

# Travellers' TIMES

SUMMER 2014 | ISSUE 55 | FREE  
[WWW.TRAVELLERSTIMES.ORG.UK](http://WWW.TRAVELLERSTIMES.ORG.UK)

THE ONLY MAGAZINE  
FOR GYPSIES, ROMA  
AND TRAVELLERS



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TT ONLINE – YOUR VOICE ON THE INTERNET





# FROM THE EDITOR

*By Damian Le Bas*

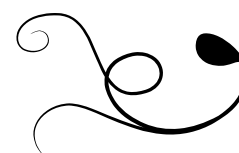


PHOTO: Damian Le Bas by Dan Salter



## WELCOME TO THE NEW LOOK TRAVELLERS' TIMES.

**I**t's the fair season again – and we hope you're happy to have a copy of Travellers' Times in your hands. This year, the TT website is getting a major facelift too.

As "the book" teams up with the web, we reckon you'll love the mixture of videos, news and chances to get involved in TT that are heading your way.

Thanks to a new grant from the Big Lottery, TT's future is secure for the coming years.

We're also looking forward to doing more workshops with Travellers on how things work in TV, film, and the press, so get in touch if you'd like to know more.

These days, news travels faster than it ever has before.

As we've all seen in the past few years, this also means the things people say about us travel just as fast.

Hundreds of our readers have written in and left comments on TT Online to tell us how angry they've felt at recent TV shows

WHEN YOU'RE GETTING YOUR VOICE HEARD, YOU WANT TO BE SURE YOU'RE HEARD RIGHT. SO WHATEVER YOU'RE INTO, WE'D LOVE TO HELP OUT IF WE CAN.

claiming to have the last word on Gypsy and Traveller life.

From our survey, 93% of you told us you don't think we get fair play in the media. TT's mission is to help change that.

And the good news is, the internet makes it easier than ever to have your say.

When Travellers' Times started life more than 14 years ago, 90% of people in Britain didn't have the internet at home. Nowadays, three-quarters of British adults go online every single day.

At first, Gypsies, Roma and Travelling people were a bit cagey about the internet. Now, we use the internet just as much as non-Travellers do, and it's getting more popular every day.

When you're getting your voice heard, you want to be sure you're heard right. So whatever you're into, we'd love to help out if we can.

You might need to talk to the council, or to a journalist or film crew.

You might want to complain about unfair press coverage and this has been proven to make a difference. Whatever your question, give us a ring or drop us a line.

Like the wider world, the world of TV, the press and the internet has its good sides and bad sides. And if you know the lie of the land, you'll be ready for whatever comes your way.

### *On the cover Riley Smith*

You can see a short film about Riley and much more on our website: [www.travellerstimes.org.uk](http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk)



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Travellers' Times is the national magazine for Gypsies, Roma 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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COVER PHOTO: Riley Smith by Elisabeth Blanchet





# INSIDE TRACK

*News from your world – in brief*



**BRITAIN'S** first-ever Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association has been set up in Kent. Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes said: "Our police force should look like, speak like, think like and be like the people it serves." I also hope that, in time, it encourages more men and women from Gypsy Roma Traveller backgrounds to consider the Police service as a career option," she said.

THE GOVERNMENT is considering tightening planning rules so that only those who 'actually travel' can appeal for 'gypsy status'.

Currently, only those who travel for work purposes can claim 'gypsy status' – but if someone has stopped travelling due to age, ill health, or for their children to go to school, this can be taken into account.

Barrister Marc Willers, of Garden Court Chambers, said: "We would argue forcefully that a requirement to show [Gypsies and Travellers] are continually travelling when there are no stopping sites available and draconian measures in place to force them to move on is a wholly disproportionate breach of their rights."

AN INVESTIGATION was launched by London Midland Trains in March after a train announcement warned people to "beware pickpockets and Gypsies" when getting off at Telford.

"This is unlawful, it is a racist comment. It is the same as using any offensive word," Mr Bill Kerswell told journalists.

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL is trying out a new 'negotiated stopping' project, where Travellers are allowed to stop on empty Council land for up to three months. In return, Travellers sign a contract agreeing to keep the area tidy, and promise to move off at the end of the agreed period.

Romany Gypsy Valerie Ellison told Mike Doherty: "We had no problems again at the new site ... We kept the site clean and just got on with it."

Helen Jones, CEO of local charity Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange, said: "Leeds has become a beacon of good practice for managing unauthorised encampments which is now being emulated around the country from Kent to Cumbria."

PHOTO: Appleby Fair by Alison Chapman





# TRAVELLERS ADVICE TEAM AT COMMUNITY LAW PARTNERSHIP

*Security at last for Gypsies and Travellers*

## NATIONAL TELEPHONE HELPLINE FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

**0121 685 8677**

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

After a long campaign, in April 2011 the Mobile Homes Act 1983 was brought into force on local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites in England. The Welsh Government have just brought it into force on Welsh local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Therefore Gypsies and Travellers on these sites can finally properly defend eviction proceedings that may be brought against them.

For advice on this and on other issues relating to unauthorised encampments, planning, homelessness and related matters, please telephone the Travellers Advice Team on the number shown

### THE COMMUNITY LAW PARTNERSHIP LTD

TEL: 0121 685 8595 (switchboard)

FAX: 0121 236 5121

ADDRESS: 4th Floor Ruskin Chambers  
191 Corporation Street  
Birmingham B4 6RP

EMAIL: [office@communitylawpartnership.co.uk](mailto:office@communitylawpartnership.co.uk)



PHOTO: Delaine le Bas

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# FREE SCHOOLS FOR TRAVELLERS

*Too good to be true? enquires Bill Laws*

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**A** Free School for Gypsy and Traveller children in Britain could be a reality within two years, if enough parents want one. That's the view of campaigner Adrian Brook, a man with a mission when it comes to Gypsy and Traveller schooling.

Education Minister Michael Gove has approved over 300 Free Schools since the Coalition came to power. Set up by parents, charities, faith groups or business, free schools "address real demand" says Gove.

How would a free school for Gypsies and Travellers work? Parents could send their children along. Or they could register their sons and daughters with the school – even if they live hundreds of miles away – and make the most of distance learning.

Distance learning projects such as ELAMP (E-Lamp Learning and Mobility Projec) and STEP (Scottish Traveller Education Programme) have proved popular with some Travelling families. Some are already using cheaper mobile networks and video calls on

Skype or FaceTime to keep in touch at home or abroad.

The man behind the plan is Adrian Brook. He would like to see a Gypsy and Traveller free school set up in the South West, possibly in Dorset or Wiltshire.

"Teaching Traveller children too often involves trying to fit a square peg into a round hole," he says. "We want to change those holes into square ones: it's all about hearing the voice of the child and their family."

Adrian married into the Travelling community. He and his wife Diane (she was a Benham until her marriage) have lived on site and on the road. They now live in a church house in Blandford where Adrian works as Salisbury Diocese's Gypsy and Traveller chaplain. The couple home-schooled their daughter and sent their two sons to various schools.

In the last few years Traveller Education Services have been cut to the bone. Yet even before their disintegration, many Traveller children fared badly in state

education. Many parents have opted for home education or stopped sending their children to school.

Sophie Chatfield, a student at the University of the West of England, has been talking to Bristol Travellers about school. "One mum from the Irish Traveller community was saying how children can get into school all right, but if they're moving around they might have to go to a new school every three months or so. It's not easy."

Adrian Brook believes the key to better Traveller education lies in adopting new teaching tools such as the Learn to Live programme. This family-led plan is designed to ensure that all services respond to a family's needs.

"It always seems as if the education system is geared towards Travellers fitting in rather than building a bit of flexibility in to the system," says Adrian. Critics of his Free School plan fear it could further isolate Gypsy and Traveller children.

Adrian Brook, meanwhile, wants to know how many other parents think the way he does.

What do you say? Could a Free School be a haven? Or a hell-hole? Tell us your thoughts.

To find out more, visit the Government's web page about Free Schools: [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools)

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# TT: WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

## *Facts from deep in (Digital) Space*

*The Digital Age allows communities to tell their own stories*

We surveyed over 500 readers (print and online) last year and found that:



**93%**

said they don't get fair coverage in the mainstream media

**90%**

are connected via smartphone & tablet

**86%**

said that they wanted an online directory of GRT organisations

**50%**

said they wanted support getting on the internet

Know your Travellers' Times history

**2005**

10 years later TT online launched and now has **350,000** visits a year

**1995**

A4 4-sided newsletter with no pictures.  
– sent to **150** people

**2014**

The magazine has a readership of **150,000** per issue packed full of news, stories & pictures. We have nearly **6,000** friends on Facebook and **1,800** followers on Twitter





**" I started using the internet mainly to keep in touch with relations but it's widened my horizons on everything.** There's all the things about Traveller history and also, getting in touch with Travellers that are related to me from all around the world."

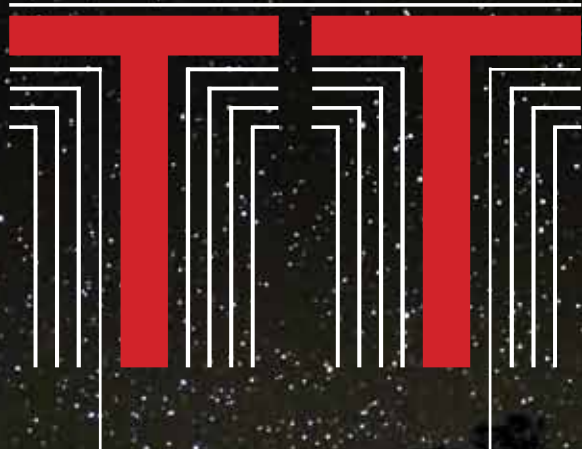
SUSAN, ROMANY GYPSY

*ies without having to be in the glare of mainstream media*

## Where is TT Heading over the next 3 years

We are building a brand new website called TT-TV which will go live this autumn. TT-TV will have more news, a bigger events diary, and carry more of your stories

We have launched Your Voice to offer GRTs a chance to gain communication skills and produce digital stories which will be published on TT-TV



We will work closely with over **40** GRT organisations supporting their information needs and partnering on new projects

TT-TV Academy will offer **15** places for GRT advocates and campaigners to develop their skills in handling the media

## What Online Media **can't** do

Make the tea

Give you the winning lottery number

Bring about world peace



Make sure your stories are told in a fair and positive way

Keep you in touch with news and events almost as they happen!

Give you access to information, services and products from all over the world

## What it **can** do





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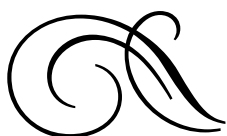
Also stockist for **Jovani**, **Forever Unique**  
and **Party 21** to name just a few.  
Deposits now been taken for Christmas orders

## Posh Furs

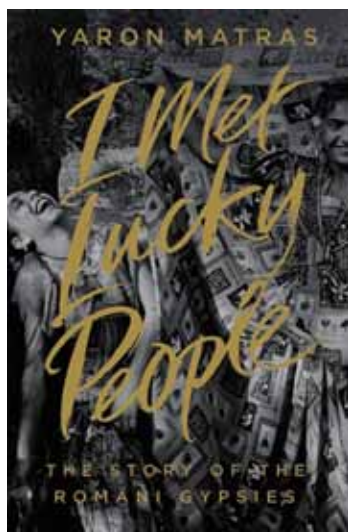
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## BOOK REVIEWS



### *Yaron Matras 'I Met Lucky People'*

"I travelled long roads, I met lucky Romanies", so says Djelem Djelem, the Romani national anthem. The author of this book, Yaron Matras, is an expert on the Romani language, and there is a lot about the language here. Matras traces the story of the Romanies across Europe. It goes from the ancient past in Asia, to the heartbreak many Romanies saw through slavery and the Holocaust, to the chance of a brighter future today. This book is quite complicated in parts but it is a serious book on Romani history and an important one at that. There is a lot of interesting material about the various Romani tribes around the world.

## FAIR DATES

STOW FAIR 8TH MAY 2014

WICKHAM HORSE FAIR 20TH MAY 2014

APPLEBY FAIR 5TH-11TH JUNE 2014

EPSOM DERBY 7TH-8TH JUNE 2014

SEAMER HORSE FAIR 11TH-15TH JULY 2014

PRIDDY HORSE FAIR - CANCELLED

HORSMONDEN FAIR 14TH SEPTEMBER 2014

STOW FAIR 23RD OCTOBER 2014 (DATE TBC)



### *Travellers' Tales*

Travellers' Tales is a joy. It's a charming collection of stories, old and new, along with some fantastic photographs. From campaigning for Travellers' rights at Westminster, to becoming a professional boxer, gaining an education whilst in prison, and enjoying school, these are uplifting tales of the Traveller spirit.

Collated by Sister Carmel Clancy and Ciara Leeming, this delightful book has happiness at being part of the Gypsy and Traveller community springing from every page, yet gently challenges the prejudice experienced by Travellers every day.

Copies of the book can be purchased from:

<http://bit.ly/1jBF6zp>



## OBITUARIES

Simon Evans, who died on 9th January this year, was a very close friend of many Travellers across Kent and the south. Simon, who was born in 1952, was a master of many trades – photographer, broadcaster, musician, author and expert on folk music and English Gypsy culture. Many of you will know his book "Stopping Places", a brilliant history of Gypsies in London and Kent. Our thoughts are with Simon's family at this time.



PHOTO: Simon Evans by Delaine Le Bas

Frank Brazil, who died on 9th November 2013 aged 63, was the inspirational founder, along with his brothers and their wives, of the South East Romany Museum at Marden, Kent. Frank Brazil grew up the traditional Romany way, travelling all through Kent and East Anglia, and was a devout believer in the Gospel. He was buried at the Love Lane Cemetery in Faversham. TT offers our condolences to Mr Brazil's family and friends.



PHOTO: Frank Brazil by Elisabeth Blanchet





# WHEN THE JACKS ARE DOWN, KEEP AN EYE ON YOURSELF



PHOTO: Candis Nergaard

ADVERTORIAL

MENTAL HEALTH IS HOW SOMEONE IS FEELING IN THEIR MIND. GOOD MENTAL HEALTH IS ABOUT FEELING GOOD ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND BEING ABLE TO COPE WITH PROBLEMS WHEN THEY HAPPEN. WE CALL GOOD MENTAL HEALTH MENTAL WELLBEING.

A mental health problem is a problem with someone's mind that makes it difficult for them to live a normal life. Mental health problems may be small problems or more serious problems. They may last for a short time or a long time.

People with mental health problems can often live normal lives if they get the right treatment and support. Mental health problems can affect anyone, anywhere. 1 out of 4 people will experience a mental health problem at some time in their life.

## FIVE STEPS TO MENTAL WELLBEING

Evidence suggests there are five steps we can all take to improve our mental wellbeing.

**CONNECT:** Connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.

**BE ACTIVE:** You don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find the activity that you enjoy, and make it a part of your life.

**KEEP LEARNING:** Learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not try a new cooking recipe, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?

**GIVE TO OTHERS:** Even the smallest act can count whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can

improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks. Volunteering to help others around you can be rewarding and make you feel valued.

**TAKE NOTICE:** Be more aware of the present moment, including your feelings and thoughts, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness 'mindfulness', and it can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges. (NHS Choices website)

**For more information visit:** [www.nhs.uk/livewell/emotionalhealth](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/emotionalhealth)

For information, help and support on mental health you can contact

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) | T: 0300 1233 393

[www.rethink.org.uk](http://www.rethink.org.uk) | T: 0300 5000 927

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) | T: 08457 909090

Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (DWMHPT) is a single NHS mental health provider organisation. It employs community development workers to work with communities to address inequalities that exist within mental health. The community development workers are looking to work closely with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities within Dudley and Walsall in raising an awareness of mental health and wellbeing. If you would like to get involved or would like more information and support about mental health and wellbeing, please contact:

**The community development worker team**

T: 01384 366517

E: [iram.maan@dwmh.nhs.uk](mailto:iram.maan@dwmh.nhs.uk)





# THE TRAVELLING PEOPLE 50 YEARS ON



*What's changed in the five decades since Gypsies and Travellers spoke out – and sang on the BBC – about the ups and downs of their lives?*

**I**t was one of the first ever programmes to let Gypsies and Travellers speak out about their own lives in the media. In 1964, a radio programme called 'The Travelling People' went out on the BBC.

Called a 'radio ballad', it featured songs – now well known amongst Travellers – like the *Move Along Song* and *Freeborn Man of the Travelling People* by folk singers Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, and people on both sides of the argument voicing their opinions.

Before this time, actors were hired to play the people who were being talked about, but in 'The Travelling People' it was the Travellers themselves who did the talking.

Gypsy and Traveller people living all over England, Wales and Scotland spoke out about their lives, including Sylvester Gordon Boswell, Minty Smith, Belle Stewart, and Cornelius Lee. Alec MacGregor played the spoons and Caroline Hughes was among the singers.

Made before the 1968 Caravan Sites Act was brought in, at a time when very few Gypsies and Travellers had a lawful place to stop, the radio ballad captured some unforgettable lines from a world that was changing fast.

"There's nothing beats the lovely heather and the moors and the birds whistling and the clear burn," says one voice. But there was also the dreaded winter, the "Terror Time".

Sylvester Gordon Boswell spoke about the story of how the Gypsies descended from the children of Abraham and his maidservant, and Minty Smith described the time she and her husband were moved on while waiting for the midwife to come and deliver their baby. "The horse was in harness and we were travelling along the road and the policeman was following behind, drumming us off and the child was born, born on the cross roads," she said.

The programme caused a huge stir when it went out on air, in part because of the shocking way it ended. Alderman

"WELL IT  
AIN'T A BAD  
LIFE IN THE  
SUMMER,  
BUT I THINK  
ABOUT THE  
WINTER,  
NOT THE  
SUMMER  
– I THINK  
ABOUT THE  
WINTER.  
THAT'S THE  
TERROR  
TIME."

Harry Watton, who was known as 'the little Caesar of Birmingham', said there might come a time when the government should "exterminate the impossibles". The show's producer Charles Parker asked if he really meant "exterminate", to which Watton replied, "Why not?"

Fifty years on and there are around 5,000 pitches for Travellers on local authority sites in England and Wales. Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised ethnic minorities under the Race Relations Act, and Scottish Travellers won ethnic recognition in Scotland in 2008.

Yet even today there are only a few hundred transit pitches – sites where Travellers can stay temporarily while they look for work – and the current government is considering making 'gypsy' status apply to fewer people in the planning system. Many non-Travellers, and much of the press, are as hostile as ever. So in 50 years of British history, what's really changed for the Travelling People?

We'd love to hear your views.

Email: [info@ruralmedia.co.uk](mailto:info@ruralmedia.co.uk)

Tel: 01432 344039

Comment: [facebook.com/travellerstimes](https://www.facebook.com/travellerstimes)

Write to us: Travellers' Times, The Rural Media Company, Sullivan House, 72-80 Widemarsh Street, Hereford, HR4 9HG

Copies of the Travelling People CD can be purchased from: <http://www.amazon.co.uk>





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