my time I'll meet you there.  
Just save me a spot right by your side,  
Close by the yog where I can squeeze you tight.  
I can just hear the stories that are all going on,  
Chatting and going till break of dawn.  
Fun and laughter, dancing and rhyme,  
Forgetting the hours with no sense of time.  
It's kushti up there, it sure is the best,  
A world full of Gypsies, it's called Romany Rest.



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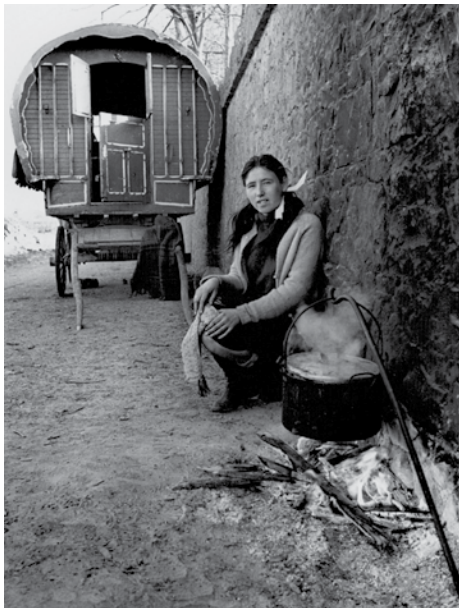
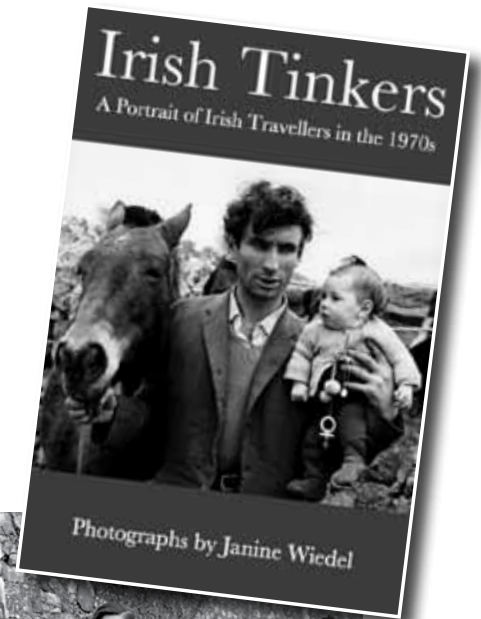
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*IRISH TINKERS* WAS originally released as a hardback book in 1976. It's now out of print and hard to find but you can get your hands on the ebook for as little as £3.49.

These amazing photographs are a one-off portrait of a time that might not seem that long ago until you look at how much has changed.

There are pictures of people living with their bow-top wagons and trading horses and donkeys at the big fairs of the day.

Some of these photographs also show how hard things sometimes were, and they pay tribute to the strength of the people who got through them with their families.



ALL IMAGES: Janine Wiedel

# One man's scrap...

A special short story and recipe combo from 'the Gypsy Chef' Tom Ewer

**This is the story of a boy named Joe and how he came to live on the road.**

Joe's parents were both very busy people. They had no time to stop and think, talk or love. They didn't even have time for their son Joe.

Joe would often entertain himself for hours in the fields behind their home, fashioning animals and people out of old pieces of wood with his small carving knife.

'One day I'll have my own animals,' thought Joe.

At night, Joe would line up all his little carved creatures on his bedroom window sill next to his little box of leaves and flowers, berries and seeds he'd found and dreamed of one day planting. He tried to show them to his dad, but Joe's dad would laugh and make fun of Joe.

One summer's day Joe had gone to the library and found an old map of the woods. Before you could say 'Bob's your uncle', he had packed the map and a few bananas into a small canvas bag and he was off on a trip that would change his life forever.

Joe followed the map and walked 'til the sun was high in the sky. He sat down, unfurled his blanket, unlaced his boots and lay down.

Joe fell asleep. He dreamt of a horse he had made called Agnes, she was a beautiful working horse. All day she pulled a large dray filled with people's unwanted objects. Joe could hear the sound of her as she walked down the road.

Joe woke with a start: he could really hear a horse coming towards the clearing! It was Agnes. Joe couldn't believe it.

Walking at Agnes's side was a man. He wore a black hat and a red neckerchief. The man undid Agnes' reigns and guide and gave her a good pat. Then he spoke words to the horse that were alien to Joe:

'Sar sin mandi's grai?' (How are you my horse?)

Joe rushed home in the twilight. His parents were still sat in front of their work and didn't blink an eyelid when he arrived home out of breath.

For the next couple of weeks, Joe went to the forest and watched the man and his Grai. On one day he had got closer and closer, when he slipped and fell out the bushes right in front of the man.

'Tuti been dikkin on mandi?' said the man.

Joe didn't know what to say as he didn't understand him.

'What does that mean?' said Joe.

It turned out the man's name was also Joe, so they called each other "Little Joe" and "Romany Joe".

Romany Joe would show Little Joe the ways of the road, and cook them his special bacon stew. While they ate, Romany Joe would teach him how to rokker Romanes, and Little Joe would tell fantastic stories he'd imagined about his carved animals.

On the first day of September, Romany Joe told Little Joe he must leave and go to warmer climates as Agnes didn't like the cold. Little Joe ran home crying. When he got home, he packed all his little wooden friends into his big wooden toy box, got in with them and cried himself to sleep. When he woke up, he heard his parents talking:

'We need to get rid of it,' said Mum.

'He will never grow up if we let him keep it,' said Dad.

Joe knew they meant his toy box. Suddenly he heard a voice say:

'Kushti, that'll do handsome back in mandi's vardo.'

It was Romany Joe. He took the toy box, carried it out of the house and put it on the back of his cart. When they got back to Romany Joe's atchin tan, Little Joe jumped out of the box and hugged Romany Joe. Little Joe rode off into the sunset with Romany Joe, never to be seen again by his selfish parents.

**To read the full story of Little Joe's adventure, visit [thegypsychef.co.uk](http://thegypsychef.co.uk)**



Tom Ewer PHOTO: [www.1-4-4.com](http://www.1-4-4.com)

## ***Romany Joe's bacon and bean stew*** (Serves 4)

- 2lts chicken stock
- 500g smoked bacon diced
- 2 sticks celery diced
- 2 carrots diced
- 2 white onion diced
- 200g dried fava or broad beans soaked over night
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/2 Savoy cabbage finely sliced
- 3 fennel tops
- 10 sprigs wood sorrel

Drain and cook your soaked beans until slightly underdone in water. In a large frying pan or pot, fry off the smoked lardons, add your vegetables and herbs and cook out for 10 minutes. Then add stock and season with some salt and pepper, continue to bring to a slow simmer. Now add beans and cook for a further 20 minutes. Add Savoy cabbage 5 minutes before serving. Garnish with wood sorrel and fennel tops. As always, enjoy with a big hunk of bread and some good company.

**Find The Gypsy Chef on Twitter @TheGypsyChef and on Facebook at [facebook.com/thegypsychef](http://facebook.com/thegypsychef)**



PHOTO: Tom Ewer





Kerry James Hawkins and Peter Ingram in the latter's cabin home PHOTO: Jamal Jimenez

# The Green Gypsy Church – Reflections on Romany Identity

By Jamal Jimenez

IT WAS A calm, slightly chilly August day last year, and white clouds moved slowly across the sky. Following a small track through the woods we caught our first sight of the Gypsy Church - a small green building with a sloped roof and tiny spire, sheltered deep within Bramdean Common, near Winchester, Hampshire. A small thread of spider web caught across my face as we walked into the enclosure of the church ground.

Upper Itchen Benefice Church stands in the serene woods at Bramdean Common and was built in 1883 to provide a place of worship for Gypsies and other itinerant travellers who stopped in the area. It was built in five weeks, a small green painted building of wood and corrugated tin.

From early in the Church's history there are records of Gypsies baptised in the church and as recently as 11 May 1997, following in this tradition, Kerry and Kathleen Hawkins baptised three of their children in the church.

Kerry James Harry Hawkins was born in August 1964 in Hampshire. "Some of my earliest memories are of living on a caravan site and my mum taking me to visit my grandmother Annie, who was born in 1906 and brought up travelling about in horse drawn wagons and living in tents," he says.

As well as a detailed knowledge of his ancestry, Kerry has a cherished album of family photographs, some of which date back to the 19th century. They include one of his three-times great-grandfather Samuel Ayres, the son of

Paul Ayres and Matilda Bowers and a Hawker by trade. Samuel married Mary Ann Pannell, a daughter of James Pannell and Jane Bowers.

The denomination of the church is Church of England, yet it transcends denomination and even religion. A symbol of sacred Romany geography, the Gypsy Church also documents the Romany experience in the English countryside, an alternative British history. Recent genetic studies support the story already told by the Romany language, that the origin of the Romany people is in the Indian subcontinent. As Hawkins explains:

"DNA has linked all Romany vista to a common male ancestor who lived in South Asia within the last 2000 years!"

This genetic study of the Romany is not without controversy and is not welcomed by everyone. For instance, might there be cases where certain families of non-Romany origin, who having lived amongst Romany for generations, adopted their ways, traditions and lifestyle and over time became absorbed into the community?

Hawkins thinks otherwise, "You cannot become a Romany by being adopted into or taking to the culture. Recognition amongst other Romanies and Gypsy families is purely based on blood from the old travelling families of Romany origin. They often refer to themselves as 'Travellers' and can know and recognise each other at a glance."

"With the ability to travel to work using

modern roads and vehicles, most Romany families chose to settle decades ago," explains Hawkins, who has a flash of dark hair beneath his trilby.

"Others were forced into housing by parliament acts, and pressure from authorities to close compounds and prevent stopping places being used by travellers," he adds.

"Some site dwelling Gypsy families will often look upon the house dwelling family as being not proper Romany, even though the truth may be that some house dwellers are more true in Romany blood than their site-based or semi-nomadic distant brethren."

Later in the day, Hawkins took me to meet Peter Ingram, a renowned restorer of traditional Romany Gypsy wagons. Ingram is inspired by 'Grey Owl' Archibald Leach: Native American books, cowboy ropes, masks and peace pipes sit alongside his china, old photographs and a drawn portrait of his famous Welsh Gypsy relative Esmeralda Wood.

As Kerry Hawkins says: "The Romany tan of Peter Ingram takes his visitors in a reverse migration back along the camel route to Iraq, through the Hindu Kush and up the Silk Road into the Orient, then crossing the Bering Straits and into the Americas."

"The culture could all but disappear but the bloodline will remain, a little watered down but still a heritage to be proud of. Society is moving so fast, and the travelling life is fast becoming a dying culture."



PHOTO: Damian Le Bas

# Whose lingo is it anyway?

By *Damian Le Bas*

"THEY PRESERVE A Romani ethnic identity, but they lost the language, in some cases already centuries ago." That's what an EU study said about Romany Gypsies in the UK, and the language, in 2001.

So is that it then? We've "lost the language", simple as that? If the professors are saying it then it must be true. That's what the government thinks, and that's why the language has no recognition in the UK. Why bother recognising a dead language? And anyway, if it were recognised, all the old colliers would learn what's left. And nobody wants the gorjers knowing what all the words mean.

Let's get this "dead language" rubbish out of the way first. The language might not be in the best state of health but it's a lie to say it's dead. I know when I can hear someone speaking French and the same goes for Romanes. "Kakka rokker nixes chavvy, muskros akai mush." There you go. Anyone who can understand that sentence knows our language isn't dead just yet.

Even if the language had "died out", that shouldn't stop it being recognised. Ned Maddrell was the last fluent, native speaker of the Manx language of the Isle of Man, and he died in 1974. Dolly Pentreath, the last

native Cornish speaker, died in 1777. That's 236 years ago.

It's well documented that the Wood family still spoke Romanes fluently in the 1960s, nearly 200 years after Cornish apparently died out. Yet both Cornish and Manx are recognised minority languages of the UK, and they're now growing in strength again, with children being taught in the language.

Anyway, the fact that Manx and Cornish, as well as Welsh, Gaelic, Irish and Scots, are all recognised, hasn't suddenly made everyone learn them all. I can't speak a word of any of them. Fair enough, I know what ARAF means when I see it on a Welsh road, but that's no different to Del Boy knowing what "kushty" means. There's no evidence that if Romani was recognised in the

UK, everyone would suddenly know what you were on about in the pub.

What it would mean, though, is that the country would have to sit up and recognise that we have a culture and language that's been here centuries, that belongs here, and that our children have a right to learn about in the future. And that diks kushty to mandey, chavvy.



"Rokker round the yog" PHOTO: John Band

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# A Traveller in Two Worlds Volume 2: The Tinker and the Student DAVID CAMPBELL

Luath Press Ltd.  
Hardback. ISBN 9781908373328  
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## Review by Ros Green

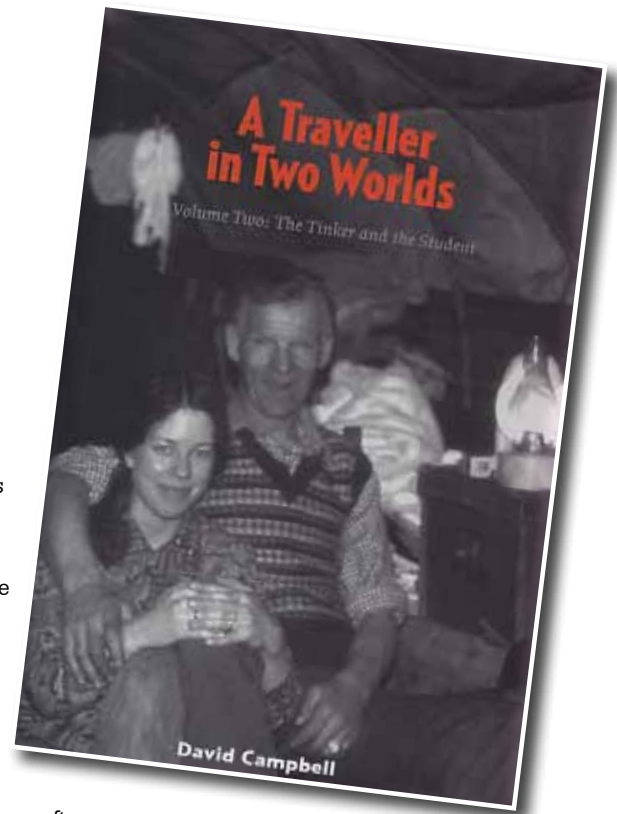
*The Tinker and The Student* is the second volume of *A Traveller in Two Worlds*, in which fellow storyteller and long-time friend David Campbell takes up the story of Scottish Traveller Duncan Williamson after he meets and marries his second wife, the young American student Linda Headlee.

This vibrant and intimate book combines an infectious mix of conversational interviews with excellent storytelling. Campbell's poignant biography traces Duncan's remarkable journey from the tent and the campfire, to hundreds of globe-trotting performances in concert halls and school classrooms across the world, stretching from Iceland to Canada: performances that in a very short space of time won him the accolade of being "simply the best storyteller in the English speaking world".

Still, at the heart of the book is the tension between the early Duncan and his older self. Because while he was at his happiest having a 'crack' or spinning a yarn – irrespective of his audience or the location – Duncan clearly also yearned for his 'other' life. A slower life, perhaps, bound in with the shifting seasons and the intimacy of the campfire.

The book concludes with a moving account of Duncan's death in 2007. It is followed by a series of equally moving interviews, which reveal the enormous legacy of stories and songs that he has left behind.

I read *The Tinker and The Student* in one very long 'sitting' and defy anyone to put it down after they've read the first chapter...



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# New Kids on the Block

Since Travellers' Times was started over 14 years ago, its pages have always offered a stopping place to Gypsies and Travellers of all breeds and backgrounds. But sometimes readers ask us why New Travellers are included in TT, so we asked *Tim Wilson* to give us a point of view on a way of life that's often just as misunderstood by other Travellers as it is by settled folk.

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***"Society needs to condemn a little more and understand a little less. New age travellers? Not in this age! Not in any age!"*** PM John Major to the Conservative Party Conference 1993

ANOTHER DAY. There's earning a pound and all that, then there's everything else; collecting firewood, filling water butts, sorting out the generator. Getting wood can take an hour or so, if you don't have to deal with an irate landowner. Churches are often best for water.

This begs the question I've been asked ever since I first moved onto site: why do I live like this?

Well, the answer's simple. I want to live

amongst a like-minded community; those seeking a different, low impact lifestyle, centred on people over profit. And I want to live rurally. I couldn't afford a country home in a million years, but taking my home to the country is another matter. And why not? I think if there's one strand that runs through all Traveller culture, it's that the Earth and its bounty belongs to us all.

There are many traditional Travellers, particularly of the older generation, that

question New Travellers' motives for taking to the road. This is understandable. For them Travellers are a race, or at least a collection of ethnic groups. In this respect New Traveller culture is only a few generations old, but there's still been many born to it and, for those, it's all they've ever known.

I moved onto site in the late 80s, when the authorities and press still called us New Age Travellers. The name was thoroughly disliked, with its implications of rose tinted,



pseudo-eastern philosophies. However, the need to provide an alternative life has always underpinned peoples' decisions to go on the road. I find it odd that wanting to be part of a close-knit, self-determining group is seen by society as non-conformist. People are meant to live in communities. We are supposed to know each other.

So now it's New Travellers, which is an improvement if nothing else, though we refer to ourselves merely as Travellers. We - that is the wider Travelling community - are well aware of our individual differences, but ultimately we all bear the brunt of the same common prejudice.

For the most part we are Travellers by choice, a life opted for because it provides a viable alternative to the ruled and regulated world of bricks and mortar. If anything, we come from the age old practice of squatting land.

The 1970s were ripe for the growth of a counter-culture. Many of the people taking to the road were squatters from Britain's towns and cities. Best described as free thinking libertarians, they left their urban environments during the summer to attend the self-organised Free Festivals springing up throughout the country. These gatherings were a way for people to express themselves socially and creatively and to put into action new ideals for living.

Although the media focused on the festivals' more hedonistic aspects, they were really no different from the ancient fayres that used to be held all over Britain: people trading, celebrating, swapping news. At the same time, the authorities began closing down the urban squats.

***"These days we have come to live in a world where all Traveller culture has been decimated by hundreds of years of discrimination. New Travellers came out of a time when there were still enough of Britain's traditional ways left to follow."***

Rather than become homeless these squatters took the logical next step and stayed on the road, moving from one festival site to another. Suddenly that simple, yearned-for lifestyle had become a reality. Living freely as an ideal was now a possibility; living freely was now financially a necessity.

If nothing else, these modern nomads had the courage of their convictions to carve out another life for themselves. And now, with hindsight, it is arguable that without them and their ilk there would be no environmental movement and certainly no modern music festivals.

I caught the end of this time, when our lifestyle had been tested almost to breaking point. The Battle of the Beanfield, near Stonehenge in 1985, and the mass impounding and eviction at Stoney Cross a year later were deliberate attempts to destroy the growing New Traveller movement.

But this was how we lived, we had no other homes, and the more we came under attack from lawmakers and police the more we had no choice but to stand our ground. So much of the legislation of the Thatcher years, including the Public Order Act, was designed to exert control over the many disenfranchised sections of society.

Employment and housing opportunities in the early nineties were terrible at best. The nation's youth were desperate for an outlet. And when the valve blew, it went with a bang. That bang was Rave. If there are two things Travellers are good at they're celebrating and entertaining. Suddenly there was a massive influx of people who wanted to have fun and needed to do it on the cheap. The Free Festival and Rave scene was a match made in heaven.

A few years later, when the sun finally set on those heady days, the spirit lived on but New Travellers were left to eke out life amongst constant evictions and political and media vilification.

These days we have come to live in a world where all Traveller culture has been decimated by hundreds of years of discrimination. New Travellers came out of a time when there were still enough of Britain's traditional ways left to follow.

Now stopping places get fewer every year, the opportunities for nomadic work likewise. Hopefully New Traveller culture will always be there, as a way for people to create a different life for themselves, outside-the-box, and on the road. I just hope the road will still be there for them.

# Hilltop update: "Damned if we do and damned if we don't"

By Tim Wilson

IN TT51 I wrote of Teignbridge District Council's plan to build a permanent New Traveller site at Haldon Hill in Devon. At the time I credited TDC for their efforts in consulting the current site's residents about their proposals. Months on, it has become evident that all our input has been thoroughly ignored.

At the last meeting the site received copies of the Terms and Agreements every resident has to comply with. Though the meeting was billed as a consultation, Teign Housing's representatives told us these terms are non-negotiable. Bearing in mind that the local authority's slogan for this project is, "Celebrating Diverse Communities", here is a small sample of the restrictions to be imposed upon us:

No Outside Fires. No Untaxed, Uninsured or Unroadworthy Vehicles. No Gas Bottles (full or empty).

That is, no more being able to sit around a fire. No being able

to SORN a live-in vehicle that may not move for an entire winter. And no re-cycling cars for spares. But then, under Section 7.2(g) residents will not be permitted to fix their own cars anyway. And every time someone goes travelling they'll have to buy a full gas bottle and dispose of it before their return.

Restrictions on movement, pets, self-employment, equipment, behaviour, visitors; the list goes on. Residents will have to pay an estimated £100 per week rent for the privilege of living under these new rules in a place where they live already.

Eviction is the only alternative to accepting a pitch. We're damned if we do and damned if we don't. To say this plan is ill thought out is a mammoth understatement. For all the lip service paid towards embracing different cultures, it would seem TDC's proposal is aimed at completely dismantling the Traveller way of life.

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