

THE MAGAZINE FOR GYPSIES, ROMA & TRAVELLERS

THE TRAVELLERS'

TIMES

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PETITION TO THE GOVERNMENT

GYPSY/TRAVELLER RALLY

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EDITORIAL

By Lisa Smith

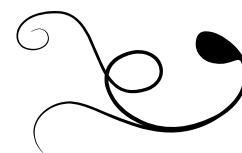


PHOTO: © Natasha Quarmby



I am a Romany Traveller from Worcestershire. My early childhood was spent travelling around Wales. The sound of a humming generator or the pounding of rain on the roof of the trailer gives me a great sense of comfort.

I have worked within a Traveller Education Service for the last eight years and completed a Master's degree in Inclusive Education. I am passionate about how education can be used as a tool for our communities to engage in political debate and social change and I am Vice-Chair for The Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers.

I remember how Travelling got harder as I was a child. I remember that large concrete boulders started decorating entrances to stopping places and evictions became more regular. My parents recognised that society was changing rapidly and access to schooling became of paramount importance to them. I did well at school with my parent's encouragement.

It eventually took my family five years to gain planning permission when life on the road became too hard and they wanted to settle. Initially on our arrival on our land, a petition by local residents was set up 'to get the Gypsies out'. We also experienced extreme invasions of privacy, unannounced intrusive visits, a resident living opposite us taking pictures of us going in and out of our property, and

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we were told the local parish had put on a fundraiser event to hire a helicopter to take an aerial view of our property so they could see what was going on inside. These types of heavy surveillance are not the isolated experience of one family but are a normal part of everyday life for many Gypsies and Travellers across the country.

So when the government said they had introduced new planning changes to make the system fairer for everyone I decided to join the Gypsy and Traveller rally earlier this year. I felt that the government needed to be made aware that in reality it has always been hard for Gypsies and Travellers to get planning permission and that the new legal definition of who we are would only further disadvantage us. It is already being used as a tool to reduce the amount of pitches that councils will have to supply.

Negative reporting of us in mainstream media gives a false impression of who we are and this impacts on how policy makers develop legislation towards us. The Travellers' Times works against this and helps create a truthful and positive representation of us. I have read the magazine for a number of years and am happy to be joining the TT Team and seeing how things work behind the scenes.

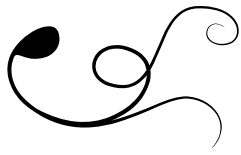
TT TEAM



 **RURAL MEDIA CHARITY**

COVER PHOTO © NATASHA QUARMBY/FIELDS OF LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY | Ruby-Leigh, 13, and Scarlett-Betsy Smith, 11, Tony Buttigieg, 18, and GATE Herts' Josie O'Driscoll hand in a petition to the government at Number 10 Downing Street, London, after the Gypsy/Traveller Rally in May

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The 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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NEWS

Read all about it



NEW PRIME MINISTER TRIES TO DENY GYPSIES A HOME – ON THE DAY SHE STARTS HER NEW JOB

The Travellers' Times can reveal that Theresa May objected to a Traveller Site in her constituency on 13th July, the very day that she moved into her new home at Number 10 Downing Street and met the Queen for the first time as the new Prime Minister.

In the letter dated 13th July and addressed to the planning manager at Wokingham Borough Council – seen by The Travellers' Times – Theresa May, also the Member of Parliament for Maidenhead, asks the council to deny planning permission to the proposed site.

Theresa May also reminds the council planning manager that she objected to a previous application because of the "concerns of her constituents" who will be "affected by the traveller site".

Gypsy and Traveller campaigners reacted with fury to the news. "Does Theresa May not realise that this Gypsy family are her own constituents too?" they said.

NEW REPORT ON EDUCATION BY WALES-BASED GYPSY AND TRAVELLER-LED CHARITY



PHOTO: © RCAC

The Romani Cultural & Arts Company based in Cardiff, Wales, received a £5,000 grant earlier this year, to commission research and consultation into the opinions and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers about the education provision on offer to their community's children and young people.

The resulting report – Educating Gypsies and Travellers – is now ready and will be made available to all Welsh Local Authorities, the four regional educational consortia and the Welsh Government.

The report, funded by the Big Lottery 'Awards for All', is intended to help them to reflect upon current policy and practice and ask appropriate questions in order to improve the life chances of some of the most vulnerable and marginalised children and young people living in Wales.

The report can be downloaded from the charities website at www.romaniarts.co.uk

REPORT RACISM WEBSITE LAUNCHED BY GYPSY AND TRAVELLER-LED CHARITY



PHOTO: © GATE HERTS

Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment Herts (GATE Herts) have launched a new dedicated hate crime reporting website for Gypsies and Travellers and have vowed to make racism against their communities "unacceptable".

The new website, called 'Report Racism Gypsy Roma Traveller', is in early stages and will be improved to contain reports and research on the hate crime that affects Gypsy, Pavee, Roma and Traveller communities.

GATE Herts are working in collaboration with Galop, the LGBT+ anti-violence charity and Tell MAMA, the anti-Muslim hate crime charity, to further develop the site. GATE Herts' 'Report Racism' also has support from the Independent Advisory Group for Hate Crime.

Sherrie Smith, Project Coordinator at GATE Herts, said that they would be producing reports and statistics to present as evidence of escalating hate crime towards Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

"We have third party reporting status [to the True Vision government hate crime website] and will be working hard to encourage the reporting of all incidents of hate crime," she said. "GATE Herts will also continue with our workshops aimed at helping the community to identify and challenge racism."



PHOTO: © ARTICLE 12



PHOTO: © DAMIAN LE BAS



PHOTO: © OUR VOICE

SCOTTISH CHARITY RECEIVES BOOST

Article 12 in Scotland, a Gypsy and Traveller charity based in Scotland, has been granted a further 5 years' funding from the Big Lottery Fund for their Young Gypsy/Travellers' Lives (YGTL) project.

The project's aim is to equip young Gypsy/Travellers with the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to identify, highlight and address issues relating to them and the wider Gypsy/Traveller community to exercise their right to speak for themselves so that they may live in a diverse Scotland, free from prejudice.

Bernadette Williamson, Peer Mentor for the YGTL project and Chairperson of Article 12 in Scotland's Board of Trustees, had the following to say about her experiences with the project so far:

"I was trained as a peer educator and have delivered training about my community to a wide range of people – such as in schools, with young people from the settled community, with professionals and practitioners – from all levels of society. Delivering a training to a group of journalists from the BBC was one of the best and a real highlight for me.

I can't really put into words what Article 12 has done for me, without it I have no clue where I would be now. I think still sitting in the house or maybe I would've got married out of boredom! Now I feel that there are so many opportunities out there for me and the world is my oyster."

NEW SITE FOR BRIGHTON

A major new local authority site for Travellers has opened at Horsdean, off the A27 near Brighton, East Sussex.

The site application was supported by the charity Friends, Families and Travellers and has been long in demand. Some of the site's new residents had been living by the roadside in the area for 23 years, constantly being moved on from place to place.

The site has been named St Michael's Way – a name chosen by the Travellers. The site has a long history as a stopping place, and now comprises 12 permanent pitches and 21 'transit' pitches – for Travellers who are temporarily in the area.

The completion of Horsdean marks an increase in the number of fully authorised stopping places in Sussex. Previously, the only two major transit sites were those at Bridie's Tan and Westhampnett. Both sites are also close to the A27 – at Lewes and Chichester, respectively.

"When we first came down here, that was 23 years ago," said Mary Murphy, who now has a pitch on the new site. "At that stage we were just getting moved, going round and round and round," she said.

"You can have your everyday routine, organisation, the children can go to school ... It's changed everybody's life," said Anita Ross, a resident of the new site.

"Especially for the smaller children, safety wise it's better, everything. Health, everything comes into it. It's transformed our lives," said Anita.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

Young women from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community have been on quite a learning curve at The Dukes in Lancaster recently.

Our Voice was part of the MAKE Project, a cultural partnership between Lancaster University and The Dukes which aims to develop arts, education and learning in Lancaster and to invest in, enrich and sustain the city's cultural life.

Thirty-two girls aged 10 – 16 took part in the project which involved them asking other young women and parents for their views on education and then producing films. The films were then premiered at a special event at The Dukes where the girls also presented dances they had learned during the project.

Olivia Hammond left education after primary school but is now studying at Lancaster & Morecambe College, thanks to her involvement with The Dukes.

"It completely changed my life," she said. "I would never have gone to college if I had not done The Dukes projects. They widened my horizons."

For further information please contact Louise Bryning on **01524 598509** or email **bryning@dukes-lancaster.org**



GYPSY WOMAN WINS AWARD FOR BEING REFUSED CREDIT

The Financial Services Ombudsman has awarded a Gypsy woman £500 for “distress and inconvenience” after a credit firm refused her credit because she lived on a Traveller site that had previous customers living there who had been “difficult”.

Caversham Finance Limited, trading as Brighthouse, compounded the issue, said the Financial Ombudsman Service, because the Gypsy woman was told by staff in front of other customers that she would be refused credit “because she was a Gypsy and lived on a site”.

The Gypsy woman complained to the Ombudsman saying that the other previous credit customers living on the Traveller site had nothing to do with her. She also said that she felt “distressed” about being told in front of other customers that she was not going to get credit because of her ethnicity.

In their decision, the Ombudsman said: “I think the reference to her race, and the fuss it created, would’ve been distressing and humiliating for her and so I’ve reflected this in the compensation.”

STAFFORD PRISON’S GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER EVENT A GREAT SUCCESS

The Gypsy Traveller Prisoner Group at Staffordshire prison recently celebrated Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month by holding a special event for prisoners and prison staff.

The event was attended by The Irish Chaplaincy’s Traveller Equality project, the campaigning group that was instrumental in driving the increasing spread of Gypsy and Traveller prisoner groups throughout the UK prison service.

Writing to The Travellers’ Times, Kev, the prisoner chair of Stafford prison’s GRT Group, said:

“We only have a small number of Traveller prisoners here at Stafford, but the support we get from the non-Travellers is really good.

The creative arts group did us proud, as did the prison band. We also raised £100 for the local Hospice.

I think that every prison should have a GRT group. We get a very bad press and these groups help other people to understand our way of life and culture. It also helps to break down barriers between prison officers and Travellers.”

LLANDEGAI TRAVELLER SITE RESIDENTS WELCOME THEIR COUNCIL’S PLAN TO REBUILD AND REFURBISH

Gypsies and Travellers living on a public site in Bangor, North Wales, have been told the good news that Gwynedd Council will extend and refurbish their homes.

The site, which is in an industrial area on the outskirts of Bangor and is partially closed off from disused wasteland by huge concrete blocks – dubbed the “Berlin Wall” by the residents – is overcrowded and a health and safety hazard, they say.

A Gwynedd Council spokesperson said: “Maintenance work takes place on the site on a regular basis, with expenditure increased in the past year.

Welsh Government officials visited the site upon the request of Gwynedd Council to start discussion with the Gypsies and Travellers regarding applying for funding from Welsh Government.

All parties present agreed that Gwynedd Council would aim to apply for funding to extend and refurbish the site during 2017/18”.



EVENTS



GYPSY, ROMA & TRAVELLER ARTS & CULTURE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM II

TALIESIN ARTS CENTRE SWANSEA UNIVERSITY, SINGLETON PARK, SWANSEA SA2 8PZ
FRIDAY 20 JANUARY 2017 - 9.30AM - 2PM

The Romani Cultural & Arts Company is pleased to announce the Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Arts & Culture National Symposium II. The event will be hosted by Taliesin Arts Centre and will feature artists Artur Conka and Billy Kerry plus guests.

We anticipate that this exciting half-day symposium and exhibition showcase will generate great interest so book your place early by contacting The Romani Cultural & Arts Company, romaniarts.co.uk

THE TRAVELLER MOVEMENT’S NATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016

RESOURCE CENTRE, 356 HOLLOWAY RD, LONDON N7 6PA
THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2016

The Traveller Movement’s Annual Conference, ‘Our Rights. Our Entitlements. Your Duty!’ is taking place on Thursday 24 November 2016 at the Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Rd, London N7 6PA.

To book a place visit the Traveller Movement website on travellermovement.org.uk or ring **0207 607 2002**.



GYPSY AND TRAVELLER RALLY IN PARLIAMENT SQUARE

Cover Story

PHOTO: © NATASHA QUARMBY



Gypsies, Roma and Travellers from across the country collected in Parliament Square, London, in May to demonstrate against the government's new planning laws redefining 'gypsy status' and to hand in a 5,000 strong petition to the Prime Minister at Downing Street.

The rally, called 'Dosta! Grinta! Enough is Enough!' was organised by a community led steering group, supported by the Gypsy Council, the Traveller Movement, the London Gypsy Traveller Unit, GRT Voice, The Travellers' Times, GATE Herts, the National Alliance of Gypsy Traveller and Roma Women and Munya Barnet.

Along with the hundreds of demonstrators on foot carrying placards and banners, there were also four carts and horses festooned with flags and slogans.

The petition was handed into Downing Street by Ruby-Leigh, 13, and Scarlett-Betsy Smith, 11, Tony Buttigieg, 18, and GATE Herts' Josie O'Driscoll.

The petition was protesting against the reclassification of 'gypsy status', which is used to determine a person's eligibility to plan, develop and live on Traveller sites. To qualify for the new 'gypsy status', Gypsies and Travellers will need to travel for three months every year, which will make many people homeless, or force them on to the road.

GYPSY COUNCIL NEGOTIATES FOR MORE RIGHTS AND RECOGNITION OF THE ROMA HOLOCAUST

PHOTO: © IWM LONDON | Gypsy Council hand in letter



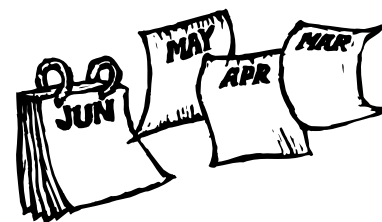
The Imperial War Museum in London has agreed to appeals from the Gypsy Council for more recognition and representation of the Roma and Sinti Holocaust in the Holocaust Exhibition currently showing at the museum.

The appeal was made by the Gypsy Council's Grattan Puxon after the August 2nd Hyde Park Roma Holocaust Memorial event, held to remember the estimated 1/2 – 1 million Roma and Gypsies murdered by the Nazis in the Second World War, and followed on from a meeting with Museum officials the week before. "Jews and Roma died together," said Grattan Puxon. "We are a brotherhood of victims."

The museum has already accepted that the commentary of a documentary film with the iconic shot of a young girl peeking out of the door of a cattle truck as it left Holland was wrong. The original commentary identified the victim as Jewish. Historical research had proved that she was a Roma girl called Settala Steinbach.

A spokesperson for the IWM London said that they had met with the Gypsy Council and had taken on board their concerns about "a lack of diversity in representation of Roma and Sinti in the current Holocaust Exhibition".

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE GOT TILL IT'S GONE



PHOTOS: © CHARLES NEWLAND

"It's important to be working for the future and making sure there is enough accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller people, but it is also very important to record our heritage because you don't know what you've got till it's gone," says Siobhan Spencer MBE, from the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group (DGLG) and the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups (NFGLG).

The Travellers' Times spoke to Siobhan at their recent heritage day event at their offices in Matlock, Derbyshire.

The DGLG has now been in operation for thirty years and has hosted the NFGLG for ten – which means a vast amount of campaigning experience for these Gypsy and Traveller lead groups. NFGLG celebrated 10 years of collaborative working in 2015.

The DGLG tackles local issues like "outreach, health, dementia amongst Gypsy and Traveller people" and runs a national telephone advice line, whilst the Federation works on national policy, planning and runs a number of heritage and history projects. The Federation has expanded its work in recent years, thanks to funding from The Open Society and the Tudor Trust amongst others, and now has Adrian Jones as national policy officer. Roger Yarwood – a chartered town planner – and Alice de la Rue, has joined the team once again to review the 5 year supply of land that councils should identify.

"Roger has been challenging local council plans that don't provide sufficient accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller people," says Siobhan. "We have submitted to around 250 local planning consultations and succeeded in getting a number of them overturned." Meanwhile, Adrian works at the government level on policy and other areas that affect

Gypsies and Travellers. The Federation recently worked on reviewing the government's 'Roma Integration Strategy' and continues to hold them to account for much of the strategy that still has not been implemented.

Another area of work, one that Siobhan describes as "very, very, important", is the recognition and remembrance of the Roma and Sinti victims of the Nazi Holocaust.

Siobhan sits on the Education and Testimony Committee of the government's Holocaust Commission, the DGLG holds events to commemorate Holocaust Day on the 27th January and the Roma and Sinti Holocaust Memorial Day on August 2nd is commemorated also by NFGLG.

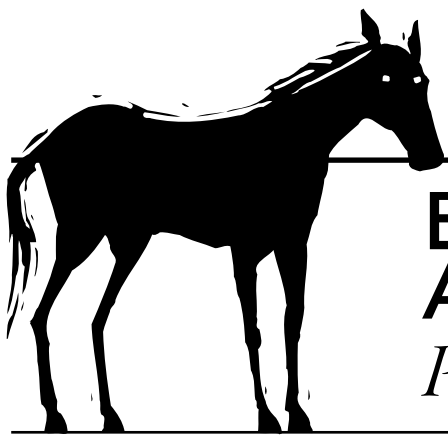
The NFGLG has an exhibition of 15 panels about the Holocaust called 'Through the Eyes of Children' which tracks the fate of various families and individuals during that dark time in history.

"Every August 2nd we visit the Holocaust Memorial Tree in Chatsworth Park, Derbyshire and lay a little wreath with a note," says Siobhan. "It's a public park and people come and read what we have put so ordinary people become aware about the Roma and Sinti Holocaust."

As I said, it's important to remember the past because you don't know what you've lost till it's gone. We will greatly miss Gordon Boswell who recently passed away, but the work he did preserving Romany Gypsy culture at his museum in Lincolnshire remains for future generations."

The Travellers' Times will be publishing the full interview with Siobhan Spencer on our website in due course.

Log onto travellerstimes.org.uk to read it.



EVERYONE'S A WINNER AT APPLEBY HORSE FAIR

Pictures by Redwings Horse Sanctuary

The Best In Show competition returned for a second year to Appleby Horse Fair. From the hundreds of horses that visited Appleby this year, 11 winning rosettes were awarded over the course of three days.

Winners included a full range of horses; from loyal family pets to show champions, a retired harness racer and 'all-round' ride and drive ponies, the competition put a spotlight on high welfare of horses, no matter what walk of life.

The competition is run by Redwings Horse Sanctuary and awards are issued by their vets, who have attended Appleby for over a decade to help with horse health advice and any veterinary emergencies. It's a fun competition that aims to recognise Fair-goers' pride in their horses' health and wellbeing, and give vets an opportunity to promote good welfare.

"It's great to see The Best In Show at Appleby," said Andrea Betteridge, Director of the Traditional Gypsy

Cob Association. "It's another way of celebrating the pride and passion in the wonderful Gypsy Cob, and the TGCA look forward to sponsoring some rosettes next year."

Redwings' Education and Campaigns Manager Andrea Vilela said: "It was a pleasure to run the competition this year. It was great to see several owners proudly displaying their rosettes for the duration of the Fair."

PHOTO: Mouse, Layne | Best In Harness



PHOTO: Moonshine, Katrina Daly | Best Cob



PHOTO: Billy Casper,, David Cummings | Best Trotter



PHOTO: Sexy Legs | Another Best In Show rosette



PHOTO: Henry's Ace | Best Pacer



PHOTO: Dolly Blue, Diamond Chanel | Best Shetland

PHOTO: Tommy, Warren Mowbray | Best Cob



PHOTO: Eddie, Ken Smith | Best In Show rosette



PHOTO: Lulu | Best in Show

PHOTO: Mr Jack, Lillymarie Williams | Best Cob



PHOTO: Mowgli, Shane Pool and Shaney Lee | Best in Harness



TRAVELLING IN HOPE RAISES OVER £3,000 FOR CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

PHOTO: © MIKE DOHERTY | Mr Jack, Lillymarie and Ellie Travelling in Hope



Travelling in Hope has taken to the roads in North Wales and has raised £3,050 to help a local children's hospice.

Lillymarie, 15, – who is from the Lovell Romany family – and her friends Ellie and Beth, 15, took a bow-top wagon, pulled by Lillymarie's Gypsy cobb Mr Jack, on a sponsored travel around the highways and byways of Anglesey fundraising for Hope House/Ty Gobaith.

The two girls drove the 1930's vardo from one stopping place to another for the whole of August and covered more than 150 miles.

"I am really proud as to how the family pulled together to finish this,"

said Debbie, Lillymarie's mum, who balanced a full-time job with staying every night with the girls in the wagon.

Lillymarie dedicated the journey to her best friend Courtney Rose Jones, who sadly died aged 14 and was supported by Hope House/Ty Gobaith in Conwy. "She was my best friend," said Lillymarie. "She died in Hope House."

The Travellers' Times met Lillymarie, her friend Ellie and her mum and grandad Debbie and David, as they neared the end of their journey.

Lillymarie said the trip had had its "ups and downs", with Lillymarie breaking her collar bone falling down the steps of the wagon two weeks into the trip and was then rushed to hospital to have the

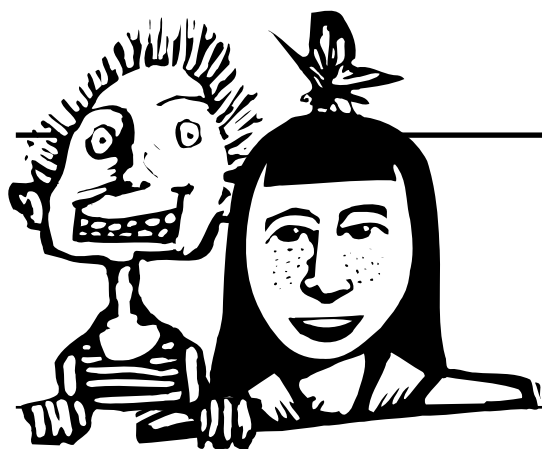
bone set. "I was the driver and I couldn't drive anymore," said Lillymarie.

Not to be beaten, Travelling in Hope soldiered on and Lillymarie's friend Ellie was given a crash-course in how to drive Mr Jack and the vardo.

Mr Jack is a steady horse and was not fazed by the traffic when the girls took him through towns.

"He would pull till he dropped if you let him," adds David. "But of course we don't let him and it's trot – walk – trot – walk for the journeys every day with breaks for watering and rubbing down."

"It's going to be weird going home," said Lillymarie. "But at the same time it will be nice – but we will miss it. We achieved what we set out to do."



YOUNG VOICES

BEN BENNETT TAKES A STAND AGAINST RACISM

Ben Bennett, one of the young stars of Channel 5's new series about Gypsy and Traveller young people which launched earlier this month, has pitched in to support a Gypsy/Traveller anti-race hate campaign.

Ben – who stars in the TV series 'Gypsy Kids' – took to Twitter to post a photograph of himself holding up the logo to 'Operation Report Hate'; a campaign launched by The Traveller Movement.

Ben is featured in episode two of the series, produced for Channel 5 by TV production company 'Knickerbockerglory'.

On the show, Ben and his mum Nathalie talk about the racism and bullying that Ben has faced at the nine schools he has attended, and how Ben is determined to rise above it and realise his dream of becoming a pilot like his Grandad who served in the Royal Air Force in the 1950s.

Ben said that his past experience of dealing with bullying had prompted him to support Operation Report Hate and he hoped that the campaign would "wake people up" to the



PHOTO: © CHARLES NEWLAND | Nathalie & Ben Bennett

hatred and prejudice that many Gypsy and Traveller young people have to face in their daily lives.

"I personally have experienced hate crime and it's horrible, it makes you feel worthless," he said.

"This campaign gives an opportunity for my community to stand up to hate crime by reporting it."



PHOTO: © CHARLES NEWLAND

JASON SMITH – A DEAF ROMANY TRAVELLER SHARES HIS STORY

My name is Jason Smith, I was born profoundly deaf, and I want to share my story to raise awareness of deafness and cochlear implants within the Romani and Traveller community.

At one time my world was complete silence. I was unable to speak, hear or talk. I would throw tantrums and get upset and frustrated trying to make sense of the world. Hearing aids didn't work. I couldn't explain that the sounds were hurting my ears. My parents persevered for months trying to make me wear them, but when their backs were turned the hearing aids would come out.

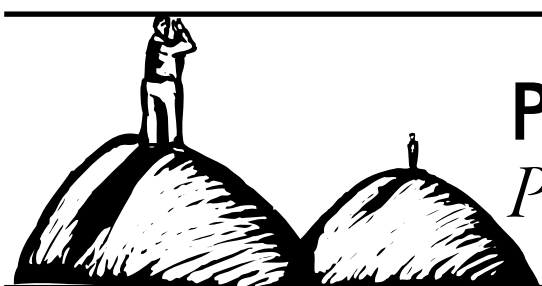
One night, as my father sat watching the TV one programme caught his attention. It was a documentary about deaf children having cochlear implants to help them hear. At this

point little did we know that the same surgeon we saw carry out the operation on the TV would be the one to carry out mine at Birmingham Children's hospital.

After the operation, when I had healed, we returned to the hospital to have the bandages taken off and the cochlear implant activated. The effect was immediately profound. I jumped. I could hear people breathing, the tap of computer keys and the buzzing of the hospital. I was amazed. I remember the sound of the car's engine as we reversed out of the car park and the tweeting of birds – the sounds people take for granted every day.

I am not part of any Gadje deaf community and do not know of any Deaf Traveller support groups. If you are deaf and reading this, please get in touch with me on Facebook. I have created a Facebook page called the Romani and Traveller Deaf Alliance. I hope to work to increase awareness about Romani and Travellers' deafness and the multiple barriers that we experience in society.

Read Jason's full story on The Travellers' Times Online at travellerstimes.org.uk. You can also contact Jason Smith through The Travellers' Times – email travellerstimes@ruralmedia.co.uk or call us on **01432 344 039**.



PROUD GYPSY TRAVELLER

Pictures by Charles Newland



PICTURES OF GYPSY AND TRAVELLER LIFE FROM THE 'SUITCASE UNDER THE BED'

Twentieth Century Gypsy and Traveller Culture and Heritage was the topic of 'Proud Gypsy Traveller', a project created in Doncaster that presents the oral histories, images and artefacts collected from local Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Run by Doncaster CVS and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project has already had a 'Hidden History' exhibition that ran for six weeks over the summer in Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery. A second, larger exhibition then took place, called 'Suitcase Under the Bed', which built on the idea that most Gypsy and Traveller people have a suitcase of memories.

There are more events planned and a book, and you can go online and follow the project as it develops on the 'Proud Gypsy Traveller' blog at www.proudgypsytraveller.co.uk

Violet Cannon, from Doncaster CVS, leads the project alongside her colleague, Paula Nicholson.

Violet Cannon told The Travellers' Times that she and Paula had been spending the last 12 months working alongside Gypsy and Traveller communities across Doncaster to uncover the many fascinating histories that existed amongst the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Lots of Gypsy and Traveller families have an old suitcase or two of photographs or mementoes, she said, and these formed the backbone of the two exhibitions.

"The Gypsy and Traveller communities are at the helm of this project, sharing their memories and artefacts with us so that we can then share them with the wider population," says Violet Cannon.

"The Proud Gypsy Traveller project aims to open up the cultures and put them under the spotlight. And the most refreshing difference with this exhibition is that the spotlight is being directed by the communities themselves."





MEDIA ON THE MOVE

PHOTO: © BBC JONATHAN HIPKISS



Our people were the media until people got radios and televisions and telephones. We were the walking people, the Pavees” – the words of Thomas McCarthy – an Irish Traveller/Pavee singer speaking and performing at The Travellers’ Times and BBC Outreach’s Media on the Move conference in July, earlier this year.

Thomas was talking and singing about a time when Gypsies and Travellers told the news of the day, walking from place to place and made welcome by the people they visited.

As a contrast, in more recent times, Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have often become targets in the media.

The purpose of ‘Media on the Move’, held at the BBC Birmingham studios, was to encourage more informed coverage by the media.

Journalists, producers and editors heard a first-hand account of what it feels like to be on the other end of a harsh radio

interview from The Travellers’ Times Editor-at-Large, Damian Le Bas: “I’ve had some really tough experiences on local radio. More than the presumption that we’re all the same, it’s the presumption that we can take anything and it’s not going to hurt us if you have someone, for example, accusing us of incredibly disgusting racial stereotypes.”

As the conference progressed, Editor of The Travellers’ Times, Mike Doherty introduced Gypsies and Travellers who were helping to create the media they wanted.

Betty Billington, whose family had lived for 300 years in Christchurch, Dorset, got fed up with stories in the local press about unlawful encampments and rubbish. She set up a local group involving the local authority, investigated the sources of these stories and started to pitch new and different stories about the community to the local newspaper editor.

Sherrie Smith went on a TT media and news-writing course. She’s gone on to write articles about the things that are important to her – things she wants everyone to know about. As a direct result of contacts made at Media on the Move, Sherrie Smith featured in a Radio 4 programme about a group of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers visiting Krakow in Poland to commemorate the August 2nd Roma Holocaust Day.

And there were many other examples of this community making and changing the media – perhaps now owning the news themselves in same way as Thomas McCarthy’s forefathers did walking the paths of Ireland.

The ‘The Oldest Show on the Road’, a three minute film created by The Travellers’ Times for ‘Media on the Move’, has been nominated for a prestigious Royal Television Society award. The film can be watched on The Travellers’ Times website travellerstimes.org.uk.

OBITUARIES



PHOTO: © DAMIAN LE BAS

GORDON BOSWELL | 1940 – 2016

Sylvester Gordon Boswell and his wife Mary were proud parents to Gordon Boswell, born in a tent at the side of a wagon, in the late summer of 1940.

Sylvester wrote the very well-known 'Book of Boswell' back in the 1970s. A champion of the Romany life, his son Gordon followed in his footsteps. When his father sadly died in 1977, Gordon took over his scrap metal yard at Clay Lakes, near Spalding, in Lincolnshire.

On February 25th 1995, on what would have been Sylvester's 100th birthday, Gordon and his wife Margaret opened the Romany Museum in his memory.

The museum housed the horse-drawn vehicles and considerable memorabilia that Gordon had spent a lifetime collecting. It also meant he could share and preserve these important examples from Romany life, with both Travellers and gorgia alike, making a visit there unforgettable.

As an ambassador for Romany people, Gordon excelled. He enjoyed meeting people and knew his subject off by heart. His talks and slide shows were delivered humbly, in down to earth, everyday language, but with the authority of one who has lived the life in all its hues.

This year, the museum was in its 15th season and is widely acknowledged as being one of the largest collections in Europe. It took the visitor on a journey back in time ... from the tent time of the 1800s, through wagon time and finally into the trailer time of the 1960s.

One wagon, from the 1800s, bares Queen Victoria's coat of arms, while across the way stands a 1930s early Eccles trailer, along with his friend Henry Miller's gleaming Westmorland Star.

But what of the man himself? Gordon was a family man, he epitomised style and class, respect and dignity, coming as he did from one of the best-known Romany families.

As we both lived in the same county our paths crossed quite often, travelling to Appleby, planning Gypsy events or at the museum. He always gifted my children a few pounds when they met him, never anything but generous.

His gift for holding an audience and telling a good story was second to none. He was delighted when, for one event, we arranged delivery of a barrel of 'Boswell's Bitter'.

Gordon leaves behind his wife Margaret, his three children (including Gordon Jnr) and at least ten grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He will be very sadly missed.

In answer to the question 'Will there be any Travellers in heaven?'... the answer must surely be a resounding yes!

The man with the big moustache, the Romany Rye ... will still be telling stories round the campfire.

By Ryalla Duffy

VALERY NOVOSELSKY

Many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller activists were deeply saddened to learn of the death this August of Valery Novoselsky. He was 46 years old.

Valery Novoselsky was founder of the Roma Virtual Network, an important source of news and information which connected Romany people and their allies around the world. He ran it for more than 15 years and was a regular presence at conferences all over Europe.

Agnes Daróczy, the veteran Roma activist and author, said: "Roma Virtual Network was an engine for the Roma movement that Valery created, founded and edited, day by day, working tirelessly."

Born in the Ukraine into a mixed Roma family (he also had Jewish and Chinese heritage), Novoselsky emigrated to Israel in 1995 where he gained his degree and worked as a translator.

Bernard Rorke of the European Roma Rights Centre said: "His commitment and dedication to the cause of Roma rights, and his singular determination to see the good in other people remain an inspiration."

By Damian Le Bas



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